

as the Bill provides that no persons of blood relationship shall be allowed to marry, I offer no objection to its passage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

*House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 3rd November, 1932.*

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

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1932-33.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

*Vote—Attorney General, £65,561:*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.33]: I move—

That this vote be postponed.

**HON. P. COLLIER** (Boulder) [4.34]:

I am sorry the Attorney General is not present this afternoon, but I cannot allow this motion to be passed without expressing my objection to a statement made by him last evening. He is reported to have said that the President of the Arbitration Court had

made ridiculous remarks. The President of that court occupies a position equal to that of a judge of the Supreme Court. It is not permissible for any member of this House to criticise a member of the Supreme Court bench. Most of all, I say, it is unbecoming in the head of the Crown Law Department, the Attorney General, to make a remark that would bring contempt upon, or belittle, a member of the Supreme Court bench. I could imagine the man in the street, the kerbstone critic, making a remark of the kind the Attorney General is reported to have made, but it is unthinkable that the Attorney General should offer criticism of this kind concerning the President of the Arbitration Court. I hesitate to raise the question in the absence of the Attorney General, and I am sorry he is not present. It ill-becomes him to make remarks concerning the holder of a position that is equivalent to that of a judge of the Supreme Court, and which savours of belittling the occupant of that position. It is all very well for our self-satisfied young gentleman to talk in this way, but if the remark had been made by someone on the Esplanade or in the street, the police would have taken action. I regret very much that the Attorney General should so far have forgotten himself as to have given expression to the opinion that any man occupying the position of President of the Arbitration Court had made a ridiculous statement.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—in reply) [4.38]: I was present during the debate last evening, but did not hear the remark attributed to the Attorney General. He cannot, of course, be held responsible for any mistake that may have been made by the Press. At all events, members will have an opportunity of taking up the matter on the return of the Attorney General on Tuesday next, when no doubt a full explanation will be made to the House. I agree it is right that this Chamber should maintain the dignity of our courts. We have no right to say anything that would bring ridicule on our judges in the eyes of the public. If we here do not maintain the dignity of our judges, we cannot expect anyone else to do so. I can only say that the Attorney General must have been mis-reported. I do not remember that he made the remark attributed to him, but I feel sure he will take

the first opportunity to make amends if he did say it. This is the first time I have heard about the matter. When the items are before members next Tuesday, the Attorney General will have an opportunity of making amends if he has not been incorrectly reported, and members will have the opportunity to discuss the whole matter.

Motion put and passed.

Department of the Minister for Mines (Hon. J. Scaddan).

*Vote—Mines, £102,564:*

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [4.40]: The Estimates of expenditure of the Mines Department and one or two sub-departments do not vary materially from the actual expenditure of last year, except that they show a reduction of approximately £2,000. The activities of the department are centred largely upon the production of gold, although it is charged also with the responsibility of administering all matters affecting base metals, coal, and, if we are fortunate enough to discover it, oil. At the moment the most important feature of its activities is gold mining. It can be said that of all the industries in this State, and in Australia, the mining industry is the most prosperous. It is prosperous not only because gold has always been looked upon as a commodity which is readily marketable, but also because it maintains its market value. Fortunately, from the standpoint of the State and I believe of Australia as a whole, at present gold has an enhanced value. This is evidenced because of the ready market for it and the keenness of the demand for it. The producers have had the benefit of that demand and the additional value represented by the premium in the form of the difference in the exchange rate between Australian currency and sterling. Western Australia maintains the proud position of being the premier gold producer in Australasia. Unfortunately we are not producing the same quantity, or have not been doing so in recent years, that was produced in the early history of gold production.

Mr. Marshall: Alluvial gold played a big part in the early days.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not now as abundant as reef gold. We

reached our peak year in 1903, when the output totalled 2,064,000 ounces valued at £8,770,000. The industry reached its lowest point after that date in 1929, when the output was 377,716 ounces, valued at £1,602,000. That was a very serious drop, involving over £7,000,000 in value. After 1929 the industry began to go ahead again. That was due to the fact that Australia was just entering upon what is only too well known as a depression, a state of affairs which generally gives advantage to the gold producer. In 1931 the production of gold increased to 510,372 ounces, valued at £2,972,770. I am delighted to be in a position to say that the increase in production still continues. For the first nine months of this year—the latest figures I can obtain are to the end of September—production reached a total of 448,314 fine ounces of an approximate value, including the enhanced price of gold and exchange, of £3,237,368, as against a value for the whole of last year of £2,972,770. Compared with the first nine months of 1931, the production this year has shown an increase of 93,559 ounces, and on normal values that would represent £397,626 above that recorded for the first nine months of the previous year. Based on the 72 per cent. premium, which is slightly below the percentage obtained at the moment, that would mean an increased value of £683,917 over that of the production for the first nine months of 1931. A few months ago I stated I had reason to believe that this year we would more nearly approach the production of gold valued at £5,000,000 than for some time past, and a number of people asserted that I was altogether unduly optimistic and that there was nothing to warrant my making that statement. As a fact, the average monthly output for the first nine months of this year has been 50,000 ounces in round numbers. The actual production averaged 49,813 fine ounces. If that average can be maintained in the three closing months, we will have a total production of 597,756 ounces. On the other hand, there has been a gradual increase monthly and I happen to know that extra efforts are being made at the moment because of the further increase in the price of gold. Therefore during the three final months we are likely to improve on that average, and I do not doubt that we shall

exceed 600,000 ounces for the 12 months. If, however, we reach 597,756 ounces only, normally that will represent a value of £2,540,463. With the premium of 70 per cent.—it will average more than that, and at the moment it is 80 per cent.—that will represent a value of nearly £4,320,000. In those circumstances, I feel confident that at the end of December it will be found that, with the extra impetus that has been given to production due to the enhanced price of gold, we shall not be short of gold recovery worth £5,000,000 for the year, as against a value of just under £3,000,000 for last year. Of course I know it was probably unwise to make such an optimistic statement at the moment I did, as we were then threatened with the loss of the gold bonus. At the same time, I rather viewed it from the standpoint that it would be a further encouragement to those who have seen fit to grant the gold bonus to continue it, because definite evidence was there that the production of a very desirable and essential commodity was being increased as the months went on. If a bonus can help by increasing the production of a commodity that can find a ready market at enhanced values, surely it is the type of production that should receive the benefit of a bonus, and those in the industry should not be discouraged by the removal of that assistance. I say most emphatically that the increased production of gold, as compared with any other commodity I know of, helped very materially in repaying the cost to the taxpayers involved in the provision of the bonus and also in the production of other commodities by making available the essentials to enable the exchange and marketing of those commodities. Instead of there being any complaint against such a statement relating to the possibility of gold production increasing to the extent I indicated, a contrary attitude should have been adopted and should have stimulated those in charge of the government of Australia to continue essential assistance to encourage the production of a commodity that we all desire shall be augmented. Increased production was largely helped by virtue of the fact that the British Government's going off the gold standard enabled commodities to be placed on the markets of the world. With the exchange rate in our favour, the increased production of gold has been of tremendous

benefit to the State as a whole. It represents one of those happenings in the history of a country that is not appreciated in a sense. I have often said that if a Government should take action to prevent some difficulty arising, no one ever suggests that anything worthy of notice has been done. On the other hand, if, after an evil is apparent and difficulties have actually arisen, a Government should take action to cope with that situation, they receive a fair amount of public applause. The same thing applies to the stimulation of an industry such as that relating to goldmining. It is not easy for the people at the moment—I refer to the great bulk of the population—who live in close contact with industries that have suffered seriously on account of the depreciation and are no longer able to produce at profitable prices, to realise what the increased production of gold means to the State as a whole. When I point out that in a little over two years the number of men employed in the mining industry has increased by more than 78 per cent., or, in actual figures, by 3,223 additional men, it can be seen what has been happening in the State. We can realise what has occurred in that industry by comparing it with others that have suffered severe blows, due to the depression. If the goldmining industry, instead of employing additional men and increasing its production, had fallen away to the extent that the pastoral, timber and wheatgrowing industries have done, it is hard to visualise what might have happened here.

Mr. Marshall: You have referred merely to the wages men, but what about those who are out prospecting, for instance?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I appreciate that fact; I have been referring so far merely to those actually employed in the mining industry. If the industry had not received the benefit of the enhanced price of gold and the exchange rate, but had been carried on as it was in 1929, without any variation, it would have meant that we would have had to provide for an additional 3,223 men quite apart from those who have to receive assistance today. That would be in addition, also, to those who are now out prospecting and are not accounted for as being employed in the goldmining industry.

Mr. Marshall: If my information is correct, a large percentage of the men employed on the Golden Mile came from the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think that is correct.

Mr. Marshall: A fair percentage.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Possibly there were a few from the Eastern States, but I do not think most of them came from those parts.

Mr. Marshall: Take the position at Wiluna. A large proportion of those employed there migrated from the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe a fair number came from other places than the Eastern States, but that does not alter the position much from the State's point of view. If the men are in employment, and are engaged in producing a commodity of value to Western Australia, and so are enabling trade and commerce to be carried on with increasing activity, then the employment of those men is beneficial to the State as a whole. Quite apart from that, however, in the circumstances I have outlined there would have been that additional 3,223 men who would have had to be cared for by the State and to that we may add another 50 per cent. representing those who would lose their employment but who to-day are engaged in providing the wherewithal to enable the men on the mines to be maintained. So to the 3,223 men who have been added to the list of those employed in the gold mines, we can include another 2,000 men. It means therefore that there are over 5,000 additional men who are on full-time work at basic rates, and that is of tremendous advantage to the State.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: When I said that, when discussing the employment question, and asked for additional assistance for the mining industry, my suggestion did not receive much consideration.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is quite easy to say that an industry of so much value is deserving of encouragement. The trouble is that I have never yet known a period in the history of the industry when the same thing has not been said. When the industry was declining,

from 1903 to 1929, everyone said that the State should do its best to encourage the industry to revive.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: No.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The object of the assistance was to keep people in employment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Now when we find the industry is enjoying complete prosperity compared with other industries, it is suggested that the State should do even more. The trouble is that the State can assist any industry from either one of two sources only. It can assist from loan funds or from revenue. If it is desired to assist from loan funds, that means going on the open market to raise a loan, and we cannot do that.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: You would have to provide for the men anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not wish to argue that point at this stage. The fact remains that the assistance can be rendered only from those two sources. While other industries are on the bread line, and some are below it, it is not easy to obtain revenue either in the form of direct taxation or through payment for services rendered. It can be said on behalf of the mining industry that its development of recent years has been largely without assistance from the Government. As a matter of fact, we have had to withdraw some assistance that we did furnish the industry, as the Leader of the Opposition knows full well. The burden has now fallen upon the industry itself to provide for its expansion where previously it was assisted from the general revenue of the State. While that is so, it is all the more satisfactory to know that the outlook is quite equal to what it was a few months ago, and to-day is perhaps even better. The Golden Mile has been completely revived during the last 12 months. Hon. members will know that for a number of years past a very definite feeling existed amongst those in a position to speak, that what was required there was an amalgamation of interests in order to enable capital to be found for the provision of more up-to-date methods of mining and treatment. It is pleasing to know that, due to the circumstances I have already mentioned, particularly the increased value of

gold, a satisfactory amalgamation has been effected between several mines at Kalgoorlie and additional capital has been found to provide the necessary up-to-date mining and treatment methods.

Mr. Marshall: Wiluna is the best example in that regard.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I admit that, but Wiluna is different from the conditions that have obtained at Kalgoorlie. Wiluna started off with practically no previous mining of any great magnitude at that centre. It had not reached the point even of exhausting the oxidised ore, the free milling ore, which went to a depth of only about 100 feet. The balance of gold-producing ore below that level had not been touched. But in Kalgoorlie we had got down to very great depths, and under conditions which I do not think would be acceptable in mining practice to-day. However, different methods have been adopted, which is very satisfactory. The falling-off in the grade ore, together with the inefficient methods previously prevailing had made it look as if we were coming to the end of mining operations on the Golden Mile, but with the introduction of additional capital, more up-to-date plant and more extensive operations, quite a new life has been given to the Golden Mile, and to-day the outlook is brighter than at any period during the last 25 years.

Mr. Patrick: That depends on the maintenance of the present price.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. I am glad of that interjection, because it voices a feeling which apparently exists in a great part of our community, namely, that the gold-mining industry is actually living on the increased price of gold. That is not so. The industry has in large measure used up the increased return on the product for the purpose of improving methods of mining and the plant, with the result that if to-morrow we went back to a normal price of gold most of the mines on the Golden Mile would be in an infinitely better position than they have been in at any time during the last 25 years. Take the Lake View and Star. Presently I will give figures from the Sons of Gwalia mine, which in recent years was almost at the point of being scrapped.

Mr. Marshall: They were salvaging it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but the member for Hannans, as Minister for Mines, to his very great credit went to their assistance by providing sufficient funds to enable them to do additional developmental work, with the result that to-day the mine has ahead of it many years of life on a profitable basis.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: I know it gave the member for Hannans a headache trying to find the money for them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know of anything which has been better worth while. Any assistance on a scale such as that must give the person providing it a headache, because it involves tremendous risk. If you lend a man a pound when you have only 10s., you have occasion to worry if he fails to pay back that pound. When the member for Hannans lent them that £70,000, he must have had a headache, and if they had not been able to repay the loan that headache would have continued and even become accentuated. The Lake View and Star is probably the best example of what has been done and can be done in the revival of the industry. Those who know the history of the industry on the Golden Mile will know that for a number of years that mine had a very prosperous career. The Lake View at one time produced a ton of gold per month.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Yes, for six months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, six months on end. But apart from the fact that it was a wonderful advertisement for the State and for the mine, I do not know that it was in the best interests of the State in the long run, for they worked out a very rich chute, leaving a mass of lower grade ore, perhaps never to be recovered. The Horseshoe, the Chaffers deep lead and the Hannans Star had very chequered careers, sometimes producing profitably and at other times at a loss. But with an amalgamation of all those leases, the introduction of up-to-date treatment plant enabled them to treat a greater tonnage per month and although the turnover on a tonnage basis was small, yet it meant a considerable profit on the year's working. The improved plant provides for increased treatment to the extent of 30,000 tons per month, and arrangements have been made which will allow them to reach 40,000 tons per month. That was a big venture, because they were not perfectly certain about the treatment

method. It is true they had Wiluna to guide them, but there was a difference in the types of ore in the two places which might have led to trouble. Actually there is a difference in the type of ore in various parts of the Golden Mile, and while one type is amenable to treatment in one mine, is not in another. However, the amalgamated leases have had a very satisfactory run, and have been able to reduce their mining and treatment costs. While I do not desire to disparage any of our mining authorities, I venture to say that the introduction of some new blood would materially serve to introduce new methods of mining. After all, if the mining methods are wrong you can do what you will in your treatment, but it will not get a continuance of profitable mining operations. The first essential is mining. After that generally it is possible to improve your treatment methods and so increase the tonnage output as to enable a small profit per ton to become a handsome profit in the course of the year.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The methods employed in the old days were then equal to perhaps the best in the world.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is true. At that period in the history of gold-mining in Western Australia it might have been claimed that we were as far advanced in methods and treatment as was any other gold-mining centre anywhere in the world. It has often been said that in British industry the cry used to be "What was good enough for grandfather is good enough for me," and I am afraid we indulged that view in this State. Still the awakening came, and it compelled those controlling our big mines in Kalgoorlie to look around for new ideas, which have since been introduced on a very satisfactory basis. And while they have made great progress in point of treatment, they have also made gratifying developments underground. At the 3,300 ft. level the Chaffers deep lead is opening up well, with every indication of values continuing at a greater depth. That is one of the most satisfactory developments in recent years on the Golden Mile, that discovery of a fairly high-grade ore at a greater depth than ever our predecessors dreamed of. So it looks as if there is still an unlimited life ahead of us in the production of gold in Kalgoorlie. The power plant is right up to date, and the only feature that depresses me is the fact that in order to operate that plant we have

to use an imported fuel. I am inclined to believe they could easily change over from oil consumption to producer gas power. On the Lake View and Star they have four 1,100 h.p. Diesel engines directly connected with the generators, and three 400 h.p. Diesel engines directly connected with the air compressors. It is a very up-to-date plant with a total capacity of 5,600 h.p. and is a credit alike to those who designed it and those who are operating it.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: What about pulverised coal for fuel?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think you can use pulverised coal in a Diesel engine. Of course it can be used for the generation of steam, but that has not been the trouble. I doubt if pulverised coal could produce steam cheaper than they have been doing by the use of firewood. But they can much more satisfactorily produce electricity with this type of engine than with the ordinary type of steam engine. And there are other difficulties, such as water and so on, and so after careful consideration they have changed over to oil fuel, which means importation.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Let us hope that pretty soon we too shall get oil.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are very much nearer to that than we were 10 years ago, and I hope that in the near future oil may be found within our own borders. I had an opportunity a fortnight ago to go out over the goldfields firewood supply line over which during the last 30 years they have carried more than 7,000,000 tons of firewood, from a place which most people imagine to be a desert. To-day they are obtaining that wood in a locality 137 miles from Kalgoorlie. When a claim was made for a reduction in the tariff on fuel oil, it was said that it was an essential commodity for the production of power in Kalgoorlie, and would become still more important because the supplies of firewood were rapidly becoming depleted. I was astonished when I heard that, and I asked the Forests Department to make a survey to see whether we were approaching that stage. The department assured me that with what might be termed natural reforestation there would appear to be many scores of years of supplies still ahead of us which could be economically obtained, and that with proper methods applied to our

forests there would be at least 250 years' supply ahead of us, and probably by that time we could consider whether the mining industry would continue any longer. As the member for Collie said when recently I told him of this, since that will see us all out we are not very much concerned. The gold mining industry has been valuable, not only by reason of the production of gold, but also by the production of firewood at the rate of 1,000 tons per day, thus constituting a very satisfactory subsidiary industry. The introduction of oil as a fuel has had the effect of reducing the output of firewood to 700 tons per day, and unfortunately the difference means a reduction in the number of men employed and a loss in the circulation of the wages they would have received. I say, therefore, that it is one regrettable feature of the introduction of what is termed more up-to-date plant. I think it can be shown that producer gas, as used by the Sons of Gwalia mine, can easily outdo oil. That mine is working on a very satisfactory basis. The cost of production, I believe, is down to that of the Lake View and Star.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Their cost of production is lower. They are producing electric power cheaper than it is produced at Kalgoorlie with a Diesel engine.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The object of introducing the plant was to generate electricity because that is the cheapest, easiest handled and most convenient way of providing all the power required, even that required underground. For a number of years one of the most costly operations on the Golden Mile, particularly on the Lake View and Star mine, was that of bailing water from the mine, but with the use of electricity and high pressure pumps the water can be bailed without inconvenience. In fact, one hardly knows that the pumping is going on. The only cost is the slight amount for attention and that of producing the electricity. If it is possible to use a local commodity, which producer gas is, and get the same results in power and at less cost, it would be infinitely better, if it were practicable, to change over from the use of an imported commodity such as oil, at any rate until we can produce oil in the State.

Mr. Marshall: They could not change over.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am advised that the type of Diesel engine being used is built in such a way that it can use crude oil or gas. Whether it would be possible to make the change-over, I do not know. However, I mention the matter of displaced men as one of the sad features. The use of the 200 tons of wood per day would mean the employment of 150 additional men, and the 150 men together with others required to supply their needs would mean the employment altogether of an extra 500 men.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: And additional railway men would be required to transport commodities for their needs.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The underground operations at the Lake View and Star have been very extensive. During the last 12 months 17,000 feet of development work has been completed. Better ventilation has been provided at the lower levels, and the main haulage ways have been connected to provide for electric traction. Instead of a man pushing a half-ton truck, the trucks are now drawn by electric power to the shaft and thence hauled to the surface, and this work is being done at much less cost than previously. Without introducing into the debate something foreign to it, I should like to say in passing that this type of machinery is all to the good. Where machinery can be used in that way, it does not cause the displacement of labour, except that it involves some men changing from one avenue of employment to another. As the cost of production per ton is reduced, additional ore bodies can be mined that would not have been mined had the costs remained high. Consequently the same amount of employment is afforded.

Mr. Marshall: It means cheaper mining.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is all a question of bringing ore of lower value into profitable working and extracting gold from ore that would be unpavable otherwise. In connecting the main haulage ways, the mine provided three drives extending from the Ivanhoe to Chaffers, a distance of 2,600 feet, in order to afford easier approach to ore bodies at different points.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Those drives are more like railway tunnels.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, they are really wonderful as compared with the drives in the mines as we knew them 20 years ago. Speaking of the outlook, this work has considerably extended the life of the Lake View and Star and the position is more hopeful than ever before in the history of the mine. Another point is that the success there achieved inspires great hope for the balance of the Golden Mile, especially when we realise that at 3,000 feet the possibilities are as great as ever. Very little work has been done below a couple of thousand feet in most of the old mines on the Golden Mile: I wish to mention the Boulder Perseverance mine, because a different method of treatment has been introduced there. The present manager, Mr. Blackett, is a metallurgist of high standing and he believes that the bromo-cyanide method is more satisfactory for the ore in that mine. He had an uphill fight before he was able to induce the company to agree to introduce the plant, because it meant the outlay of a large sum of money. Eventually the company agreed and handed over the mine to Mr. Blackett with the right to provide a treatment plant on the new bromo-cyanide system. The plant cost £62,000, and that expenditure would have been a serious matter from the standpoint of the mine, as well as that of Mr. Blackett, if it had proved a failure. I got into touch with Mr. Blackett recently, and he advised me that although the mine is not working full capacity, the 14,000 tons treated to the date of the last survey gave an average extraction of 93 per cent. That, I believe, is quite as good as any percentage obtained on the Golden Mile, and it has been achieved at a considerable reduction of cost as compared with the old treatment plant.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They estimate 7s. per ton.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: From present indications it appears to be a very satisfactory method of treatment. The plant is comparatively small. The whole of it could almost be put in the old engine room. If anyone wanted to see a heap of junk, he ought to view the old plant on the Perseverance. It covers almost the whole of the lease and one could almost get lost in the maze. The new plant has a capacity of

7,000 tons per month. It is a credit to Mr. Blackett, and I hope it will be beneficial to the production of gold on that mine. Underground, there has been very satisfactory development. At 88 feet below the 1,100 feet level, a bore intersected an ore body that gave an average assay of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ounces over a width of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet. That is an excellent development. Therefore we can say that on the Boulder Perseverance the outlook is brighter than it has been for years. Perhaps most satisfactory of all is the development at the north end. At what I call the north end is the Paringa mine. The Paringa is situated in proximity to the Brown Hill and other famous mines that have produced 28,000,000 tons of ore yielding 18,000,000 ounces of gold of a value of £72,000,000. In recent years that end of the Golden Mile has been regarded as about closed down.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Almost extinct.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: From 1910 to 1916 the Paringa company's lease, worked on a tribute, yielded 43,480 tons of ore valued at £79,519. During the present company's development work a discovery of ore was made at the 100 feet level and driven north for 323 feet, disclosing ore up to 14 feet in width carrying high values. The main shaft has been sunk to a depth of 1,300 feet and the mine is equipped with winding and hoisting machinery and all accessories. The directors of the company contemplate diamond drilling at a cost of several thousand pounds, to make a thorough survey of the ore bodies at depth. Only last week they asked the Government to allow the Government Geologist, or an officer of his department, to confer with the attorney of the company to fix the sites for the bores in order that the best possible results might be obtained. It is to the credit of the department that the company should have asked for the assistance and advice of our officers. It is evidence that they appreciate the services of the officials. I was advised by Professor Woolnough that we have in the Mines Department of Western Australia, on the mineralogical side, men probably as good as, if not better than can be found in any part of Australia, and perhaps in any part of the world.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: And do not forget that a good deal of the credit for the discoveries in the Sons of Gwalia is due to the officers of the department.



The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, that is all to the credit of the officers. Unfortunately, at the moment, they have to accept for their more than usually valuable service— a reduction in the same ratio as other officials. Although the industry is enjoying prosperity, the officers of the department, even those on the goldfields, are not receiving as much as they would be entitled to have under different conditions. However, they are not complaining, and they are doing their work well. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company also asked for the services of one of our officers, and he has been with them ever since they started operations here. All that is evidence that the officers of the department are satisfactory. The Paringa lodes are practically undeveloped, except at shallow depths. There is good reason to hope that another large gold producer is now in the making at Kalgoorlie, and that many other mines will gain a prolongation of life through the introduction of modern treatment plants, fresh discoveries, increased price of gold and the general revival in gold mining interests. It may be possible that further operations in the Paringa mine at depth will enable the company to trace the continuance further north of the lode which has produced gold to such tremendous value. Let us now proceed further north to the Sons of Gwalia mine, to which I previously referred briefly. I have told the Committee what arose out of the assistance rendered the mine by my predecessor in office. During the nine months January to September, 1932, the mine has produced and treated 107,822 tons of ore for a recovery of gold of standard value of £138,605. This recovery includes a small amount of gold from the re-treatment of 6,888 tons of sand. The old sand dump was exhausted in April, so there will be no further re-treatment. Exchange and gold premiums during the period amounted to £66,704. The profit on ordinary working expenses was £12,574, so that the gross profits amounted to £79,279. Capital expenditure accounted for £22,672, leaving a net profit for the nine months of £56,606. The total cost of mining and treatment operations was £126,030 equal to 23s. 4.53d. per ton of ore milled. That is fairly satisfactory, and is evidence of careful mining and careful treatment.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It shows very efficient management, seeing that the mine is

200 miles north of Kalgoorlie and has to bear the cost of extra railway freights, etc.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. It is pleasing to note that, during the period, the company have continued to pursue an active programme of underground development work in addition to equipping the plant and machinery with necessary additions. The company have reduced the amount of the Government loan considerably. As a matter of fact, the only money the Government have to assist the industry is that which is being repaid by the Sons of Gwalia in reduction of the advance made by my predecessor. The reports from the Inspector of Mines indicate that ventilation and working conditions underground are thoroughly satisfactory. Attention has been paid to those matters as well. In passing, may I say that under Mr. Edquist, the company have been able to establish very definitely that producer gas can be most economically used in the production of electricity. I wish to make reference to Wiluna because all eyes are on Wiluna. In recent years we have had opinions from all classes of people regarding the possibilities of Wiluna. A huge sum of money was found to develop that belt of country, and at the outset there was some criticism because of the time that elapsed before the company actually commenced operations. It was even suggested that the company were deliberately delaying the commencement of operations because they had no faith in the venture. It was said they thought that sooner or later it would break down, and it was alleged that a number of shareholders were unloading on a satisfactory market because they were not prepared to hang on until the treatment of the ore was started, lest the same trouble as was previously experienced recurred. Apart from delay that was only to be expected from the initiation of such big operations as the company undertook, mistakes could easily be made. The company had nothing to guide them. The type of ore that the company had to treat was different from any of which we had had experience. The result was that adjustments had to be made. The adjustments are being made, and it can now be stated definitely that Wiluna will remain for many years a highly satisfactory producer of gold and employer of labour. On these Estimates I do

not propose to make any reference to the State batteries, which will be dealt with under the heading of State enterprises. There again, however, we have definite evidence of increased activity by small mines operated in the main by prospectors. In the year 1930-31, as indeed for many previous years, Western Australia exported more per head of population than any of its sister States. For that year Western Australia exported to the extent of £37 per head of population, the next nearest State being Queensland with £18 per head, and the remainder of the States tailing off from £17 down to £10 per head. At present practically the whole of our gold production is exported. Taking the value of the 1931 output at £2,168,771 means that in effect £5 worth of gold per head was exported from this State. On the figures for the first six months of this year, the gold export is approximately £5 per head of population for the half-year. With a continuance of the same activity in the industry, this amount should double itself by the end of December. All these things are evidence of the tremendous value of gold mining to Western Australia. I wish to explain one item appearing on these Estimates, an item of expenditure for last year under Treasurer's Advance. I refer to the apparent loss on the exhibition of the Golden Eagle nugget. Hon. members may assume, from the figures, that there has been a loss; but that view does not put the matter correctly. The Auditor General's report shows the position more clearly. Particulars are to be found on page 63 of that report. In the Estimates a loss of £582 7s. 2d. is shown as the result of the exhibition of the nugget. This, however, is misleading, the actual position being as follows—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Purchase of nugget ..	5,435	4	2			
Loss on exhibition ..	586	7	2			
Cr.						
Proceeds of sale ..				6,647	13	1
Less expenses ..				6,024	11	4
				623	1	9
Local charities ..	213	7	1			
Eastern charities ..	67	0	2			
	280	7	3	280	7	3
Total Profit ..				£903	0	0
Vendor ..	5,435	4	2			
Travelling and other expenses ..	660	14	4			
				£6,098	18	6

From these figures I argue that the purchase and exhibition of the nugget have been highly satisfactory transactions. I leave the Estimates at that, in the belief that hon. members will realise that the Mines Department did its work as well last year as it has done that work during many years, notwithstanding an enormous development in mining activity generally, which resulted in greatly increased demands on the officials. They are entitled to receive that credit which is due to them because of the work they have performed, and because of the entirely satisfactory manner in which they have performed it.

#### MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.38]:

At the outset I tender my congratulations to the officers of the Mines Department on their work. I have invariably found those officers most obliging, efficient and enthusiastic. As representative of a mining constituency I appreciate their services most highly. They consistently endeavour to foster and develop the gold mining industry—I restrict my remarks to gold as being the only mineral found in my electorate. Perhaps I might refer to manganese, which mineral could be mined in large quantities, but unfortunately its value has declined. It is pleasing to be able to say that the gold mining industry is particularly prosperous, thanks to the increased price obtainable for the product, as the Minister has stated. There has been a concentration of effort on gold mining to furnish a livelihood for many unable to obtain other employment, by reason of the depression. Apart from the men on the wages sheets of the various mines producing gold, there is an astounding number of men engaged in the search for the precious metal. In travelling through my electorate I have been astonished to find men formerly employed in the city setting out into the wilderness to provide themselves with the wherewithal of life by means of prospecting. Some have done well. Others merely eke out an existence, but Fortune may smile upon them at any moment and richly reward them for their toil and sacrifices. I protest against the discontinuance of the gold bonus after its being paid for one year. On this subject I disagree with the Minister for Mines. I am convinced that numerous persons came here from the Eastern States, attracted by

the increased activity of mining on the Golden Mile and on the other auriferous belts of Western Australia. Having arrived here, they set themselves to secure employment, and were successful. Thus Western Australia has relieved other States of the obligation to provide these new arrivals with either sustenance or work. The Commonwealth Government have also been relieved in that respect, which fact renders the discontinuance of the gold bonus an act of peculiar unfairness. Almost needless to say, I have no prejudice against the Australians of the Eastern States; but for every Eastern Australian who obtains employment here, a Western Australian has to suffer, and probably becomes a charge on the State Government, thus adding to the large amount that has to be found by Western Australian taxpayers for unemployment relief. It is remarkable how influence can be brought to bear upon the Federal Government to grant bonuses and bounties on all kinds of products necessitating the employment of special agents to search out markets all over the world. Because Western Australia has done remarkably well in the matter of gold production, and because there is an advantage in the exchange, the Federal Government withdraw the gold bonus. Other bonused industries, however, derive advantage from the exchange. Evidently the Federal Government cannot resist the pressure of Eastern States representatives, although Western Australian representatives fail to secure recognition of our just claims. Thousands of prospectors producing gold are not producing it profitably now, and to the extent that the bonus would have benefited them Western Australia is penalised. Without prospectors the gold industry must come to a conclusion. The prospector never knows what is beyond the pick's point, and thus is always encouraged to continue. However, the withdrawal of the gold bonus has discouraged prospecting in general, and from that aspect especially I complain of the Federal Government's action. Again, the gold bonus would have been of immense value to the prospectors, to say nothing of the material value it would have been to the mines actually producing gold. To-day prospecting for gold is very different from what it was in the early days, when most of the discoveries were first made in the

way of alluvial gold. The prospectors were then running over the surface and it was for the first time, I suppose, in the history of the State, that white men had trodden those areas. It was only to be expected that big quantities of alluvial gold would be found. Those finds materially assisted to pay expenses, and to advertise the possibilities of gold being found in greater quantities in the State. That is not the position to-day: it is only on rare occasions that alluvial gold is now discovered in any quantities. Prospecting must be conducted now on a more scientific basis and here we are severely handicapped in the sense that we have not men experienced scientifically to carry on the work. To the credit of the prospectors, however, we can say that most of them are willing, self-sacrificing and most efficient. If the gold bonus had been continued, reduced as it was, the payment of it would have been of great assistance to those men fortunate enough to find gold in small quantities. Our voice of protest, however, is like one crying in the wilderness: the Federal Government have decided against us and therefore it is for the State to do the best it can to foster prospecting and keep the industry actively moving. There were quite quite a number of pessimists when Wiluna was being equipped with its plant and when extensive experimental operations were being conducted at that mine. It is remarkable what a great deal of information can be obtained regarding a gold mine from an individual who has little or no knowledge at all about gold mining. If I wanted to know anything about operations at Wiluna I had no difficulty in learning what was taking place from someone who perhaps had never seen a gold mine in his life. Such information was always available, not on the particular goldfield itself, but in the streets of Perth. I had kept a watchful eye on the construction of the plant at Wiluna and I was most interested in it, naturally. I was also interested in the development that was taking place underground, and I missed no opportunity of keeping myself au fait with what was taking place on all the occasions of my visits to Wiluna. But in Perth I was always told that Wiluna was going to be a huge white elephant, and this came from those who professed to know all about it. I would counsel those people to remain silent and not to throw a damper on development work that might be taking place in our goldmining centres. Invariably this information came from peo-

ple whose experience of mining I do not suppose extended beyond the subsoil of their gardens. I am more than pleased with the developments that have actually taken place at Wiluna, and also that the northern end of that belt of country will be developed. If development takes place on right lines, the whole of that area will prove a wonderful asset to the State. There are between 650 and 700 names on the pay sheet at Wiluna, and to gauge the actual population of the town one has only to multiply the number of paid employees by four or five and you get the total. The man underground generally carries four or five other men, women and children. So that but for the Wiluna gold mine there would have been to-day another 1,500 or 2,000 people on the dole. I was very pleased on the occasion of my last visit to notice the prosperity that prevails in that town and to learn there was a possibility of its increasing. It is the same with Meekatharra and other districts in my electorate. The time is rapidly approaching when the Big Bell, the Mararoa at Reidy's, and other mines will be actively working. I believe every effort is being made by those interested in the various leases to raise the capital that will permit of their being equipped with modern machinery. Notwithstanding the prosperity that is attending the goldmining industry, I tell the Minister that there are certain matters he should deal with immediately. The principal one is the granting of big reservations. I am not hostile to the granting of extensive areas provided that money can be found for their development within a reasonable time. There seems to be a desire, however, on the part of certain individuals to acquire very large auriferous areas and hold them out of activity and in that way prevent others from developing. The present system of granting these reservations is wrong. The Minister has power not to agree to grant concessions, but unfortunately the outside world are not aware of the granting of the concessions. An individual will approach the Minister, apply for an area and convince the Minister it is necessary that it should be granted to him. The Minister grants it. Prospectors have no knowledge of what has taken place, and if they go on any particular reservation and start prospecting, the holder may come along and say, "You are on my reserve; get off." It is astonishing that such a thing could happen. Instead of granting the reservations silent-

ly—I have no desire to be offensive when I use that word—and unknown to the rest of the community or the district, the application could be made to the warden, and if the warden was satisfied that it should be granted, he could agree to the request. The local people would then be aware of what was taking place, and if they desired to object, they could do so. Moreover, the warden would have a better idea than the Minister of the value of the area applied for, and it would be easier for him to determine whether the concession should or should not be granted. For instance, the reservation at Quinn's involves an area of 5,000 acres. That is an enormous area for one person to hold in a small place like Quinn's. The prospector is excluded from entering any part of that territory; neither is he able to say where the reservation starts or where it finishes. Consequently he is nonplussed. He is not even in a position to apply for the forfeiture of the area or any part of it because of non-compliance with the covenants of the reservation.

The Minister for Mines: Many of those areas have been abandoned for years.

Mr. MARSHALL: Take the district of Nannine. I suppose the whole of it has been prospected by thousands of men. First they found a lot of alluvial gold. Then they left and other men came and prospected and they in turn left. That has been going on for the last 25 or 30 years. The Minister granted the license, and when old Gustafsen and others who had previously been prospecting there returned to the island to have a look at it, they were astonished to find that a reservation had been granted and they could not touch it. The lessee has done nothing at all, yet he was able to exclude those men from further prospecting. That applies throughout the goldfields. Men leave a belt of country to-day but they return to-morrow. The lure of gold is the cause of that. I often talk to men in the reserves and there are men in the Old Men's Home and in the Wooroloo Sanatorium whose one desire is to get back to some place where they worked previously. Naturally, when they are able to do it, they go back. When such concessions are granted, however, those men are prevented from working.

The Minister for Mines: The lessee is raising capital to develop a territory that requires capital, and it cannot be developed in any other way.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not agree; it can be developed in many other ways. If there is a company or an individual who can bring in half a million of money to develop an area, the lease should be granted, but I object to the length of time for which such reservations have been granted. Take the Big Bell: the Government subscribed some money when Mandelstamm first took over the Big Bell and Little Bell. Alongside those leases was a reserve granted by the Mines Department because, in the process of the boring carried out by Mandelstamm, assisted by Government money, it was discovered that the deeps were out of his lease. A reservation was made something like five miles by three miles on the eastern side of the lease. All those leases plus the reservation have been held up for three years to my knowledge, and have not been touched.

The Minister for Mines: Previously they were touched, and no good could be done with them. The only method of working the Big Bell is that adopted at Wiluna, and no prospector can do that.

Mr. MARSHALL: On that the Minister and I have always disagreed. Take Wiluna: From the first we disagreed on what he was doing there, and I still argue that had the leases at Wiluna been forfeited when their forfeiture was sought, Wiluna would have been operating long before it started.

The Minister for Mines: Not at all.

Mr. MARSHALL: I shall always hold my own opinion on that. If the Minister's contention is right, he implies that the only individual who knew the value of those leases was the then lessee.

The Minister for Mines: It was not a question of the value of the leases. Everybody knew that no one could treat the ore below the oxidised zone at that time.

Mr. MARSHALL: There were mining men in Kalgoorlie at the time who endeavoured to get those leases on several occasions with the idea of raising money to work them, but they were prevented from doing so because the then lessee wanted the lion's share. He wanted as much money for the leases as was necessary to equip and develop them, and men who knew the district would not pay the price.

The Minister for Mines: You know as well as I do that different systems of treating the ore below the oxidised zone

were tried, and every one failed. Under one system, everything but the gold was recovered.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know the history of Wiluna.

The Minister for Mines: So do I.

Mr. MARSHALL: Although the then lessee floated the Wiluna leases, the first man to go there on behalf of the company that had taken over the leases was an experienced mine manager of Kalgoorlie, who years before had attempted unsuccessfully to get the leases. He did all the work. The lessee did nothing. The lessee's experience was never availed of to plan the development of the Wiluna mine. He secured a very handsome prize and came out of it very well financially.

The Minister for Mines: The State came out of it well, and that is the main point.

Mr. MARSHALL: The State would have reaped the benefit 10 years ago if the leases had not been held up.

The Minister for Mines: That is an assertion that can be disproved.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not an assertion. Let me return to the Big Bell mine. It is of no use the Minister advancing the argument that there is only one man who is able to raise money to develop those leases.

Mr. Angelo: Is he doing anything now?

Mr. MARSHALL: No.

The Minister for Mines: Of course he is.

Mr. MARSHALL: Two and half or three years ago, after having finished with the Government boring, the lessee went to England and promised the then Minister for Mines (Hon. S. W. Munsie) that he would be back with half a million of money in practically no time. Since he left, Wiluna has been developed: since he left the interest rate for money has fallen from 5 or 6 per cent to 2½ per cent. He has been in England the whole of that time—

The Minister for Mines: Wiluna got the money before him.

Mr. MARSHALL: But a lot of money has been brought in from the Old Country since then. He told the then Minister for Mines that he would be back in no time with money to equip and develop those leases. That was nearly three years ago.

The Minister for Mines: It must be over three years.

Mr. MARSHALL: Assume it is only three years. The Under Secretary for Mines told me that he had received a cable from the lessee to the effect that money and diamond drills for further boring on those leases were being brought out. If there was any prospect of the lessee raising money to develop those leases, the opportunity would have occurred during the last three years. Although he said that diamond drills and money were being brought out to continue the work, neither diamond drill nor money nor the lessee has been seen in the State since. That gentleman has had a reasonably good spin from the department.

The Minister for Mines: I do not deny that he has.

Mr. MARSHALL: I go further and say he has received too much consideration.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think so.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Mines Department would be justified in calling a halt to the concessions.

The Minister for Mines: We have not acted without consulting those in a position to advise us. You talk about cheap money in London. It was not cheap money.

Mr. MARSHALL: I say that money is now cheaper than when he went to England.

The Minister for Mines: No; the bank rate is lower, but that does not make money cheaper.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: There was a prohibition in England against sending money out of the country.

Mr. MARSHALL: I did not want to mention the name of the lessee.

The Minister for Mines: Everybody knows to whom you are referring.

Mr. MARSHALL: Having regard to the statements made by the Minister and by Mandelstamm—

The Minister for Mines: What would be the good of putting him out and putting in someone who would not do any better?

Mr. MARSHALL: If that contention is sound, we can hold out no hope of the north end of Wiluna being developed. Only recently Mr. Claude de Bernales went to England and he feels confident that he will get money to develop the north end of Wiluna. The Minister's argument is that it is of no use taking the leases from Mandelstamm, because he is in England, and may raise the

money, and is the only man who can raise the money.

The Minister for Mines: I did not say that. He has made an effort.

Mr. MARSHALL: And has failed.

The Minister for Mines: He has not failed.

Mr. MARSHALL: He has failed dismally, to my mind.

The Minister for Mines: He is trying to raise the money now.

Mr. MARSHALL: I read in the paper that two experts—

The Minister for Mines: It is the same old story that one man has something and somebody else wants it.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Give him another 12 months.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister is not fair in making that statement; I have not in mind any man who wants those leases. I have been quite fair to the Minister. Any man who could convince me that he had a chance of raising money to develop auriferous leases such as the Big Bell would receive from me reasonable time and all possible encouragement. But three or four years is not reasonable.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think that is fair. You know the conditions that have prevailed. The member for Geraldton told you that during a fair part of that period there was a prohibition against sending money here.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Or anywhere out of England.

Mr. MARSHALL: How long is it since the prohibition was lifted? Has it been lifted?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then what took Claude de Bernales Home? He is recognised as almost an expert in raising money. He has gone Home with all those reservations—and he has a lot of other concessions besides the north end of Wiluna—with the idea of raising money, and what possible hope has he of raising money if what the member for Geraldton said is correct?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: He is probably acting now so that, when the prohibition is lifted, he can get the money.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I honestly believe that when he returns he will bring back at least £5,000,000 for investment in gold mining in Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: If he succeeds, no one will be more pleased than I.

The Minister for Mines: You always criticise before the event.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is not right.

The Minister for Mines: You know there are certain low-grade propositions that can be developed only by massed production and that an aggregation of capital is necessary. How are you going to get the aggregation of capital otherwise?

Mr. MARSHALL: I argue that having given the lessee reasonable time in which to raise the money, and he having failed, the leases should be forfeited.

The Minister for Mines: He has not failed.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then I shall be pleased when a greater degree of success attends his efforts. The leases have been held for three or four years, nothing has been done, and exemption after exemption has been granted.

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

Mr. MARSHALL: No good purpose will be served by pursuing any further the subject of the exemptions that are continually granted to lessees of mining tenements. It is a wrong principle to continue granting exemptions to individuals who, though they may promise to secure money, fail to do so within a reasonable time. What is it that worries the Minister in the matter of granting those mining concessions in the same way that a lease is granted? I can see no objection to an application for a reservation going to the warden in the ordinary way, and the individual applying for a lease: but the Minister can see a lot of objections to that procedure. Very large areas are being held up because prospectors have no right to go upon them, whereas they could be granted to other applicants in the ordinary way. I am puzzled to know why the Minister cannot see that. He declares there are many things to prevent him from bringing down an amendment to the Act, or to making this alteration possible by regulation. I should like to know what trouble would ensue if people were allowed to make application to the warden for some reservation. I do not want any interference with the present procedure in regard to the forfeiture of gold mining leases, but I do want some amendment to the mining Act. If I am the lessee of a gold mining tenement or prospecting area, this may be subject to forfeiture. It must not be forgotten that most

of the leases are held in small communities where the people are all interested in each other. A friend of mine may desire to obtain the right to prospect on the lease I am holding, or to find capital to enable him to open it up. He hesitates to apply for forfeiture of the lease because he may live in the same community as I do, and on personal grounds may not wish to make the application. That sort of position has arisen on more than one occasion in my electorate. Some individual may have had the temerity to apply for the forfeiture of a lease on ground that is well within the mining laws. Thereupon the holder of the lease raises a small army to oppose the application, and the person who wants the forfeiture raises another small army of people around him. A miniature warfare thereupon ensues, and nothing but abuse goes on between the two factions. I do not object to that sort of thing, but I do want the Minister to embody in the mining Act a section to provide that an inspector of mines may call upon the lessee of any land, that is the subject of a gold-mining tenement or prospecting area, to show cause why the lease should not be forfeited. If an individual living in the town did not want to apply for the forfeiture of a particular lease, he could then inform the inspector of mines that the property was not being worked according to the mining laws. The inspector could then examine the lease, and if satisfied that the Act was not being complied with, he could call upon the lessee to show cause why forfeiture should not ensue. Surely the Minister <sup>may</sup> rec that no complications would arise if the Act were amended in this direction.

The Minister for Mines: That is no new idea.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have never been able to prevail upon any Minister for Mines to consider seriously such an amendment.

The Minister for Mines: What would you do after forfeiture: to whom would you give the prior right?

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned about prior rights. When an inspector called upon a man to show cause why a lease should not be forfeited, no prior right should enter into the question. The lease would then be open to anyone to apply for. If no application was made, and the holder of the lease did not comply with the terms under which it was issued to him, it would

revert to the Crown, which could then invite applications for it. That is the sort of thing that happens in the case of any other land that is taken over from the Crown. I can see no objection to an amendment of that sort being embodied in the Act. The Minister knows that because men become closely associated with each other in these small places a good deal of auriferous country is held up. A man may have a lease and neglect to work it. No one will apply for the forfeiture because that person already holds the lease. He may be asked to surrender it in favour of somebody else, but if he refuses no one has the temerity to apply for its forfeiture. In that way the land is held up. I have asked previous Ministers to give consideration to this suggestion with a view to overcoming the difficulty that arises through small communities being divided into two armies, and carrying on a sort of miniature warfare. I cannot see why anybody should object to such an amendment. No lease would be forfeited unless there had been a breach of the covenant. If people have not complied with the terms upon which they took over a lease, they are not entitled to hold it any longer. I hope the Minister will go carefully into the matter. I agree that the Government have assisted to a small extent by granting sustenance to those who are prepared to go out prospecting. The payments have been at the rate of 10s. a week. This has been granted in the same way as ordinary outdoor relief is granted to someone who does nothing at all. True, the prospector gets 3s. a week more. The allowance is made to him so that he can go out prospecting, merely for the purpose of keeping him engaged in following up a healthy occupation in the hope that he may discover something beneficial to himself and the State. The Mines Department has done nothing directly to assist the prospector beyond providing him with transport and other equipment necessary for the work. The old system of giving sustenance to prospectors has been done away with. Very little, if any, sustenance has been granted since the present Government took office. The usual argument advanced by the department, when I have put in an application for sustenance for prospectors, has been that no money is available. I admit that money is not available

from the source from which it used to come. In reply to a question I asked some days ago as to what amount had been repaid to the department by gold mining companies representing loans which had been made to them some years ago, the Minister for Mines informed me, in effect, that something like £48,000 had been repaid in the last two years. The Government have been in office very little longer than that time, but none of this money has yet gone to prospectors in the way of sustenance.

The Minister for Mines: It did not come from them in the first place.

Mr. MARSHALL: No. That money came from Loan funds.

The Minister for Mines: Not much of it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Quite a lot of it did.

The Minister for Mines: Very little of it came from that source. Most of it came from the grant for the development of mining.

Mr. MARSHALL: It was not right that the Government should take money which was earmarked for the gold mining industry, and has since been repaid, and put it into Consolidated Revenue, when some of it should have gone back to the prospectors.

The Minister for Mines: It could not go into Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. MARSHALL: Where has it gone?

Mr. Kennelly: The Minister must have it.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not accusing the Minister of taking it.

The Minister for Mines: You are more charitable than most people.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not put that up as an argument. The Government have not been lending money as they used to do in years gone by. The sum of £48,000 has now been repaid, but none of it has been expended on the industry in my electorate.

The Minister for Mines: It has all been expended, and some of it in your electorate, such as in the case of the Cue battery.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know that is in course of construction. It would have been a generous act on the part of the Government if they had used some of this money to assist prospectors. If we do not foster the industry it will become extinct. The responsibility for its prolonged life rests upon the shoulders of the prospectors. The position is acute. It is all very well to argue that because gold is bringing an enhanced price, everyone in search of it must be doing well.



The Minister for Mines: There must always be some people on the bread line.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. Whilst some people are in a favourable position, those who are in search of prospects which may yield gold are in no way blessed by the enhanced price of that commodity. People of the latter description are facing a difficult situation. Every application for sustenance on the part of prospectors that I know of has been refused on the score that funds are not available.

The Minister for Mines: Last year we spent £24,293 in sustenance of that sort.

Mr. MARSHALL: Not an application from my electorate was favourably considered. I believe there were one or two expeditions in which sustenance and equipment were given, but in my electorate all were rejected. The Minister knows the situation as well as I do. When a man is prospecting for gold, even though he may be getting small quantities of it, he is not enjoying himself to any great extent as a result of the enhanced value of gold, because he is not getting enough of it. And then there are scores of men prospecting and getting no gold. We must encourage prospecting. It is heartening to see men who formerly held fairly good positions in the city roughing it in the bush as prospectors. They find that occupation more arduous because of their previous pursuits. They are the kind of men we want to encourage, and they ought to be shown every consideration. As to the operations of the State batteries, I object to the deletion of the 25 tons free crushing.

The Minister for Mines: That can be discussed on the vote for State batteries.

Mr. MARSHALL: I accept the Minister's suggestion. I repeat my appreciation of the enthusiasm and energy displayed by officers of the Mines Department. I note that notwithstanding the enormous increase in the work of the department, there has been next to no increase in the staff. I sincerely hope that the staff at Wiluna has been increased, because the officer in charge there has to be a sort of human encyclopaedia, doing every description of work. That officer is an acquisition to the district as well as to the department, and deserves the greatest credit for the manner in which he carries out his duties.

MR. NULSEN (Kanowna) [7-48]: I have spent nearly all my life on the gold fields; in fact, I was the second white boy at Wiluna. I grew up on the gold fields with the member for Murchison. My electorate comprises the huge belt of auriferous country from Laverton to Norseman. The Minister has stressed the importance of the gold mining industry, which has done most to keep the State solvent, and which of all our primary industries is the only one that is paying. Prospectors put up with a great deal of work, worry and trouble, and any assistance the Minister can render them is greatly appreciated. The carting allowance in vogue during the Collier regime should be reinstated. Although small, it enabled many prospectors to carry on. The same remark applies to crushing facilities. Such allowances help in the prospecting of new areas and that leads to discoveries of the greatest benefit to the State as a whole. Gold has played and continues to play a great part in the history of Western Australia. The present problem is to distribute the wealth produced, and to this end gold is an important factor. A gold discovery of first-rate importance would end all our troubles straightaway. To refuse assistance to prospectors is a penny wise, pound foolish policy. When visiting Salmon Gums recently, we had several requests for water supplies. Prospectors at Larkinvile are now limited to three gallons per day. The extra cost of additional water being so slight, to restrict a man to three gallons is needlessly to discourage the mining industry. Three gallons will not allow water to wash dishes, to say nothing of washing one's clothes at the end of the week. Four gallons per day should be the minimum. In the past the carting allowance has been exploited, but that difficulty can be overcome by imposing a minimum of 2 dwts. to the ton. If the stuff proves below 2 dwts. in value, there should be no assistance towards carting. The minimum would prevent exploitation. At the last general election there were stated to be 1,840 voters in the constituency; but after going through the district we found that another thousand names could easily have been added to the roll, more than half the persons concerned being on the goldfields. I appeal to the Minister to give every con-

sideration to mining, and especially to prospectors who open up the country and thus lead to the introduction of capital, providing employment for many who otherwise would be on the dole.

**MR. ANGELO** (Gaseoyne) [7.57]: In introducing the Mines Estimates to the Committee the Minister not only made a fine speech but gave members most interesting and valuable information. I was indeed pleased to see the former Minister for Mines, who controlled the department for many years, applaud the present Minister at the conclusion of his remarks. In the interests of Australia the information furnished by the Minister should be broadcast, not only throughout this State, and not only throughout Australia, but also in the Old Country. At present interest rates in the United Kingdom are very low indeed, and therefore now is the time to persuade monied people to develop this State's huge mineral resources. I am perfectly certain that not even one per cent. of the business people of Britain know what we have in Australia. I thought I had kept myself well informed regarding the development of our goldfields, but some of the information given by the Minister for Mines was quite new to me. That information should be sent Home with an intimation that although Australia is known as a gold-producing country, Western Australia produces 88 per cent. of the total Australian output. The British people should also be informed that in our North-West there are hundreds of mines at present inactive, awaiting funds for their development. If these matters were made known at Home, Western Australia would have an influx not only of people, but also of money. Very often, when I read "The Times" and other English papers, I notice articles about the development of various industries in other Dominions, but very seldom do I see any article on the development of industry in Western Australia. I really think it would be good business if the Government were to take advantage of the speech delivered by the Minister for Mines this afternoon, amplify it with further information, especially regarding the number of mines that could be developed profitably, and send the information to our energetic Agent-General with a view to having some

of it disseminated throughout the United Kingdom.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH** (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [8.1]: I join in the satisfaction expressed by the Minister concerning the healthy condition of the gold mining industry. It is gratifying to know, not only in the interests of the industry itself but of the State generally, that those conditions exist. It would be difficult to visualise the position generally throughout Western Australia to-day were it not for the fact that the industry is prospering, and that Western Australia is furnishing at least 70 per cent. of the gold production of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Angelo: The percentage is nearer 88.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH:** During the war period, the gold mining industry declined. That was due not alone to the fact that there were declining values in the mines themselves or that the gold was less valuable, but to the circumstance that the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of providing finance successfully to prosecute the war, departed from the intrinsic currency then in operation and introduced a representative currency of a considerably depreciated value. Although the value of gold itself did not decline during that period, the Federal Government, by means of their policy, deprived the industry of the increased value of gold in the terms of the currency then circulating. Ultimately that deprivation by the Commonwealth of a vast amount of wealth that should have accrued to the industry, was largely responsible for its decline. The industry owes a lot to the late James Gardiner, a one-time Treasurer of this State, who was the first Parliamentary representative to draw attention to the fact that the gold mining industry was being deprived of a value that rightly belonged to it. Eventually those associated with the industry were successful in securing the right to sell gold through the Gold Producers' Association and to enjoy the premium that should have been theirs practically throughout the war period. It is rightful compensation to the industry that to-day those in control are in a position to enjoy the results of the economic conditions that recompense them in a measure for the unfair burden imposed upon them during the war period. There is no question but that the economic conditions prevailing to-day are highly favourable to the goldmining industry and much of its prosperity results from that source. Owing to the incentive

that the premium has given to production and development, new life has been given to the industry, due to discoveries resulting from the development that has taken place. We can safely say that many mines on the Golden Mile, through development and improved plant, are in a position still to work on a payable basis, even if gold were to revert to the original mint price of £4 4s. 11½d. per fine oz. I was pleased to note that the Minister gave due recognition to the fact that the gold-mining industry, particularly on the Golden Mile, has not taken advantage of the premium solely for the purpose of creating profits and paying dividends. A vast proportion of the profits won during the past few years has gone back into the industry. New treatment plants have been erected, and a considerable quantity of developmental work has been undertaken. Last year, out of £3,000,000 gained from the production of gold, £53,000 only was paid out in the form of dividends. That shows that the mining companies have due regard not only for their own interests but for those of the State, and desire to develop their properties so as to win all the wealth that can be obtained by proper development and methods of management. However, I am sorry that, though the mining companies are pursuing a policy that is in the interests of all concerned, the Government have seen fit to cut out the water and other concessions that the companies formerly enjoyed. It should be remembered that the vast undertakings in connection with the new plant have not been completed, but are in the transition stage, and I regret all the more that the Government have felt compelled, probably for financial reasons, to deprive the industry of those concessions, particularly that relating to water supplies. I notice that the Goldfields Water Supply Department showed a profit last year of over £5,000, and this year are budgeting for a profit of £68,000. While I know the department have been reimbursed from the Mines Development Vote, in view of the fact that a profit of £68,000 is anticipated during the current year, the Government could very well have made arrangements for the water concession to have been continued.

The Minister for Mines: The profit you refer to would not be nett.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Yes, according to the financial returns. I notice that, after paying interest and sinking fund charges on the supplementary capital cost, covering

renewals and extensions, the department are budgeting for a profit of £68,000.

The Minister for Mines: The accumulated loss stands at £1,187,000.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I know that is so. I am also aware that a certain proportion was paid out of revenue, but the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme represents an undertaking the value of which cannot be assessed on the basis of the direct returns from it. That scheme enabled wealth that existed to be won from the Golden Mile, and in return created the possibility of agricultural development throughout the State. That fact is scarcely appreciated. Another feature I wish to touch upon has reference to the inspectors of mines. The staff has been seriously depleted and I do not think that is desirable in view of the fact that the number of men employed in the industry has increased so appreciably. The State Mining Engineer, in his report for the year 1931, stated—

Since March, 1930, my staff has been reduced by four officers, that is, Assistant State Mining Engineer, one inspector and two workmen's inspectors, and the field work is now being carried out by the senior inspector, Mr. W. Phoenix, four inspectors, Messrs. A. W. Winzar, E. J. Gourley, H. P. Rockett and J. McVee, two workmen's inspectors, Messrs. L. C. D'Arcy and R. P. McMenamin, and a newly appointed officer to assist with dust and ventilation work, Mr. E. E. Brisbane.

Since then Mr. Gourley has left, so that makes one less. Recently applications were called for the position of district inspector, but, after the applications were received, no appointment was made. I do not know whether those responsible for the appointment of the inspector considered that those who applied had not sufficient qualifications for the position, but it is quite possible that they were guided by the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act governing the appointment of inspectors. They may have submitted the candidates to the examination prescribed for district inspectors. If that were so, I consider it almost impossible to fill a position carrying a salary of £346 a year by securing a man possessing all the qualifications set out as necessary for the position. To my mind, the most essential knowledge that should be possessed by an inspector of mines should be that gained from length of experience in underground work. He might possibly require to have some knowledge of mine surveying, but why should he be required to have a knowledge

of metallurgy, ore dressing and sampling, mining geology or arithmetic, or mensuration of lines, surface and solids, book-keeping and mining accounts? I do not consider those qualifications are necessary for inspectors of mines at all. We notice from the inspector's report that there are only two workmen's inspectors for the vast district extending from Norseman to Wiluna. In those circumstances it is impossible for a workmen's inspector to do justice to his position for a salary of £346 per annum. It is cheeseparing to deny the miners the protection that another workmen's inspector on the Golden Mile would give them. Last year the percentage of accidents showed very little reduction as against previous years. During the year there were 169 serious accidents in the East Coolgardie district alone, and 13 fatal accidents. Although the percentage over the years from 1927 to 1931 has not varied very much, I do not think we can pride ourselves on that achievement; we could pride ourselves only if we found that the number of fatal and serious accidents on the mines was reducing each year, as it should be, as the result of proper supervision in the industry. We find that those accidents are practically the same in number year by year, and in fact show a tendency to increase. There is no reason why there should have been 169 serious accidents in the East Coolgardie district last year and 13 fatal accidents. There seems to be a practice on the Golden Mile to put into responsible positions men who have not had very much experience. To put on a lot of new chum miners lends force to the contention that the inspectorial staff should be considerably increased, not only district inspectors, but workmen's inspectors also. Another feature in the industry is the tendency to put into responsible positions, such as shift bosses, men who have not had any lengthy experience in the industry. In my opinion a man should have at least 10 years' underground experience of Western Australian mining before being appointed to such a post. But nowadays there are shoved into shift bosses' positions men who have had only two or three years' experience. Under the coal mining regulations a man has to have some qualifications before he becomes an over-man, which I take it is a similar position to that of shift boss in the gold-mining industry. The inspector in his report submits an examination paper giv-

ing a significant indication of the qualifications required in a man to be appointed to an over-man's position in the coal mining industry. I take it those qualifications are insisted upon in the interests of the men who work in the coal mines. Similar provisions should obtain in the gold mining industry to ensure that new chums and others lacking experience should not be given supervising positions in a mine. I join with the member for Murchison in protesting against the cutting out of sustenance for single men prospecting, and against the niggardly fashion in which sustenance has been advanced for prospectors generally. I do not know whether the Government intend to pursue that policy. Only 10s. a week has been allowed to prospectors, and in some instances only 7s. a week. Yet those men are out doing a real service to the community. The only hope we have of finding a new gold mine is through the exploratory work of the prospector, who does the pioneering and submits to all the hardships entailed in prospecting. The least the Government might do is to reconsider their attitude in respect of sustenance for prospectors, for I believe that if that sustenance were more readily given it would well repay the Government. But if it is the policy of the Government to deny sustenance to single men who desire to go out prospecting, and to cut down sustenance to prospectors generally, it can only be regarded as an unfortunate policy. I wish to make a suggestion to the Minister. Nowadays a lot of small companies are being formed for mining development. In another place a goldfields member drew attention to the fact that these small mining development companies raise a certain amount of capital, the bulk of which is supposed to be used in mining development. He rightly pointed out that in many instances a large amount of the capital raised is eaten up in office and other overhead expenses. I suggest to the Minister that with a view to assisting men to get employment he make an offer to those small companies that where they spend from £1,000 to £3,000 in development work he will subsidise them to the extent of, say, 10s. per week for every man they employ in development work. That would be an incentive to those companies to spend a fair amount on development work and at the same time would create employment for a large number of men. The prospects of the

gold-mining industry are very bright. I know there is a possibility that the international conference to meet in London shortly to consider the monetary position may decide to break away from gold altogether and use something else as a standard of currency, which would be disastrous. However, I have little fear of that happening, for I know that gold has peculiar qualities as a basis of currency, and there is very little possibility of any substitute being found for it. Senator Sir Hal Colebatch in a recent letter to the "West Australian" said that the best opinion tends to the reduction of the gold content of the sovereign, which is now 113 grains of fine gold. According to the Senator, in all probability that will ultimately be fixed at 90 grains. If that comes about, the price of gold will never again drop below £5 per oz. The outlook generally for gold-mining is a very healthy one. There are one or two other matters, such as State batteries, which I should have liked to have touched upon, but I understand I will have an opportunity to do so later.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Council of Industrial Development, £921; State Labour Bureau, £3,604—agreed to.*

*Vote—Police, £204,228:*

**HON. P. COLLIER** (Boulder) [8.25]: Will the Minister take the House into his confidence and say just what is the intention of the Government in regard to the control of the police force? Although there is no regulation retiring age for the Commissioner of Police, I understand the present Commissioner was appointed for a term of years which has nearly expired. Will the Minister say whether it is intended to appoint the present Commissioner for a further term in office, or whether it is intended to make a change? I think the House is entitled to know just what is in the minds of the Government in this regard.

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [8.27]: The Commissioner will shortly reach what is generally accepted as the retiring age, namely, 65 years. I have not yet consulted Cabinet on

the question of continuing the Commissioner in office or alternatively appointing a new Commissioner. As soon as the matter has advanced far enough to submit it to Cabinet a public announcement will be made. I realise that what is in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition is that we should make as little disturbance as possible in the control of a very important department. Personally, I think we would do well by appointing the Commissioner for a further period. Whether or not he would be prepared to accept a further term, I cannot say. Cabinet will have to decide upon what course is to be followed. The Commissioner realises that if required to do so he must retire, but as the Leader of the Opposition has said, there is no specific time at which he should retire, for the period fixed in the regulations does not apply to the Commissioner. When a decision is arrived at a public statement will be made.

**MR. H. W. MANN** (Perth) [8.29]: Like the Leader of the Opposition I am very much interested in the position, for the reason that for nearly a quarter of a century I was connected with the police force. I served under the present Commissioner, first when he was an inspector and then subsequent to his appointment as Commissioner. Amongst a dozen men we may not find one suitable for the commissionership. Many traits of character are required in a man to fill this very difficult position. I doubt whether there is another position in the Government service that necessitates the tact, diplomacy, personality and general control that is required of the Commissioner. He needs to have a general knowledge of public opinion; he must be a man in whom the public have confidence—from time to time he is called upon to act at once under conditions delicate and difficult—and he must have the confidence of his officers and men. The Commissioner has been in the force for close on 40 years and has risen from the rank of ordinary constable to the highest post in the service. There has never been any suggestion against his administration, and that is due to his aptitude for the position arising out of his long training. Some of the other States have speculated or taken the risk of going outside the service for a Commissioner, and I do not think the experiment has been a success in any instance. If the Commissioner desires

to retire, it will be the duty of the Government to appoint a successor, but I am doubtful whether they will be able to find anyone outside the service with a knowledge of the intricacies of the position. Only through long service can a man realise the responsibilities of the office. There may be an officer with long military service or long association with the Public Service, but he could not possess the experience required of a Commissioner of Police. During industrial troubles, the Commissioner should be able to discharge his duties in a manner to win the confidence of both sides to the dispute. Such troubles occurred while I was in the service, but there was never a suggestion that the Commissioner exceeded his duty or embarrassed either his officers or his men.

Mr. Marshall: What age is the Commissioner?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Approaching 65.

Mr. Marshall: We have appointed men who were older than that to important positions.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am not speaking in favour of his retirement. If he is inclined to continue in office, I suggest that his services be retained. He is still full of vigour, and has experience to guide him in the discharge of the duties for many years. If he retires of his own volition, I hope the officers of the police force will be considered before any appointment is made from outside the service.

Mr. Marshall: That would exclude any possibility of your becoming Commissioner.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I hope to be here for some years to combat the hon. member's efforts.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have got a job.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I merely desire to inform the Committee of the difficulty of the position. Two of the other States took the risk of appointing a Commissioner from outside the service, but such men cannot understand what is required of their subordinates.

Mr. Marshall: Do you think a majority of the force would agree with your contention?

Mr. H. W. MANN: If a vote of the whole of the members of the force were taken to-morrow, they would favour the appointment of a Commissioner from

within the service. I am sure there are officers within the service capable of taking the position. It might as well be suggested that a man without previous experience could take the position of chief engineer in the Works Department.

Mr. Marshall: Such a man would be an engineer.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Any candidate for the commissionership should be a police officer. A man might learn to be an engineer in a shorter time than it would take to become a police officer.

Mr. Marshall: He would only need to learn the routine.

Mr. H. W. MANN: A police officer must be au fait with Acts of Parliament, know how to control men, and know how to overcome the hundred-and-one difficulties that arise, and such knowledge can come only from years of experience.

Mr. Kenneally: If there are competent men in the service, the perquisites of the service should be open to them.

Mr. H. W. MANN: There are men who have given loyal service and who look to the chance of reaching the highest position.

Mr. Marshall: Quite a lot of them fail.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I trust the present Commissioner will continue, but if he desires to retire, I hope the Government will hesitate before selecting a man from outside the service.

*[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]*

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [8.40]: The time is overdue when legislation should be introduced to create an appeal board for the police. It has been promised for a considerable time. On one occasion an attempt was made to concede the request, but owing to an amendment having been passed that was considered objectionable to the Government, the measure was defeated. If legislation of a similar kind were introduced now without the objectionable amendment, I think it would receive support and would be acceptable to the force. I thought the Minister would have introduced such legislation this session, but we have not heard of it. Do the Government intend to introduce it this session? I am afraid there will be no time, owing to the congestion of business. This is regrettable because the matter of an appeal board agitates the mind

of nearly every member of the force, and I feel sure that the Commissioner is not opposed to legislation so long as the question of promotion is excluded. Such legislation would be a step towards satisfying all concerned. I should like to hear what the Government's intentions are.

**MR. KENNEALLY** (East Perth) [8.42]: The Minister said that Cabinet had not decided whether the Commissioner would be continued in office, and he pointed out that there was no retiring age for the service. I wish to deal with a principle, and not with any particular officer. In another service under the control of the Minister, no retiring age is provided for wages or salaried men, but the Minister is insisting upon the wages men retiring at the age of 65.

The Minister for Police: I do not think you are justified in putting it that way.

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: I am.

The Minister for Police: Then I say you are not, because it is the men's own request.

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: It is not. The Minister knows that the men waited on him as a deputation to protest against the decision to retire them.

The Minister for Police: What men?

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: The wages men.

The Minister for Police: Only the men interested, not the unions. Do I understand you to say that the railway unions are desirous of abolishing that regulation?

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: The Minister need have no doubt as to what the railway unions placed before him. They protested against his retiring men unless some provision were made for them after they had retired. Had not the question of retirement been raised, and had not the principle involved other departments. I would not have mentioned the Commissioner of Police. If it is reasonable to insist upon men on the wages staff retiring at the age of 65, and giving them a month's notice before that time so that they will not stay in the service a day longer, it is not fair to keep salaried men on the staff beyond the retiring age when they have pensions to retire upon. There ought to be some system in operation, something that will enable everyone to say, "That is the policy to apply all round." We are not justified in saying to a member of the wages staff, "Willy-nilly, when you are 65 you must leave the service." To other officers,

whether it is the Commissioner or someone else occupying a high position with an equivalent salary, we say "You can stay on." Men on the wages staff are being given notice before they reach the age of 65 in order that they may be got out of the service in good time. Some uniform system should be adopted. There should be no rigid rule whereby one set of men are sent out of their jobs before they reach the retiring age, and another set are allowed to remain.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland) [8.48]: I should like to refer to the recent raid on what was alleged to be an organisation of communists. Certain homes were visited by the police. I do not know whether this was done under the direction of the State Government, or at the request of the Federal Government. In the case of one home in which I am particularly interested, the police took away quite a lot of literature and a number of books. There was no need to remove the books, because there was nothing of an incriminating nature connected with them. The police, however, did not hesitate to take these as well as all kinds of literature. I do not know whether they found anything of real value for their purpose, but I do know that nothing has yet been returned.

The Minister for Police: I do not know to what home you are referring.

**Hon. W. D. JOHNSON**: It is not advisable that I should make the name public, but the Minister should say who initiated the raid, what its object was, and why it was not carried out in a more considerate manner.

**Mr. H. W. Mann**: You are not in favour of the communistic gospel, are you?

**Hon. W. D. JOHNSON**: That is not the point. I object to the homes of peaceful members of the community and law-abiding citizens being raided by the police. A person may be suspected and he called upon to explain something. That might occur to me. I do not always follow the crowd. I have been victimised before because I have held views which did not fit in with those of the public. Every reform movement brings with it a certain amount of hostility on the part of those in authority. It is, however, possible to take these steps in such a way as to minimise the irritation that is

caused to those who are raided. This raid was ill-considered. Possibly the police carried it out as they were directed, but those behind it had little conception of what was due to the people of Western Australia. I am prepared to give the Minister the names of the people to whom I have referred, and would then ask him to take steps to see that the books which have been removed, and are of no value to the police, are returned. If the local police were responsible for the raid, I must say that it could have been carried out in a more considerate manner, and the same results achieved without the irritation that was actually caused.

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands—in reply) [8.52]: I would not have replied to the debate, but for the remarks of the member for Guildford-Midland. The so-called raid made upon certain persons suspected of being connected with an organisation which had been declared to be illegal under the Commonwealth law, was not made by any direction given by me, or so far as I know, by any member of Cabinet. I only learned of the raid after it had occurred. It would be very inadvisable for a Minister to adopt the attitude of instructing the Commissioner for Police when and how he should act. This gives me the opportunity of telling members and the public generally that because I happen to be Minister for Police, it is assumed that every action taken by the police is done under my direction and with my knowledge. Only this morning a man said to me, "It was pretty clever of you to arrange that little arrest yesterday just when your Lottery Bill was going to be brought up again." I asked to what he was referring, and I was informed that the reference was to the case which has actually been dealt with to-day. I had not the remotest idea that a prosecution had been launched until I saw the reference to it in the Press. The Commissioner does not ask me when he should take action to see that the law of the land is complied with, or that people shall be arrested because of some crime they have committed. That would be too absurd for anything. I had no knowledge of the raid at the time, and no knowledge of any unpleasant feature in connection with it until it was mentioned here to-night. If the books are of no value to the police, and belong to some private citizen and the hon. member will give me the neces-

sary information, I will take action to see that they are returned. With reference to filling a possible vacancy in the office of Commissioner of Police, I can only repeat what I have said, that I have not yet considered the matter. I do not consider that retirement at a definite age applies to a person holding a position such as the Commissioner of Police or the Commissioner of Railways. Both are very important executive offices, which ought to be filled by persons who are completely qualified, and in whom the Government, the public and Parliament have every confidence. It is dangerous to make changes if they can be avoided. I do not think there is any analogy between the cases mentioned by the member for East Perth and these important positions. I have learned with astonishment that there is a desire on the part of the wages men, through their union, to amend the regulation. I understood the contrary to be the case. I thought it was the men themselves who decided that when they reached the age of 65, in the interests of the service itself, that should be recognised as the age of retirement.

Mr. Kenneally: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: If that is not so, it ought to be put on record. I understood they were responsible for the regulation in the first place.

Mr. Kenneally: They were not.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: They have been pretty keen on seeing that it is enforced. I know how they chased my brother-in-law to get out when he reached the age of 65. I know they did not take circumstances into account in that case. Sometimes we are asked to treat single men who have dependants in the same way as we treat married men. We are asked to consider the circumstances surrounding each case. I know they do not consider it when it applies to a man on the wages staff in the railway service who reaches the age of 65. If he does not go out then, the others very soon make a noise about it.

Mr. Kenneally: The Minister himself was the first to say they had to go out. The men are keeping him up to that now in order to make things uniform. Why should you pick and choose? Why should the men not keep you up to your own decision?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: If the hon. member puts it in that way I am sure I do not mind.

Mr. Kenneally: Why should not your brother-in-law have retired?



The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Is it actually desired that wages men in the Government service should have no age limit for retirement?

Mr. Kennelly: The Minister instituted that without the union.

The CHAIRMAN: I think members are wandering away from the subject.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Not at all. This applies to the police force as well. The other day we retired the Chief Inspector of Police.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Before whom there were still many years of good service.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Yes. There is amongst the rank and file of all Government departments a keen desire that it should be known and accepted as a policy that the man who reaches the age of 65 should retire. That cannot apply in the same sense to men who fill important executive offices, such as the position of Commissioner of Railways or Commissioner of Police.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Provided the Commissioner of Police desires to retire. All things being equal, would you consider looking for a successor in the service itself?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No appointment will be made until applications have been called from those who are within and without the service. Our object will be to get the best man who can be found to fill the position of Commissioner of Police. Men in the service will get the first consideration and preference. I cannot commit myself to saying that someone in the service will get the job. If I were to declare now that in no circumstances would anyone but a member of the civil service obtain the position, I would have to call back the Gatling gun which has gone out to slaughter emus, because there would be a war in the department to find out who the man would be. Of course everyone in the service is anxious to get promotion. The Government must treat the question of the appointment to the position of Commissioner of Police in exactly the same fashion as we provide for appointments in other departments. Applications will be called, each application will be dealt with on its merits, and preference will be given to men who are already in the service.

Hon. P. Collier: That is very generous.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: That is definite. I do not think the hon. member can point to any case of filling a high position in the Government service that I have had to do with where I did not recommend some man in the service, and sometimes a man well down the ladder.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not know of any case.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I did that in the case of Colonel Pope. I went fairly well down the ladder when I recommended him for the position of Railways Commissioner, because I considered he could fill it. I am not looking for anyone outside the service for the position of Commissioner of Police, for I think we have men within it capable of filling it. The member for Perth need not ask me to commit myself to say that no consideration will be given to anyone else.

Mr. H. W. Mann: All things being equal, will you give the position to a member of the service?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I have not yet consulted Cabinet about the matter, but will do so.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Time is getting on.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: When I have done so, a public announcement will be made.

Item, Commissioner, £800:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I appreciate the remarks of the Minister, which were very diplomatic. He said the whole question would be carefully considered, that applications would be called for, and that these would be dealt with on their merits. I agree entirely with all that has been said by the member for Perth. The Commissioner for Police is close up to the retiring age, and most likely the position will be dealt with during the next few months.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Before Christmas.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We are entitled to know the attitude of the Government in the matter. I say unhesitatingly that the position should not be filled from outside the service if a suitable man can be found inside the service. The Government, of course, may say there is no one within the service qualified to fill the position. Surely the Minister must know that an appointment will be made shortly, and that accord-

ing to common talk someone outside the service will be appointed.

The Minister for Police: That talk is very common.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Surely the Minister knows what is in his mind, notwithstanding that the matter is one for Cabinet to decide. Will the Minister tell the Committee that an appointment will be made from within the service?

The Minister for Police: With the experience you have had as head of a Government, surely you would not expect a colleague of yours to make such a statement without having consulted you?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know what the Minister would do. Without giving away any confidence, I may say that when I was a Minister controlling a department and made a recommendation to Cabinet on a matter peculiarly my own, my Cabinet never turned me down. I would not remain a member of the Cabinet if my colleagues turned me down on a question peculiarly my own, as to which I ought to be the best judge. Will the Minister for Lands or the Minister for Agriculture or any other Minister claim to be as well qualified to judge of this matter as the Minister for Police? Of course not. I protest against the possibility of an appointment being made from outside the service.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Forests, £13,763—agreed to.*

*Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £136,375:*

Mr. Sleeman: Will the Minister introduce this vote?

The Minister for Railways: There is no occasion to do so.

*[Mr. Richardson took the Chair.]*

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE** (Hannans) [9.8]: I hope the Minister will have something to say on this large vote.

The Minister for Railways: I will if you will give me an idea of what you want me to say. It is the same vote as last year's, to all intents and purposes.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I do not wish to tell the Minister what he should say. I know he is prepared to express himself on any of his Estimates. The Government

have boosted the alleged fact that more than one-third of the yearly deficit has been caused by this department. That is not the fact. The actual amount of money spent on outdoor relief is little greater now, although we are passing through such distressful times, than the amount spent in 1929-30. The increase is only £26,000. Why is there under this vote a deduction of £300,000 from the Estimates?

The Minister for Railways: That is no deduction.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The amount £643,990 was not found from revenue.

The Minister for Railways: Of course it was found from revenue.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Not all of it. The Minister should make an explanation. Was any of that money obtained from Loan funds? Of course some of it was. Will the Minister tell the Committee where the money spent on the works at Harvey was obtained?

The Minister for Railways: That has nothing to do with this. It is quite apart from this.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No Minister has yet made a statement, either publicly or privately, which would lead me to believe that all the money spent in relief work has been spent over and above the amount of the vote.

## THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS

(Hon. J. Seaddan—Maylands) [9.11]: I am not responsible for the presentation of these Estimates in this form. All I am responsible for is the framing of the expenditure in the departments I control. If the hon. member turns to Divisions 41 and 42 of the Estimates, he will find that the Vote for Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief is £136,375, while the Vote for Unemployment Relief is £310,774, which includes Item 12, which provides £300,000 for unemployment relief. If he takes those two figures, he will see that they total £447,149, which is the amount set out in the Estimates. With regard to Loan expenditure, if he looks up the Public Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June last, he will see on page 33 that for 1931-32, the Vote for Unemployment Relief was £480,000 and the expenditure £643,996, showing an excess expenditure

of £163,996. That was the actual expenditure from revenue on unemployment relief last year.

**MR. KENNEALLY** (East Perth) [9.14]: Some time ago the Minister stated that if deductions were made from outdoor relief in respect of children, it was not as a result of Government policy. Apparently since then the Government have issued additional instructions, because it is peculiar that there is a general tendency on the part of the departmental officials to cut down the payment of 9s. for children to 7s., which is more in keeping with the ordinary sustenance payments. There is another question that should receive the attention of the Minister. If it has already received his consideration then he has evidently arrived at a wrong decision. It may be a matter that is beyond him, and he may have had to accept the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner. A few minutes ago we were discussing the need for the recognition of the merits of officers who performed their work in a satisfactory manner. The officer who was immediately under Mr. Watson, formerly secretary of the Child Welfare Department, is a qualified man, thoroughly competent to occupy the vacant position of head of the department. It was small tribute to honest service when action was taken by the Government who went outside the department and appointed another officer over that individual's head, despite the fact that the appointee knew nothing whatever of the work he was to perform. I make that statement without reflecting upon him at all.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a very wrong appointment.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think so.

Hon. P. Collier: He is a good man, but the appointment was wrong altogether.

The Minister for Railways: I think it was an excellent appointment.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am not reflecting upon the officer at all. However good a man he may have been in former positions, he cannot be regarded as a good man in his present position compared with the officer who had spent his time in the department equipping himself for the higher post, whose ability cannot be queried, and about whom no complaints can be made. He was able to relieve the head of the department and to carry on successfully. To a large

extent he must have to carry the present head of the department.

Hon. P. Collier: The man is doing the job now.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is not satisfactory to officers to see others appointed over their heads in such circumstances. Another matter I would like to draw the Minister's attention to has relation to men in receipt of the smaller rates of sustenance. He will recollect that we waited as a deputation upon him, and asked that additional attention should be given to the unemployed in receipt of 14s. per week. That refers to a man and his wife alone. Instructions have been issued to the department that men in receipt of 42s. and 49s., with some exceptions regarding those in receipt of 35s., will not be considered in connection with work in the metropolitan area. We pointed out to the Minister that hardship would be inflicted upon many men who had no children, or even those with one or two children. The care and love that a man may have for his family is not governed by the number of children he has, and such an instruction as that I have referred to is not right. Greater hardship could at times be inflicted on a man with two or three children if he were sent 200 or 300 miles inland than would be inflicted upon a man with five or six children. There may be sickness in the home or other disabilities may make it extremely inadvisable for such men to be sent to the country districts. The instructions issued to the department mean that men in that position cannot be provided with work locally. At times arrangements have been made so that men are not sent out to the country, but they are then merely allowed to remain on sustenance in the metropolitan area and are not considered when local work is available. The Minister, to do him justice, said that he regarded the worst treated men in connection with the sustenance scheme were those in receipt of 14s. It is of little use to those men to know that the Minister holds that opinion, unless some additional consideration is extended to them. I trust the Minister will seriously consider the advisability of relaxing those instructions. Where warranted, work locally should be made available for some men irrespective of the number of children dependent upon them. I know that could not be done uniformly, but, on the other hand, I ask that the departmental instructions shall not be made hard

and fast. I do not find fault with the officers of the department because, under very difficult circumstances, they are performing their duties in a creditable manner. If there is one branch of the Public Service one would not like to be associated with at the present time, it is the Unemployment Relief Department, because of the onerous nature of the work. What I am finding fault with is the system by which men are sent out to the country. The officers of the department have to do as they are told, and the instructions come from the Minister direct. As the Minister has admitted that the men in receipt of 14s. are the worst treated, I hope he will relax the departmental attitude. I suggest that he leave the position open so that the officers can exercise their discretion, or the matter could be left to the members of the Unemployment Board. In all our discussions with the Minister, he has recognised the disabilities of the men to whom I have referred, and I trust he will accord them some relief.

**MR. BROWN** (Pingelly) [9.30]: I should like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to continue the farm labour scheme. It has been in existence during the winter months, but there are a good many anomalies associated with it. For instance, to come under the scheme a man had to be registered by the 31st March. Many men were engaged by the farmers, but at harvest the scheme was discontinued. Those men who had been engaged did not come to Perth and did not register again, and so they could not come back under the scheme. It was a very useful scheme, for it kept the men in the country and enabled the farmer to get more crop in.

**Mr. Kenneally:** Sometimes the men did not get their pay from the farmer.

**MR. BROWN:** Do you know of any such cases?

**Hon. P. Collier:** Yes, there was a man named Brown.

**MR. BROWN:** The idea was that the farmer should subsidise the payment if he could afford to do so; but even without that subsidy the men were very well off, for they got their pay and their keep. I trust the Government will continue the scheme, for under it the men remain on the farms instead of travelling about begging from house to house. Some do not want a job so long as they can cadge their food, but the general

run of them are good men, only too willing to work. Of course we have to take into consideration the State's finances. I see in the paper that there is a likelihood of work being found for 2,500 men, some of whom were put off from the Harvey irrigation scheme. I appeal to the Minister to subsidise this scheme again if it be at all practicable. A good many men will be absorbed during the harvest, but of course that will not last indefinitely, and with wheat and wool at so low a price the farmer cannot, unaided, afford to give employment. That is the light in which I look at it.

**Mr. Marshall:** A pretty dark light.

**MR. BROWN:** We have thousands of men out of work, and we shall never have prosperity again until we get our workers back into employment on full time at a fair rate of wages. But that time is not yet in sight, and meanwhile I would rather see the men getting whatever they can from the Government for working on the farms.

**MR. GRIFFITHS** (Avon) [9.36]: The other day I asked the Minister whether he would afford relief to sustenance married men who, to get out to their work, had to pay 2s. 6d. a week for transport. The answer that I got was "Yes." The position is that those married men are taken out on the truck daily to their work, for which they have to pay the driver 2s. 6d. per week. Then, again, men have been sent up from Perth to do work that could be done by local unemployed. I asked a question about that, and again I was told "Yes." The single local men who go out to this job have to pay 1s. a week tent rent, whereas men sent up from Perth are given tent allowance. The Minister, in answer to my question, said that he would see that local men were given the work before outsiders. I hope the Minister will fulfil that promise, for the position remains as it was when I asked my question.

**MR. MILLINGTON** (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.38]: The main business the relief committee of which I am a member has done has been with the unemployment board. The secretary of that board is a highly competent man and as sympathetic as the regulations will permit. But the work of the board could be considerably enlarged. All cases from the country referred to us have to be dealt with by the board, and it is most difficult for

them to keep in touch with the conditions of work, particularly piece-work, in country districts, and the inquiries they make do not elicit the information as they should. When the men who have complained to us are questioned on the job, very often they do not back up the story they told us; they appear to be afraid to tell it to the inspector. When Mr. Kenneally and Mr. Mooney and Mr. Watts waited on the Deputy Premier they evolved a scheme for the Frankland River piece-work sustenance men. It was that a local board should be established, not so much to supervise the work as to receive and hear all grievances and assess the value of the work on the job. No matter how competent a committee sitting in Perth may be, they cannot from Perth deal with these cases. The fixation of wages is most complicated work for the Arbitration Court, but the fixation of piece-work rates where the conditions are varying is worst of all. In clearing it will be found that even on contiguous blocks conditions and prices are entirely dissimilar. So if satisfaction is to be given to the men, these questions will have to be dealt with on the spot by somebody with authority to finalise them. It cannot be done from Perth. It requires a controlling organisation stationed in Perth, but with subsidiary boards established wherever there is a lot of work going on. Many individual cases could be settled out of hand if there were someone on the spot with authority to deal with grievances and the assessing of the value of the work. If it is difficult to settle rates of pay where work and conditions are uniform, how much more difficult is it to settle piece-work rates for dissimilar tasks? Although this matter was discussed with two Ministers, no authority has been established in the country. The promise was made in respect of the Frankland River men.

The Minister for Railways: It was offered at the outset to obtain a settlement of the trouble, but they would not agree.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It requires continuous supervision and some authority to deal with it. I am not referring to this in any spirit of criticism, for I realise the difficulty in organising this work. Those who made all the fuss and, leaving their work, came to Perth were offered some redress, but those who stayed quietly on the job will not get any consideration. That is not right. The men who asked for this organisation to be set up should be considered. Moreover, from the departmental

point of view it would be an advantage. We have to remember that in the clearing of land, as the Minister for Works knows, very few men have had the necessary experience. If there was someone on the job to direct it, it could be regulated so that those who had had experience could coach those who were not up to the work. Otherwise the men are merely wasting their time. Taking one block with another, the conditions are so different that it is impossible to fix arrangements from any distance. A competent man on the job could do it and could deal with cases on their merits, but until such an organisation is set up, there will be complaints and dissatisfaction. Surely the work is of sufficient importance to warrant the setting up of an authority to deal with it effectively on the spot. The board, I believe, are doing their utmost, but owing to the variety of work and the difference of conditions in various parts of the State where the jobs, large and small, are being carried out, it should be the business of the Minister and the board to deal with them effectively, and that cannot be done unless a subsidiary authority is set up in the district. Periodical visits could be paid by members of the board, but the authority must be on the spot permanently. Otherwise the work will not go on, there will be dissatisfaction, and the men will not be able to give value. Some men have worked the whole live days in order to make 25s. Men will not continue under those conditions. With a commonsense man on the job, that sort of thing could be remedied. If the worker was at fault, he could be told so, but when competent men complain of inability to earn sustenance without working practically the whole week, obviously the position needs to be remedied. I suggest that the matter be referred to the board and that they be asked to report on the lines of the offer made by the two Ministers in connection with country work, particularly piece work and clearing work. Otherwise the complaints cannot be rectified. Another point mentioned to the Premier and the Minister for Works a long time ago was the treatment meted out by country road boards to sustenance men who were being paid out of money supplied by the Government. In many instances there is no award to cover the rate. If the money

were raised by the board, the Minister could not interfere, but when the money is supplied by the Government, they should have some influence. If they chose, the Government could influence the policy of road boards. We have had instances of men being employed, so it was alleged, for as little as 7s. per day, and the Government say they have no authority to alter it. When we complained many months ago to the Minister for Works, he said he was not going to set himself up as an arbitration court over the road board. Later on he informed us that there would be no more trouble because there was no more money to be advanced. More money is being advanced and the same evil exists. The Minister for Works: Advanced by whom?

Mr. MILLINGTON: The country road boards.

The Minister for Works: Not that I am aware of.

Mr. MILLINGTON: They are getting money and are supervising the works. The last complaint we had was from the Merredin district. I do not know what redress the men have. I know that they are going on strike against the rates paid by the road board. Whether it was road board money or money advanced by the Government, I am not sure, and the men were not sure, but the Government could inquire. We want an undertaking that where money is advanced by the Government to a road board, it will be advanced on the understanding that the board pay the recognised rate. That is not asking too much. When money was made available by the Government, it could be made available on that condition, and it would be accepted by the road board. So far the Government have not made that condition. Another grievance brought to us from the country concerns the transport of the men to and from work. These are small matters, but they are important to the men. We have instances of adequate arrangements not having been made for the transport of men to and from work. In one instance where men were taking time off and were coming to Perth they had to arrange for transport for 30 miles because it had been refused by the foreman. Those men were working below Boyup Brook and had to make their own arrangements. That was an expensive item for the men, although I

admit they obtained a concession on the railway. The matter should be arranged; the men are justified in asking for transport. Those are matters that could be settled on the spot. We cite individual cases and can get little satisfaction or redress. While on the question of unemployment I wish to know whether the Minister, considering the approach of Christmas, can arrange for some extra men for the work in the country districts, and for that matter for the men locally. Can they be given a little more time on and a little less time off? The Minister might give the matter consideration. If it is establishing a precedent, it will be 12 months before the circumstances can recur. Another matter is the difficulty confronting the father of a family who is in receipt of relief for children under 14 and who has children over 14. The children over 14 are a charge on the amount of sustenance received. I am not speaking of cases where men are not working for their sustenance. Where a man has three children under 14 and one over 14, he will be receiving 35s. plus £1. If he is working for his sustenance, the other child could be included and he should be allowed to collect the extra amount. We have endeavoured to get sustenance for members of the family over 14, but now that sustenance work is becoming general, the allowance could be made for the additional child by allowing additional work. The time has come when this matter can receive favourable consideration. Regarding the child welfare policy, I know of definite instances in which the rate of 9s. per unit per week has been cut down to 7s. I hope the Minister will give consideration to this aspect. Where a man is working for sustenance we have to submit to the uniform conditions imposed by the Government, but there is a disposition to encroach on the established practice of paying 9s. per unit per week to people under the Child Welfare Department, not those under the unemployment relief scheme. Men who for a number of years have been drawing for their family at the rate of 9s. have been reduced to 7s. I hope this is not general, but I know of definite instances where the father is an invalid. That should be sufficient to determine that the man is entitled to come under the conditions of the Child Welfare Department and receive at the rate of 9s. When

I have made complaints, the reply of the department has been that they considered the man was receiving sufficient and that the family were being treated reasonably. This is a matter upon which we are entitled to a definite pronouncement, and I should like the assurance of the Minister that the Government have not cut down the rate paid by the department from 9s. to 7s. One other matter affects the Fairbridge Farm School. Some time ago I asked a question and understood from the reply of the Minister that the boys who had been brought out, numbering, I think, 35, were included in the allowance to the school. I understood that was to be terminated. Now it seems to me that it is a general scheme which is being continued. We are entitled to know whether the scheme of bringing out boy migrants is being continued and encouraged by subsidising that institution as in times past. Is not there in existence an agreement regarding migration? I do not know whether the agreement was annulled, but migration was discontinued, and we have to accept the responsibility for having discontinued it. Surely that could be done also with regard to the Fairbridge Farm School. People knowing how general is unemployment amongst our boys are asking why the Government should subsidise a scheme for bringing boys from the Old Country. The boys who come out under that scheme are not superior to our Australian boys; as a matter of fact they are inferior. The Government are continuing the subsidy, whereas undeniably it could have been discontinued. When I directed attention to the matter, I did not make any particular fuss about it. I thought the subsidy would be discontinued, but from what I can judge, from the recent visit of a British representative, it is to be continued. It is time those in charge were informed definitely that no subsidy will be paid in respect of new arrivals. We are entitled to an assurance in that regard. The Migration Agreement is not in operation, and this should not be in operation either whilst the present unemployment conditions prevail. The position has never been satisfactorily explained. I hope the matter will be taken up by the Government, and that the Minister will take steps to terminate an arrangement whereby a subsidy is paid to the farm school for new arrivals. The work

of the unemployment board should extend to country districts. It should be directed from Perth, but subsidiary organisations should be set up in the country to see that the work is properly regulated there.

**MR. PIESSE** (Katanning) [10.2]: Since I have been a member of this Chamber I have come closely in contact with officers of the Child Welfare Department. I have been greatly impressed by the wonderful service which has been rendered by those gentlemen, particularly at the most critical and vital time in the history of local unemployment. So much time has elapsed since the crisis first came upon us that some members may have overlooked the importance of the part that has been played by these officers. No doubt their responsibilities are relieved very largely by the appointment of the unemployment board. I wish to acknowledge the keen interest that is taken by the officers of that board in ministering to the wants of the unemployed. Probably no member of this Chamber would have cared to take on such a job for any consideration. It is one of the most exacting and difficult positions that anyone could be called upon to fill. I have come in contact with the officers both of the Child Welfare Department and the Unemployment Relief Board, and have had an opportunity to make observations. I have been greatly impressed by the wonderful patience exhibited by the officers towards those who are unfortunate enough to have to seek employment and relief, and have also been struck by the keen interest and consideration exhibited by them. I wish to draw attention to an alteration in the policy of the department, particularly since the work from Loan funds has been carried out in the Great Southern districts. During the acute period, road boards and unemployment committees that were formed were of great service in helping the department, and in rendering assistance to those who were thrown out of employment. Quite a lot of extra work was also thrown upon members of the police force. During the past 12 months they have played an important part in country districts by assisting the various organisations as well as the department in their operations. Under the new arrangement I happen to know that the department considers it necessary to discon-

tinue the subsidies or sustenance grants that were made to local authorities and committees, by putting on to Loan works those men who were previously employed under these grants. I hope the Minister will not be too exacting in respect to the number of men he sends out of these districts. We have some right to say that a certain number should be retained locally, because a large proportion of the cost of unemployment relief is being borne by the taxpayers who live in those districts. It is expected that a certain amount of work will still be necessary there, and can be carried out on lines similar to those followed by the Child Welfare Department. I do not suggest that all the men should be kept there, but facilities should be afforded for the employment of a certain number by the local authorities. Some of the men who live in those centres are not fit for axe work. Many are too old, but they would be fit for team work or to drive a grader on the roads. The responsibility of finding future work for them would fall almost entirely upon the local authorities. I endorse the remarks of the member for East Perth regarding the anomalies that exist in the distribution of sustenance. We know that the number of children in different families varies, as do also the conditions under which those families live. Those who are having the hardest time are the childless couples, or married people who have no direct responsibility for children under the age of 14. The 14s. a week, even with the extra £1 that is allowed for additional work while the men are away from home, is insufficient to enable them to keep up two homes and pay the rent, as well as sustain their wives while they are away. The average maximum amount in the case of married men works out at 31s. a week.

The Minister for Railways: They get that when they come home and do nothing, just as when they are away.

Mr. PIESSE: They have to be fed while they are at home.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot employ some on full time and allow the others to go without.

Mr. PIESSE: It is very hard upon those people.

The Minister for Railways: Of course it is hard.

Mr. PIESSE: I thought the Government would endeavour to increase the scale of sustenance in such cases. I hope those which have been mentioned by the member for East Perth will be looked into. We know there are very hard cases indeed, particularly families with boys and girls over 14 years of age who have to be kept in clothes and food and are without hope of securing employment.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [10.10]: While appreciating what has been done by the Government, and especially by the Minister in charge of unemployment relief, I wish to point out the hardship imposed on sons of settlers, and especially sons of group settlers. They are debarred from sharing in any work available until they reach the age of 21 years. It is deplorable to see the privation, practically starvation, of young men in such a situation—their clothes in rags. Could not the Minister instruct the Unemployment Board to allow those young men to receive sustenance in the same way as young men in any other walk of life? Again, settlers who take up virgin land are debarred from sustenance and from work alike, on the ground that they are landowners. The Premier has arranged to grant those men some slight sustenance through the Unemployment Board and the Agricultural Bank. As regards transport from Boyup Brook, mentioned by the member for Mt. Hawthorn, transport to the job is in fact provided. The men finish work on Thursday night, and the train does not leave Boyup Brook until Saturday morning; but the department would convey those men to their homes on Friday. However, the men contend it is more advantageous to them to pay 3s. to a truck driver to convey them on Saturday morning to Hester, whence they proceed to their homes in Bunbury or Perth, thus avoiding the expense of a night's accommodation en route. The case of timber workers' sons also calls for the Minister's consideration.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [10.13]: I appeal to the Minister to see whether something more cannot be done for men still at Blackboy, who now receive 1s. per week above their keep. Many of them are men upwards of 50 years of age, and have done excellent service for this country. In view of the approach of Christmas the Minister



should make a special effort to do something more for the men at Blackboy. The winter months proved especially trying to them. Their clothes are in very bad condition. When a man wants to wash his shirt, he has to take it off, wash it, and remain about in his waistcoat until the shirt is dry. Funds were raised to improve the position, and with the aid of a donation from the McNess fund something was accomplished. A little time ago the Minister allowed those men 5s. per week about their keep, and thus they were enabled to purchase various essentials—tobacco, postage stamps, and so forth. As the member for Katanning said, consideration was being given by the Government to the increase of sustenance rates, and it was understood that men on 14s. and 21s. per week would be raised. Nothing has been done to date except that when men are sent away on various relief jobs they receive £1 a week for sustenance. It is difficult for those men to keep themselves and their wives and their families as well. Many men have been out of work for two or three years and their position is indeed difficult. Although we have not yet had any authentic information, I notice from the Press that at the recent Premiers' Conference consideration was given to the raising of a loan of £4,000,000 for unemployment relief, and that Western Australia is to receive about £600,000 of that amount. That will not be sufficient to provide employment for the men who are out of work, although it will enable those at present on relief works to be continued in their occupations. There are thousands of men who will not be placed in employment as the result of the expenditure of that money, which is totally inadequate to meet the situation. The workless army throughout Australia have looked in vain to the Premiers' Conferences and Loan Council meetings for the last two or three years, and their hopes that sufficient money would be found to provide work for them have not been fulfilled. Their position has become hopeless. In view of the low prices ruling for wheat and wool, the position of the pastoralists and farmers is equally unfortunate. I hope the position will soon improve because, with a recovery in the prices of our staple products, additional employment will be provided. At present the condition of the unemployed is distressing. They have lost their homes and their belongings, and the outlook is black for them. The present

social system stands condemned. It is the bounded duty of the Government to at least provide sustenance for the workless army, if employment cannot be found. Instances have been quoted to show that the sustenance payments are totally inadequate, and the Government should increase the amounts payable. There is much for the private employers to do and if they desire the continuance of the present system that has enabled them to make such profits in the past, they should make every effort to provide employment for those who have lost their positions during the depression. If the situation is not remedied soon, another system will certainly replace that obtaining at present. Unemployment is increasing instead of declining and if something is not done to arrest that tendency, disaster will overtake the community. Unemployment is the most vital problem of to-day, and it is true one Minister was appointed to devote the whole of his attention to it. It is true that a board has been created to deal with detailed work, but that is not sufficient. A Minister of the Crown should undertake that task and endeavour to cope with the situation. As to the departmental officers, many of them are experienced and are carrying out excellent work. There is a difficult task, for they are required to adjudicate as between the applicants and the Government. I am aware that a percentage of the applicants for relief endeavour to "put it over them," but 90 per cent. of the men who go to the department are genuine in their desire to gain information and the assistance that their position warrants. Some complaints have been voiced concerning the younger officials who have been transferred from other departments. It is said that they do not extend the consideration to these unfortunate people that they are entitled to. Their complaints are directed only against the junior officers because it is recognised that the more experienced men are carrying out a difficult task in very difficult circumstances. They probably occupy the least desirable positions in the Government service to-day, for they are required to listen to many tales of distress and misfortune, to deal with the applications in a fair and considerate manner, and at the same time to comply with the departmental regulations. I trust the Minister will see his way clear to increase the rates payable to those in receipt of the smaller amounts particularly those who are paid 14s. or 25s. weekly.

**MR. COVERLEY** (Kimberley) [10.30]: I should like to know from the Minister why sustenance is refused to the unemployed in Broome, and why no man in the northern districts can get sustenance for more than a week.

The Minister for Railways: How is it that there are unemployed in Broome?

**MR. COVERLEY**: There are unemployed men there, just as there are in every other town in Western Australia. I want to know why the Minister has refused to grant any unemployed relief in Broome.

**Mr. Sleeman**: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [10.33]: When one glances at the Estimates of unemployment and outdoor relief he is struck by the reduction in the vote from £643,000 to £300,000. Some say it is due to the fact that a lot of it has been switched over from the Revenue Estimates to Loan Fund.

The Minister for Railways: That is not so.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: It cannot be that employment has been found for any number, because there are just as many unemployed to-day as there were 12 months ago. By "unemployed" I mean people out of work or working out their sustenance. Some of the unemployed who have been sent away from their homes are worse off than others working out sustenance. A number came up from the Frankland River to seek a settlement, but no settlement was effected and so a large army of them had to go without Government relief. Many have drifted out of the city to starve in silence along the road. The last request they put up to the Government was by no means out of the way, and with a little sweet reasonableness a settlement could have been reached. Why it was not effected I cannot understand. The only thing the men wanted was a guarantee of 25s. 2d. for the two days per week they worked, but the Government refused to agree to it. If a man has to go away into the country for two days a week, the least he should get is 25s. 2d.

The Minister for Railways: Plenty of them would claim the pay without having done the work.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: Very few of them would do that. The Minister responsible for the Myalup and Stonehouse camps declared that the work done by the men there was emin-

ently satisfactory. That being so, how can the Minister for Railways suggest that men in another locality would not work and earn their money?

The Minister for Railways: It is a different crowd.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: I daresay the crowd from Frankland River is composed of men just as good as those who went to Myalup and Stonehouse. The Minister said some time ago that the men at Myalup were out to make trouble. There was a little trouble there, but still the men did their work. When with the Leader of the Opposition I visited those camps, the first thing that struck me was the wonderful way in which the men were working. There was no Government stroke there. If those men would work like that at those camps, of course the men at Frankland River would do just as well. The great bulk of those men would have done their work faithfully.

The Minister for Railways: The offer has been open to them all the time. You have read only one of the conditions.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: That is the only one over which you could disagree with them. Can the Minister point to any other condition to which he would disagree? The Government agreed that there would be no victimisation.

The Minister for Railways: We did not agree to that. Victimisation does not exist.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: The Government replied that there would be no victimisation, and so they agreed with that condition put up by the men.

The Minister for Lands: Read the next line.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: The reply was there would be no victimisation, but that the department reserved the right to say who should be sent to the Frankland River. That could only mean that the Government would send the remainder to some other work just as good.

Hon. P. Collier: Or just as bad.

**MR. SLEEMAN**: Or just as bad. However, the Government did not agree to it. The next request was—

Immediate sustenance for the Frankland River men while negotiations are taking place for the settlement of the Frankland River men's dispute.

A settlement could have been reached in an hour, and the men could have been despatched that evening to the Frankland River. If the Government had taken care

to ensure that the men received a fair deal they would not have left the job.

The Minister for Railways: They did not start work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: A lot of them did start. The Minister knows that conditions there are a little better than they were. But for the attitude of the men who ceased work, the improvement would not have been made. If the men are getting nearer to what they should be receiving, they can thank for it the men who marched out. In the Minister's department there is information that the men would be living on cream and fruit. Anyhow, the reply to the request for immediate sustenance was—

No, their previous action does not justify this.

The trouble could have been settled by the acceptance of that request. If the Minister can show anything unreasonable about it, I should like to hear it. The next request was—

That the men unsuitable for the work and climatic conditions at Frankland River be offered relief elsewhere more suitable to their condition.

I think the Minister will agree with that. The reply was—

This is agreed to, as previously arranged.

The next request was—

That no man shall be asked to work more than two days per week to earn 25s. 2d. as obtains in the other relief camps.

The reply was—

The same conditions will apply as on other relief works where piecework arrangements prevail.

The Minister for Railways: What is wrong with that?

Mr. SLEEMAN: If the Minister can send men to Myalup and Stonehouse and pay them 25s. 2d., why not treat the men at Frankland River in the same way? Why send the men down there under the impression that they were going to work for wages and then put them on to contract.

The Minister for Railways: They were told distinctly.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The next request was—

On account of the isolation of Frankland River and the distance from Perth, we ask

that the work be carried out on the basis of two weeks' continuous work, with four weeks off.

That was in lieu of 'two days' work per week. It would amount to the same thing for the Government and would not affect the cost. The reply of the Government was—

This cannot be agreed to.

The next request was—

That we be granted free railway passes from the various centres from where the men were selected for this relief work.

I understand that the men are given a return ticket for a single fare. The reply was—

The fares to Mt. Barker of those men selected for the first time will be met by the Government from the centres at which the men were picked up to the relief works, as is being done now.

The next request was—

That free transport be provided to and from Mt. Barker.

There is nothing unreasonable in that. When men are taken 40 or 50 miles into the bush and their standing-down period arrives, they should be transported to Mt. Barker in order that they may travel to their homes.

The Minister for Lands: You do not suggest that free transport should be provided for every man who wanted to go in and out?

Mr. SLEEMAN: When the standing-down period arrives, transport should be provided for a man who wishes to return to his home.

The Minister for Lands: Those are single men.

Mr. SLEEMAN: But do not single men want to return to their homes at times? Does the Minister think they would want to remain there isolated indefinitely. They expect to go home periodically to see their friends and relatives. They would not want to go into Mt. Barker every day of the week. The reply was—

This will be provided when men are transferred for departmental convenience.

Another request was—

That if men must be sent out into this wilderness, at least a medical officer shall be provided.

The reply was—

All medical assistance considered necessary will be provided.

The Minister for Lands: It had already been provided.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The next request was—

When piecework rates are to be determined, men on the job to be entitled to elect their own representatives from jobs committee to take part in the fixing of rates.

The Government practically agreed to that, the reply being—

In the event of a dispute arising as to the value of work performed, a committee comprising a local farmer, a workers' representative and a departmental officer will be appointed.

The Minister for Railways: We offered them that from the outset.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Other requests and replies were—

That proper store facilities and delivery to the various camps be provided.

Reply—

Yes.

Request—

That the return rail fare debited against us be wiped off.

Reply—

No; this will not be agreed to, but extra work will be provided to offset this debit.

Request—

That all storekeeper debts incurred through the march-off of men be covered by extra work.

Reply—

Yes.

Request—

That a proper water supply be provided at all camps.

Reply—

Yes.

Request—

That all tools essential to the job be supplied.

Reply—

Yes.

Request—

That the matter of compensation and insurance covering the men be stated by the Government.

Reply—

The amount of compensation will be governed by the amount earned, not exceeding 25s. 2d.

Out of the whole of those requests, there was practically only one with which the Government disagreed.

The Minister for Lands: Then why did not the men go back?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Because the Government did not agree to that particular one. If the Minister can show there was anything unreasonable in the men's request to be paid 25s. 2d. for two days' work, I should like to hear it.

The Minister for Railways: That was not the original claim.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I know it was not.

The Minister for Railways: The one you cut out was like a bush fire—too hot for you.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I know what it was. We did not expect a Government like the present one to accept it.

The Minister for Lands: Nor would you expect any other Government to accept it.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Notwithstanding that it was struck out, the men still received a blunt refusal from the Government who relied upon being on top and able to starve the men into submission.

Mr. Piesse: Would not those men be better off than walking about in sandshoes?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know that they would. The hon. member is at liberty to make a practical test by trying the work for himself. I have here a letter from a man at Frankland River.

The Minister for Lands: Do you want some of the letters I have received read to you?

Mr. SLEEMAN: This letter says—

I wish to bring this under your notice, hoping you will get Mr. Sleeman to have it brought to the Minister controlling the sustenance men here. There is only one general store, which has a monopoly. Its prices are exorbitant, and its services are rotten. There was another storekeeper from Mt. Barker who built a store on the new townsite here, but the officer in charge would not give him a permit to trade, so I believe, which leaves us open to be exploited.

I can well understand that. This was one of the great grievances with the men at Stonehouse. The storekeeper did what he

liked with the men, who were undoubtedly being exploited by him.

The Minister for Lands: The men are buying bread for 3d. a loaf, and getting meat at 2½d. to 3d. a lb. for forequarters, and they even get their stores delivered every day.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister is not here to know these things. This came from a man on the spot.

The Minister for Lands: I was there only last week end.

[Mr. J. H. Smith took the Chair.]

Mr. SLEEMAN: These men are working there, and these are the conditions they have to put up with.

The Minister for Lands: I could shame you if I read some of the letters we have got from these people, who have money of their own in the "kitty."

Mr. SLEEMAN: Does the Minister deny that there is only one store there?

The Minister for Lands: It is better that we should have made arrangements with the store for a fixed price in order to keep the cost of things down.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The men say they are being exploited. When I visited Myalup and Stonehouse I found that the same thing applied there. One of the big grievances was that there was no competition with regard to the supply of stores. Only one storekeeper was allowed to conduct business there. I understand that a greengrocer tried to set up business there but was driven away by the officer in charge. Competition should be allowed so that the men may make their purchases at something near the right price.

The Minister for Railways: How long do you think such competition would last?

Mr. SLEEMAN: For quite a long time.

The Minister for Railways: You know they soon come to an arrangement. It is better to arrange for prices that are acceptable, even if it means giving a monopoly to one individual.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The business would all be on a cash basis. There would be no "tick." I do not see what is to prevent another storekeeper from starting in business. If one man is given a monopoly so that he can do what he likes, it is easy to understand why the men complain. The

latest order from the department is that no more single men are to be given relief. They are told to get work elsewhere. If the Minister could tell them where they could find work it would be all right. It is inhuman to say to single men, who have not been on sustenance, that they are to be refused any help. This order has gone out to the various depots so that in future new single men asking for direct relief will be turned down. I will test the feeling of the Committee on that subject at a later stage. Surely members will not agree that the Government should do nothing for men who are literally starving. There are also the boys who have just passed the age of 14, and who have been deprived of any further assistance from the Child Welfare Department. Many of them are too young to be sent to jobs in the country, but they are told they can get no further relief. Then there is the question of men who are forced to go into the country on £1 per week over their sustenance. They were told they would get this pound over their sustenance on their wages, that they could work up to a certain amount, and their return to their homes with something in the "kitty," remaining there until the money was spent. I saw a letter last night from Brunswick written by a man who had stuck loyally to the Government, and had gone away on the pound a week over sustenance. When he arrived at Brunswick and started work he found that he was only to work for a fortnight on wages, and then had to go on piecework. He wrote to his wife and told her he was sorry he had gone there, and that he had not joined with his mates in defying the department. He found out that the price the Government were paying for piecework would make it very difficult for him to earn 8s. a day. The Government have broken faith with those who stuck to them. They are forcing men to go away, and after a fortnight are compelling them to take piecework of this nature. By the time they get anything in the "kitty" a long while will have elapsed before they have seen their homes again. Peculiar reasons are advanced by officers of the department for refusing sustenance. Generally speaking I have found the officers most obliging and courteous, but some do give peculiar reasons for their action. One man told me he was

reduced 7s. a week on the ground that he had been dismissed from his previous job for 'general incompetence.' Because one department told another that this was a reason for his leaving the other job, he was reduced by 7s. a week. That was his own sustenance, and he still got the sustenance for his wife and two children. He was previously working in the gaol, not as an inmate, but as an employee. He did not know of any general incompetence, and said the only reason he was put off was that he was due for an increase in pay. It took the department two years to find out that he was incompetent. It is ridiculous to say that any man would leave a job that was likely to be permanent in order to go back on sustenance. It is evident that in some cases the officers are prepared to jump at anything in order to save a few shillings for their employers, the Government. As to the starving men who have been refused sustenance, I will directly test the feeling of the Committee on the subject.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [11.0]: I wish to refer to the attitude of the Government regarding the payment of sustenance being withheld to men on the goldfields. I agree with all that has been said about the difference in allowances to single and married men. Those on the goldfields are getting no assistance whatever from the Government, and most unwarrantable discrimination is being shown. The taxation that has been imposed upon the people generally applies as much to those on the goldfields as it does to anyone else. The taxpayers in my electorate have for a long time subscribed to their local hospital, and make weekly contributions towards its upkeep, and they, too, are paying the tax. They have also to pay the 4½d. unemployment tax, and on top of that they have to keep the goldfields unemployed. It is grossly unfair that such obligations should be imposed on people simply because they reside on the goldfields. I have no fault to find with the officers of the department. In point of fact, they have shown themselves sympathetic in every case that I have brought to their attention. I have also approached the Minister, but so far there has been no response to my request for assistance to be granted to unemployed on the Murchison goldfields. Apart from as-

sistance at the rate of 10s. per week granted to a very few prospectors, no manner of relief has been afforded to the Murchison; and I presume the same position obtains on other goldfields. Most of the goldfields unemployed are men who have migrated there in search of work. It is creditable to them that they should have covered distances of 600 or 700 miles seeking employment. Having reached the place where work was offering, they had in the first instance to rely upon the bounty of the community to support them. It is a pity that the Government do not assist such men to remain on the goldfields while seeking work. Men should not be taken away from a place where work is available, and brought to the city, where they have to go on sustenance.

The Minister for Railways: The only men I offered to bring back from Wiluna were men who, I had been definitely informed, would not get employment on the mines. We were not going to keep them in the dearest locality in the State.

Mr. MARSHALL: The same amount of sustenance would be paid in Wiluna as in Perth. Geographical position makes no difference in that respect. I know men were rejected as the result of medical examination for employment on the mines, but that did not apply to all the men examined. The women's organisations were prepared to contribute towards getting the men away. The Murchison goldfields get nothing from the Government except the imposition of all kinds of taxation. This subject was fully dealt with on the first Supply Bill of the session and on the Address-in-reply, and it seems a waste of breath to debate the matter further. However, I wish to draw attention to a case which came under my notice recently. There is a returned soldier with six children who is in receipt of a small military pension. He has also been in receipt of sustenance, and for a period the Government permitted him to draw sustenance on the usual basis, excluding any consideration of his military pension. At the end of that period the sustenance was reduced so as to limit the total income to £2 9s. per week—including the military pension. That, I consider, is carrying the matter to extremes. The returned soldier is a sick man requiring attention, and there is a possibility of his military pension being increased. The least the Government

can do is to extend consideration to such a man, who is actually in ill-health.

The Minister for Railways: The R.S.L. can take up that man's case.

Mr. MARSHALL: We are too prone to throw the responsibility on to the other man's shoulders. The whole community are endeavouring to excuse themselves for past apathy and are blaming everyone else for the difficult position confronting us to-day. The department would act at least humanely if they extended greater consideration to the returned soldier I have referred to. The Frankland River dispute certainly revealed lack of organisation in connection with the departmental activities. I have not any complaint to make against the departmental officials, for they are efficient and have to deal with most trying work. It is little wonder that at times they are irritable and sometimes even become offensive, although I do not hold with that. In my opinion, a Minister should be appointed to take sole control of the unemployment problem as if that were done, he would probably see to it that the men sent out on jobs were classified. If so, we would not find a man 63 years of age, with one arm almost incapacitated, being expected to work alongside hefty young men who had been accustomed to strenuous employment. That shows the lack of organisation.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot make a general complaint against the departmental officers.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not doing so. They are working at high speed and have a difficult job to carry out. At the same time they should classify the men before sending them out to jobs, for it is ridiculous to expect a clerk to work on piece rates against a navvy who has just come off railway construction work. Therefore, I say that the Frankland River dispute at least indicated the necessity for a greater degree of organisation.

The Minister for Railways: I can see paradise coming shortly.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not understand the Minister's interjection.

The Minister for Railways: You cannot, in the circumstances confronting us to-day, handle 16,000 men without individual cases of hardship and mistakes being noted. You cannot say that the position has been

handled better in any other part of Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not suggesting that, but I do contend that there should be some classification of the unemployed. That was apparent as the result of the Frankland River dispute.

The Minister for Lands: And when we offered to take them away, they begged us to leave them there.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not arguing against that.

The Minister for Railways: You know that that dispute was definitely arranged by a gang of Communists.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will not admit that at all.

Mr. Sleeman: Does the Minister suggest that two or three men could cause that dispute if there was not some reason for it?

The Minister for Railways: You know the dispute was organised long before it actually occurred.

Mr. MARSHALL: I will not participate in these accusations regarding that dispute. I remind the Minister that I read a letter in the House long before the dispute arose and it showed what was occurring. Men were promised stores and when they went down to the job, they found nothing was provided. Camps were to be there, but none was available. One man had to buy four bags so that he could sleep on them for two nights until the stores arrived. The teams were hogged and the men were for two days without food or tools. That showed lack of organisation.

The Minister for Railways: That sort of thing happened years ago when conditions were prosperous.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the dispute was organised before the men went to Frankland River, the indications are that there was justification for it. Men do not go down into that wet portion of the State to suffer conditions such as the Frankland River men experienced. Good God Almighty! What does the Minister think the men should put up with? I know that the officers of the department can do no more than they are doing. I know two or three of them and they are men of whom I cannot speak too highly. The officers are doing their work well, although at times they do fall foul of the unemployed.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH** (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [11.20]: I should like to know from the Minister what is the policy of the Government towards unemployment on the Eastern Goldfields. Nobody up there seems to know whether single men if out of work are entitled to get sustenance or whether destitute married people can receive sustenance, as persons in the metropolitan area can. For some time past we have had on the goldfields 400 or 500 young men from the metropolitan area practically living on charity. I have asked them why they did not stay in the metropolitan area where they could get sustenance, and they have told me they went up there looking for work rather than remain on sustenance in the metropolitan area. Obviously those men are genuine triers, and if they fail to find work on the goldfields, they are at least entitled to sustenance. A new position arises on the goldfields because of the financial emergency tax of  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound. It has been bruited about that this tax is imposed for the relief of unemployment, and consequently people on the goldfields who will have to pay the tax are asking whether they will be justified in continuing their voluntary assistance to the army of unemployed at present on the charity of the community. In the past, I understand, any man who had been some time on the goldfields looking for work was given a shilling and told to get out.

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

Quorum formed.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH:** Another aspect of relief on the eastern goldfields is this: It has been the practice for a married man in destitute circumstances to apply for relief, quite apart from sustenance relief, and the clerk of courts and the inspector of police had carte blanche to give relief to such cases. But a new system has arisen under which every application for relief has to come to Perth, where a big departmental officer judges the merits of the case from the correspondence sent by the clerk of courts. Then there is the system of applications for railway passes. A man suffering from a malignant growth was ordered to Perth by the doctor, and arrangements were made for his reception in a hospital down here; but it was found that the clerk of courts no longer had authority to issue railway passes, and the application had to be sent on to Perth. In another instance a woman suffering from a

malignant growth had to come to Perth for treatment. Some of her friends subscribed the necessary railway fare, and that woman, after being successfully treated in Perth, went back home much better in health. But quite recently she had a recurrence of the growth, and it was necessary for her to come to Perth again. In support of her application for a railway pass, all particulars were sent down by the clerk of courts, but the reply went back that as her friends had assisted her before, they could assist her again. Some of those cases need investigating.

The Minister for Railways: I do not think any officer would send such a letter.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH:** I received the information from a reliable source.

The Minister for Railways: He might have sent asking whether her friends could not assist her again.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH:** It might have been put that way. The inference is the same, namely, that friends had assisted her in the past and could assist her again. I hope the Minister will give some information as to the policy of the Government on unemployment on the goldfields.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. J. Seaddan—Maylands—in reply) [11.31]: Most of the cases introduced by members have been matters that might have been brought under notice without waiting for a general discussion on the Estimates. It is admitted that some of the cases date as far back as two years.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH:** If you are referring to me, that does not apply.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** The hon. member said so.

**MR. F. C. L. SMITH:** I mentioned that that was when the woman had her first illness.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** And that was two years ago. The other cases have been happening since then. Individual cases can easily be brought under notice and dealt with. I say definitely that it is not possible to handle unemployment to the extent that it now exists with the most perfect organisation without occasional difficulties creeping in involving anomalies and hardships to some individuals. It is not possible to lay down a rule which can be applied to every case. The case mentioned by the member for Murchison, if dealt with as an individual case, might have



received different treatment from other cases of a similar nature.

Mr. Wansbrough: Where a doctor issues a certificate for a person to go to Perth for an operation—

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have had so much experience of doctor's certificates during the last two years that I do not think they are worth the paper they are written on, and I consider that the British Medical Association should take some action with regard to the certificates issued by doctors.

Mr. Wansbrough: Surely a doctor—

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am so disgusted with some of the certificates issued by some of our medical men that I doubt whether they are worth anything.

Mr. Wansbrough: But a Government medical officer's certificate.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We cannot have Government medical officers all over the country. We are expected to comply with medical certificates and they are becoming a farce. They are put in every day. It is a remarkable thing that there is no difficulty about a man accepting sustenance work provided by the local authorities in the metropolitan area. There is no suggestion of any sickness or trouble then, but as soon as a job is offered on relief work—

Mr. Wansbrough: I am not referring to that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am saying what happens in regard to doctors' certificates. It is the easiest thing in the world to get a doctor's certificate giving reasons why a person should not be called upon to do this class of work, or why he should not be sent there or why he should be kept somewhere else. We should take a hand in order to get the matter dealt with on a different basis. I am prepared to admit that the department probably do not take the view that could be taken if we had one officer for every individual who was out of work. We have not officers to that extent, and cases have to be dealt with in the aggregate, and they have to be dealt with on the basis of fairness and justice to the whole of the people concerned. In the circumstances it is not possible to obviate difficulty arising occasionally. The general practice would be adopted in those cases. Individual cases such as have been mentioned to-night would be investigated by the

department, and there was no need for members to wait for the general discussion on the Estimates to bring them up. I will get a copy of the "Hansard" notes next week and send them to the department and have the cases properly investigated. On the question of policy, there has been no material change during the last 12 months or in recent months. There has been no difference on the goldfields, broadly speaking. On the goldfields there is better evidence of prosperity than anywhere else in Australia, and there should not be the same need for maintenance for unemployed. If a man finds himself permanently out of work on the goldfields, should not he make application for a pass to go somewhere else? It is not easy to remain there if he cannot get work.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He cannot get a pass.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: To get work on a mine he has to pass the laboratory test. That is one of the first essentials. Quite a number of men go to the goldfields in the belief that they will be able to pass the test. When they cannot pass, what is the use of their remaining there?

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: They have to walk out.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They have not.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Well, let us know what they must do.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The men know that if they cannot get employment over a period, they can make application and we will shift them to where work is available, the same as we do for men living in the metropolitan area. Surely there is no point in maintaining on the goldfields, week after week and month after month, a man who cannot find work there. In places like Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Wiluna, living is costly.

Mr. Coverley: Will you apply that principle to the North-West?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: When men wilfully remain, when they make no effort to get out, they may be doing just as well as they could do elsewhere. I lived in Kalgoorlie and Boulder for a number of years, and I know how charitable the goldfields people are. When a man is in constant employment, he never worries about passing out a shilling to someone who is down and out, but a man has to make many shillings to get up to the basic wage. The

community should not be called upon to provide for men who insist upon remaining in a place where they cannot get work. There is opportunity for those men to get relief work if they will accept it. Otherwise they will not be granted sustenance. I was not aware that there was unemployment in Broome. If there is, we shall try to deal with it in the same way. I do not think it desirable to keep men idle in a place like Broome for any length of time. Rather than pay them sustenance to remain in Broome, we should put them into districts where the cost of living is lower and where the conditions are probably more satisfactory from the point of the people unemployed, and find them relief work such as we are providing for others. I propose to lay on the Table at a later stage a chart showing the fluctuations in the 46 commodities, groceries and foodstuffs, investigated by the Commonwealth Statistician for the Perth metropolitan area in 1912 and 1931. It will give members a graphic idea of the amount granted by the Child Welfare Department for those years in relation to the cost of those commodities. They will find, notwithstanding all that has been said, that when there was a marked increase in the cost of commodities, the first increase was granted by the Government of which I was a member, and it has been maintained since, notwithstanding that there was a high peak in 1921 and a low point in 1931-32. That has to be taken into account. If we were justified in increasing the allowance when the price of commodities went up, we should give consideration to making reductions in the allowance when prices come down. We have been providing allowances on a basis which is not at all a disgrace to this State as compared with the rest of Australia.

Mr. Hegney: Is there any possibility of increasing the allowance to the men at Blackboy at Christmas time?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I cannot commit the Government upon that matter until the Premier returns and we know what funds will be available. Each year we have tried to give a little additional work to provide extra cash for all men engaged on relief work, and to the men on sustenance, during the Christmas period. I do not think we will fail to do that this year, but I do not yet know what

the chances will be. The men at Blackboy are unfortunately situated. It is not in the public interest that we should discuss the matter too openly. There is a big percentage of men who at the moment could not take work of any nature. It is unfortunate. They are provided with reasonably decent accommodation, they are sure of shelter, and have nothing to do but to keep themselves and their surroundings clean. They are well fed, and have 1s. a week in their pockets, and no questions are asked of them. If that is not fairly good accommodation, taking the times into consideration, I do not know what is. Of course they cannot go on permanently on that basis and probably it is desirable to give them something additional during the coming festive season. I will see how far we can help in that direction.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What chance is there for sons of men in the country?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: For some reason everyone imagines it is a legitimate thing to do to impose upon the Government. I believe there are people who are in business to-day trying to keep a smiling face although they are having a tremendous struggle to get through. There are men with families who have nothing to do, and they all hate the idea of going on the dole. We have to consider them on the basis of being people in business in competition with others who are also in business. Take the case of those who indulge in river fishing. Approximately 100 men are making a living on the Swan River. One of those men will say he is not making a living, and put in a request for more sustenance. He will say bitterly that he does not see why he should put in his net, although he may be getting up to 42s. a week. He says "Are you not allowed to earn something above the sustenance?" He would be informed that he could do so, but that it would be impossible to check up his earnings. If such a man could start off on Monday morning with his nets and 42s. in his pocket, what would happen to others who would have nothing to start with on Monday morning? It would be unfair to them. One man says he is making 10s. a week. We say, "If so, put your nets in more often and give the other fellow a fair run." Other people make every effort to main-

tain their own families in the hope that they may tide over the trouble. How are we to decide between one class of persons and another? Are we to have a number of inspectors auditing the books of the people who are in business? It is *prima facie* evidence, if a man is carrying on any form of business, that he ought to be able to provide for himself. If not, it is not a case of being unemployed. The man who cannot get through on the land, and requires assistance from the Government, should go to the department concerned and not to the Unemployment Relief Board for the dole. The first responsibility is the family responsibility. The father is responsible for his children in the first place, and the children are responsible for their parents in the second place. The whole community is only bearing the burden which properly belongs to the family. If there is the wherewithal available the family will obtain it. Once a settler is allowed to get sustenance for his children other people will want the same thing. If we could say definitely that every man will be honest, that his case would not need the closest of investigation, that we could rely absolutely upon every statement that was made, we could keep half again as many unemployed and save a lot of money in the process. Imagine the Government keeping an army of inspectors and detectives running about to investigate cases which arise from anonymous letters! There are people who will not sign their names to letters drawing attention to the fact that persons are not entitled to receive sustenance. All this would have to be done at the cost of the country. In these matters, especially in these times, people ought to be honest in all their dealings. Every case will be dealt with on its merits. If application is made from men in the country, and we are satisfied that any member of the family is in want, because of the conditions prevailing, we certainly cannot allow those members of the family to want any more than we can allow anyone else. Where a person is carrying on a business it must be accepted definitely as *prima facie* evidence that the business, if it is still being carried on, is keeping that person. Individual cases will be investigated. It is not worth while discussing the Frankland River men. I

say most earnestly if I thought the men who walked out of Frankland River were really anxious to go back, and do a fair thing by the community, which tried to do a fair thing by them, I would not hesitate to give way a little in order to arrive at a settlement. But I do not think they are anxious to go back. I believe a fair percentage were never in earnest, that they went out definitely to cause trouble and difficulty. I know from a recent investigation that there is definite evidence that they began to organise before the men got there. They took one man from the South-West, and arranged with him to go to Frankland River to start a communistic agitation.

Mr. Sleeman: You must have played into their hands.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I did so quite innocently. It is deplorable that, without a band of inspectors and detectives, we cannot trust people to do their duty as citizens. In the circumstances they are not entitled to much consideration. Notwithstanding all this, I am still prepared to give them consideration if they are in real earnest. I ask the member for Fremantle to accept my assurance that there is no desire on the part of the Government to be vindictive. We want to do justice to them, but they do owe a duty to the Government.

Mr. Sleeman: I believe the matter could be settled quite easily now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am just as anxious about the matter as anyone. Because I am frank and sometimes blunt, I am misunderstood. I am not going to stand any monkeying. It is a duty I owe to the community as a whole not to stand such a thing. While I may be prepared sometimes to give and to take, I do contend it is due to the community from those men to whom the community did justice that they should show consideration and treat the community honestly and truthfully, and avoid causing unnecessary trouble.

Mr. Hegney: What are you doing about the men on the lower amounts, 14s. and 21s.?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have the matter ready for submission to the Treasurer upon his return, and am hopeful that something will be done for the 14s. and 21s. men. Let me point out that the sus-

tenance maximum of £2 9s. is only about a guinea short of the present basic wage. The man on 14s. is, no doubt, in a very unfortunate position as compared with the man on £2 9s.; but with the latter it is a question of getting the £2 9s. when he works, whereas the other man gets the money whether he works or not.

Mr. SLEEMAN: There is one important matter to which you have not replied, and that is the latest order of the Government, that no further single men are to be placed on sustenance.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not intended to provide sustenance any further for single men. They will be registered for work, and will be offered work when it is available. Single men are being largely absorbed, though there may be difficulty occasionally in getting them work. The rule is not incapable of being varied. We have, in fact, varied it. However, it is not intended as a rule to put single men on sustenance. Instead of being placed on sustenance, I repeat, they are to be registered and given work. There is not a proper conception of the responsibility of the citizen to the community, while there is an adequate conception of the duty of the community to the citizen. No one ever suggests what responsibility the citizen owes to the community. I previously gave an illustration where a man, stepping off a tramcar, boasted of having avoided paying his fare. He has, in fact, robbed the man to whom he is telling the story; but he does not appreciate that circumstance. Those who have been in close touch with the matter know that there are not single cases, but numerous cases, where men have deliberately left work which they might have followed, because they thought they would get a holiday period, working only a couple of days per week instead of working continuously. A case has been brought under my notice where it was impossible to get a married couple to go to the country at a wage of £3 a week and found, which is not too bad under existing conditions. Single men are not as a rule being accepted for sustenance, but are being registered for relief work.

Item, Incidental, £3,400:

Mr. SLEEMAN: What the Minister has just said does not apply merely "as a rule." Fremantle has received the definite instruc-

tion that no more single men are to be put on sustenance. At the last pick-up of single men, there were more men offering than were picked up. Are the men not picked up to be told they must starve?

The Minister for Railways: Are still more men coming in to you?

Mr. SLEEMAN: They are always coming in.

The Minister for Railways: Where from?

Mr. SLEEMAN: From around the district. They are single men whose parents were able to keep them, or single men who, having got a few shillings together, have never applied for sustenance previously, and ought to be complimented on that fact. Are we to say to them, "You can die until the Government can give you a job, and when the Government can give you a job you can live"? There is the definite order that no more single men are to be given sustenance. If the Minister cannot give an assurance that something will be done for these single men until work is available, other steps will have to be taken.

The Minister for Railways: Representatives from Fremantle are coming to see me to-morrow about the matter.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I left Fremantle at half-past five, and I did not know anything about that.

The Minister for Railways: They telephoned me only about an hour ago.

Mr. SLEEMAN: In those circumstances I will let the matter go.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote — Unemployment Relief, £310,774—agreed to.*

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.58 p.m.*