

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 11th November, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands : Reports of Mr. H. P. Woodward upon phosphate deposits on Islands near Esperance (ordered on motion by Mr. E. B. Johnston).

By Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : Return of cases of swine fever in metropolitan district (ordered on motion by Mr. Lander).

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills :—

- 1, Fisheries Act Amendment,
- 2, District Fire Brigades Act Amendment,
- 3, Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment,
- 4, Declarations and Attestations.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

MR. SPEAKER : I have received from the Auditor General for presentation to the Assembly a copy of the Colonial Treasurer's statement of the Public Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June, 1913, together with Part I. of the Auditor General's report. Part II, is in course of preparation and will be submitted to Parliament in due course.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, KONDININ EASTWARD.

Mr. BROUN asked the Minister for Works : 1, Do the Government intend to continue the construction of the railway east of Kurrenkutten from Kondinin, when the line is completed from Yillimining to Kondinin, without the men and construction plant being withdrawn from the work ? 2, If so, will he introduce a Bill this session for the construction of the line east ? 3, If not, why not ?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied : 1, 2, and 3, Bill for survey will be introduced this session.

QUESTION—RED SCOURGE, WASSERMANN TEST.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin) : 1, Are the Government aware of the deplorable prevalence of the red scourge in this State at the present time ? 2, What steps are proposed to be taken to deal with grave source of national danger ? 3, Is it true that a fee of two guineas per test is charged by the Public Health Department for the Wassermann Test, which can only be satisfactorily carried out at the Government laboratory ? 4, If so, and in view of the fact that several tests are necessary in the treatment of each case, will he see that a nominal fee is charged in future for the Wassermann test, as it is impossible for a working man to pay the present fees plus the necessary medical charges ? 5, If not, why not ? 6, Is it not a fact that the sputum test for tubercle is performed gratuitously by the Public Health Department ? 7, As the red scourge is at least an equally serious public menace as tuberculosis, should not the Wassermann test be dealt with on the same lines ? 8, Will he consider the desirability of dealing with this disease on similar lines to other infectious and contagious diseases ? 9, Will the Government introduce legislation making it a penal offence for any quack or other unqualified person to attempt to treat this serious ailment ?

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. C. Angwin) replied: 1, Though any prevalence of these diseases is deplorable, there is no reason to think that venereal disease is any more prevalent here than elsewhere. 2, Free treatment is given to patients at the public hospitals. 3, Fee of two guineas is charged to medical practitioners, but not charged to cases treated at public hospitals where there is free treatment. 4, No. 5, Such cases can be treated at one of the public hospitals if impossible for patient to pay the charges. 6, Yes. 7, No. 8, Na, as persons suffering from venereal disease should have easy access to gratuitous treatment with no unnecessary publicity. 9, Legislation in existence under "Medical Practitioners Act, 1894." The drug regulations introduced by the Government, but afterwards disallowed by Parliament, were promulgated for the purpose of giving effect to the law against quack remedies.

QUESTIONS (2)—METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE SCHEME.

Expenditure at East Perth.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Minister for Works: 1, What amount of money has been expended in connection with the septic tanks and filter beds at East Perth from inception up to date? 2, What is the estimated cost of new filter beds necessary to fully equip the system? 3, Is it his intention to get an independent expert to report on the best methods for disposal of sewage, etc.? 4, If so, when?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, £30,228 17s. 8d. 2, £14,000 for present population. 3, This matter is receiving consideration. 4, Answered by (3).

Capacity of Filters.

Mr. MALE (for Mr. Allen) asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the estimated volume of sewage that will be treated by the filters on Burswood island when the scheme is completed? 2, What volume is being treated by the filters on Burswood island at the present time? 3,

How many cubic feet of filter medium are employed in treating the volume referred to at the present time.

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, 1,250,000 gallons daily for present population. 2, Volume treated on 6th inst. was 713,000 gallons. 3, 70,200 cubic feet. This includes the material in the old filter bed.

BILL—LOCAL OPTION.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker) in moving the second reading said: I scarcely think it will be necessary to weary the House with a lengthy introductory speech on this measure, because it is very similar to, almost on all-fours with, that brought in last session. The whole question has been before the country I may say for years. It has been involved not only in the local option measures, introduced in this Chamber and passed into law, but every Licensing Act and every measure dealing with the liquor trade has incidentally included references to the principle involved in the Bill of which I am now moving the second reading. It is not one of those questions that require fire or passion or party strife in any sense of the word. But it involves a principle and that is the crux of the Bill, the foundation of the measure, which is admitted on every hand, the right of the people to regulate their own domestic affairs so far as they affect the community. That principle is admitted in this very Chamber, the right of the people to say who shall represent them, and by that means what laws they shall have to govern them. In some countries of the world they have gone further, and in this part of the world it is proposed to go further and submit all measures of great public concern for the decision of the general body of the people. When I have said that this measure proposes neither more nor less than to give to the people the right to say whether they shall have licenses for the sale of liquor or no licenses, or whether licenses shall be increased or re-

duced in every district where these licenses now exist—when I have expressed that that is the purpose of the Bill, then I say every hon. member in this Chamber understands it. The rest of the measure is merely detail. I do not think either it is necessary to rouse up the passions or the prejudices of this Chamber by any long digression or utterances upon the evil effects of intemperance, because of which I would like to see, if I could, the abolition of the drinking habits of the community.

Mr. Bolton: I would like your opinion of that madman Tregear.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know that he forms an important element in the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. Bolton: I hope not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Certainly he is not the inspirer of this measure, and will certainly have no influence upon my speech or upon the votes, I take it, of members of Parliament. There is no need for fanaticism. The evil effects of intemperance can be as great as Mr. Tregear in his flights either of fact or imagination can picture, and still the people may vote for the continuance of the liquor traffic, for the continuance of that intemperance. I am not going to argue the point of intemperance on this question at all. The only question I am going to ask the Chamber to decide, is, is it right that the people should have the control of that traffic which, whether for good or for evil, so directly concerns them? Their comforts, their lives, their homes, their future prospects, their progeny are all wrapped up in the correct solution of this question, and therefore they are so intimately concerned with its settlement that the Bill proposes that it shall rest with them whether they will have a continuance of the present state of affairs or a betterment or even a worse stage of it if so they please. Therefore I do not think I need trouble the Chamber more than to inform hon. members what the elements of the Bill really are. In the first place the measure proposes that there shall be a poll taken, not in April of 1914, but, if you like, as a sort of concession to those who believe it

should be taken at a later stage than that even, that the first local option poll shall be taken in 1915, in the month of April. Hon. members are aware that the present provisions in the existing Act provide for the taking of a poll next year and also propose that in the event of "no-license" being voted, the vote shall be given effect to in 1920. This measure differs in this respect. It proposes that in 1915 a local option poll shall become immediately effective. If in any district, therefore, "no licenses" were voted, no licenses were to be issued therein, at once there would be a complete wiping out of existing licenses. There would be no form of compensation, there would be no time compensation as is provided for in the present measure, or what is tantamount to it. Therefore the good or evil of the measure, according to the views that may be taken of it by hon. members, would be immediately given effect to. The resolution carried at the poll in 1911 would exist therefore until the year 1915. We should not, if the Bill be carried, take a poll next year, but the vote as it was cast in 1911 would remain unmolested until the following year. We propose in the Bill, as before, to submit four questions, four straight-out questions to the electors. The elector can vote either for what is called "resolution A," for "resolution B," for "resolution C," or for "resolution D." "A" meaning continuance, he can vote that the licenses now in existence continue as they are in any district, or he can vote "B," which means a reduction of licenses in any district, or he can vote "C," which means an increase in the licenses in any district, or he can vote "D," which means an abolition of licenses, no licenses. And whenever a poll is taken we propose to ask the people to give their opinion on one point further. We propose to ask them, "Do you vote that new publicans' and general licenses shall be held by the State?" Hon. members will observe that there is a slight difference in putting the question in this regard in this Bill from the way in which the question was put in the Bill which was withdrawn last session. This

is more direct and will, of course, serve more purposes than would at first sight appear. It is known to hon. members that there is a section in the existing Licensing Act which permits of the establishment of new hotels, the issue of new licenses in districts outside the radius of 15 miles from an existing license. The object of that is to prepare for the requirements of the extending population. The convenience of the public is or should be the first care of the Government, and it may so be that new districts, which so rapidly increase in population in this great State of ours, require hotel accommodation. We propose that if they have hotel accommodation, as far as possible that hotel accommodation shall be under proper supervision. The law permits of new licenses being granted outside the radius of 15 miles from an existing license, but we propose in the Bill not to make it quite so easy to obtain a license as formerly. The existing Act requires only the ordinary application and the procedure in the licensing court for obtaining a license. We say that before a license is given, even in a new growing district where there may have been no licenses hitherto existing, and where some kind of lodging and eating and, perhaps, drinking accommodation is considered by the inhabitants necessary, we say that before you shall obtain that license the court shall decide upon a radius or upon the boundaries of the people living in the vicinity of the place where the license is asked for; and there shall be a petition signed from within these boundaries asking for that hotel, and it shall be signed by a majority of the residents within that district. There is to be no mere discretion of the court. I would point out to hon. members that that step is necessary, whether the proposal is to have a private license or for the building of a State hotel. The petition is a pre-requisite to the issue of the license. That, again, I think is in accordance with the principles I am advocating, namely, the right of giving the people a decision, a control over the liquor traffic. The point I want to impress upon hon. members is that although the State, the Treasurer, reserves the right that hitherto has been recog-

nised as his—and which I submit is the right of a State without any legislation to support it, or to authorise or ratify it—the right to establish an hotel, under this new measure of ours it is proposed that the State shall go on all-fours with a private applicant for a license, that before a State hotel can be erected, the licensing court must be satisfied that the accommodation is adequate, that the building is suitable, and in short that it is required by the petition of the residents of the district. So no scheme of ours over private applicants, or screening State enterprise, as some would put it, behind the powers inherent in the Crown, is possible. The measure provides that in the case of “no licenses” being voted in any particular district, there shall not be a gradation of offences which decide the court as to which hotels should disappear, as was the case in the last measure, but that the court shall be granted full discretion to consider two things, namely, the convenience of the public and the requirements of the locality. These are the two essential guiding features in deciding, in the event of “no licenses” being voted, which hotels shall disappear. Very naturally, of course, the discretion being granted to the court, other matters will be considered, such as the past conduct of the manager or of the proprietor of the hotel. But if it be merely a personal quality that is at default, that is to say, if there be a good hotel but a bad manager, it surely is common sense that the bad manager should disappear and a better manager take his place, than that, so to speak, the hotel should be burnt to the ground. What the licensing magistrate will have chiefly to look to are the requirements of the locality and the convenience of the general public. The worst hotels will as soon disappear under this as under the former provision. The measure makes provision also, as the last measure did, for a return of the moneys that are paid for the ingoing, for the good-will of the house, in certain proportions to be decided by arbitration in the case of those houses that are eliminated, that cease to exist. The measure provides distinctly that when the vote is submitted the bare majority shall decide.

That is not an innovation. All the members of the House and all the public are familiar with the proposal. It has not been sprung upon us now, but has been in our minds for a long period.

Mr. Turvey: A bare majority on the vote will decide?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Quite so. It is what governs the elections to this House. It is proposed that the first poll shall be taken in 1915, in the month of April, and every three years subsequently. That is the proposal in the Bill, and for the life of me I cannot see why a bare majority should not rule upon this question as it rules upon all other matters of great public concern. Every member of the House is returned on a bare majority.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It alters the Federal Constitution.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In what way? This is a local measure for our own government, and the Federal Constitution is not concerned in the matter. A majority vote carries the elections both for the Federal House and for this House, and now in the House of Representatives itself a mere majority of one is keeping the Government in power. And if things of such national concern as that can exist and be approved and supported, why not in this matter where the vote is limited to a district, and where those concerned in that district in their own welfare can vote intelligently on it, I see no objection whatever to the principle. These are the chief features of the Bill.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Why not take the vote on the day of the general election?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In some respects it would be well to do so, because it would be less expensive, but we have had some experience of the confusion that arises by mixing up all sorts of questions at election time. This is an issue of more intimate domestic concern than questions which are debated on the platform at election times. At election times this question may be sunk into absolute subserviency and treated with inadequate consideration, and my purpose is on this temperance question to obtain some education. I would like those who

know something about it—not from a fanatical aspect—from a social aspect, an educational aspect, a statistical abstract to go forth to the world educating, not those of mature experience in the world, but particularly the young of the community, so that as they grow to the age when they can exercise votes, the exercise of the vote may be an intelligent one. I venture the opinion that at the present stage people are not too wise in exercising their votes as they do on this question because there is at the present moment such a dark perturbation through prejudice. And though I believe it is always right to let people express their conscience by the vote, it is no real indication as to the merits of the reform proposed that the votes should at some time be against temperance—against the suppression of the traffic. I am firmly convinced that as knowledge gets abroad and people calmly think on the matter, as they obtain knowledge on matters relating to this subject, which so affects the lives, the health and the stability of the people and their national character, I am firmly convinced that the ultimate vote must be in favour of the total extinction of the liquor traffic.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I am pleased to be in Parliament and supporting a Government that have been true to their pledges in all matters.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Please ring off.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And particularly in regard to their promises to the people on the question of the control of the liquor traffic. I am sure the electors of Western Australia remember that in his policy speech in the Mechanics' Institute a little more than two years ago, the present Premier and leader of the Government said that speaking for himself he was in favour of the complete control of the liquor traffic by the people on a bare majority vote, and to-day we find the Ministry for the second time introducing a Bill entirely in accordance with the promise then given to the electors. The main principle of this Bill as outlined by the Attorney General is to give the people control over all licenses on a bare

majority vote and to provide that the local option poll shall be operative at once in all respects.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you had a copy of the Bill?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is the same Bill as we had last year, and I have had an opportunity of glancing through the provisions since I came into this Chamber.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well, let me tell you it is not the same Bill.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is in its main provisions. I am afraid the hon. member has been sleeping instead of looking through the Bill.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I was listening to the Attorney General.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I have had an opportunity of looking through the Bill since it was laid on the Table a few moments ago, and I was courteous enough to the leader of the Opposition to tell him that I was going to try and speak ahead of him rather than that the debate be adjourned.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That was before the House met.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, and I have made my notes since then. I have seen the Bill that came in last session, and I have received the assurance of the Government that this Bill would be on the same lines, and I am glad to see it is on the same lines, and I can also see it is hurting the hon. gentleman opposite. I would like to repeat I am glad the Government are bringing in a local option Bill with the object of giving the people the control of the traffic straight away, and not the bastard kind of local option to take effect in ten years or any number of years which was passed by the late Government. Anyone who has any interest at all in the liquor traffic or the moral well-being of the community must agree that if we are going to have any reform in this or any other matter, the time for the reform is now. The present is the time that the poll should be put into operation in every district in this State on the important subject of liquor

reform. The Bill provides that the local option poll cannot be taken on the issue of a reduction of licenses until 1915 and in this connection I would like to suggest to the Attorney General that he should consider in Committee an amendment providing that a triennial poll be taken on the day of the general election.

Member: Would that not disturb the main issue at an election?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If it did disturb the main issue that would be the will of the people, because the people would think that this question predominated over every other issue; and if the people thought that, what right have we to interfere with their wishes on that score. In reply to the remarks of the Attorney General on this subject, I would point out that already we have had a local option poll taken in Western Australia on the day of a general election, or rather on the day of the Federal referendum. The day when certain Federal proposals were being put to the people of Western Australia the State Government at that time very wisely decided that the local option poll should be taken on that day, and it was done without any ill results accruing to the consideration given to the questions by the people.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think it was a good poll?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It was not such a poll as we could wish, but it was a better poll than we might have under this Bill. We get the true expression of the will of the people in taking a poll on the day of a general election, and I hope the Government will at this late stage consider an improvement to the Bill in this direction.

Mr. Foley: You will have fanatics on both sides running round trying to influence the people.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I daresay the hon. member will agree with me that a man who is not an agitator—

Mr. Foley: I said fanatic.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is very easy for people to call a man who has an object in the world for the betterment of humanity a fanatic.

The Premier: If you call another man a madman, you must expect to get some back.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not know to what the hon. member refers, but I know that there are some people who are trying to do a lot of good in regard to liquor reform and other burning questions in Western Australia, and they are dubbed fanatics by opponents. Already we have the fact that the Federal Government take their referendums on the day of the general election and I am sure the Attorney General will not for a moment argue that we did not get a good poll on the Federal referendums on the day on which the general election was held. I am of opinion that we get the will of the people better on the day of a general election than on any other day suggested. Let us do all we can to ascertain the wishes of the people in regard to liquor reform. In regard to the questions that are to be put to the people I think they could be improved considerably. The Attorney General proposed to take the poll on the question that the number of licenses existing in a district be reduced. I would suggest that he should consider the question of not reducing the licenses but reducing the hours, under which liquor can be sold. If there are three hotels in a town, very little can be done from a temperance point of view by extinguishing one of those hotels and leaving the other two to trade for the present long hours, which are particularly unfair to the employees in the liquor business. I hope the Government will alter the question to be put to the people in the direction of making it a vote on the question as to whether the hours of sale should be reduced rather than that the number of licenses existing in a town or district be reduced. In fact, I think that the ballot paper might be amended in the interests of the people on the lines advocated by the West Australian Alliance for so many years, so that it would read—(a) I vote that existing licenses continue. (b) I vote that no other licenses be granted in the electorate. (c) I vote that the hours of sale be reduced. I hope

the Government will at the proper time alter the ballot paper in that direction, although, at the same time, I commend them whole-heartedly on the effort shown in the Bill to put the liquor traffic under proper control.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Why not abolish the system of shouting?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not think that a matter to be dealt with in a Bill of this kind. The present law provides that no local option shall be taken on the issue of a reduction until the year 1920. I am glad to see that the Bill brought forward by the Government provides that this poll shall be taken in 1915. As I have said before, I think it should be taken earlier—on the day of the next general election in this State next year. But whether it is this year or the year after either of them will be a marked improvement on the present iniquitous law. The Government propose that the control of the liquor traffic shall be by the people and for the people in Western Australia, and all must agree that there is no subject which the people are more entitled to control, and that the vote should be taken as quickly as possible.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: How about a man who has spent thousands on an hotel?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The publican well knows that he is granted only a yearly license.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We penalise a good many people when it is for the benefit of the community generally. Some people think that we penalised the land owners in Western Australia by preventing them from having votes in every Legislative Assembly district for every separate block they held. I remember when that was the law in Western Australia, and I am glad that the rising tide of democracy in this State has done away with that barbarous condition of affairs, and I am glad that the Government have brought in this measure to do away with similarly barbarous state of affairs which at present deprives the people from having any voice in regard

to the liquor traffic. With reference to the provisions for the granting of new licenses, I have not had time to look through the measure very closely, but I hope that Section 45 of the existing Licensing Act which allows certain licensing benches to grant licenses in districts where the people do not want them, because they are 15 miles away from an existing license—

The Attorney General: This Bill provides for a petition.

The Premier: And the consent of the Minister must be obtained as well.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am glad to hear that, and I hope that Section 45 is being repealed entirely. I am glad that a petition is required, and it would be a good thing for the Government to fix the distance at a radius three or four miles from within which area the petition must come rather than leave it to the mercy of the licensing bench to fix the districts. That is a small improvement which I suggest to the Minister.

The Premier: The conditions vary too much.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We have not had elected licensing officers in this State, and that is a matter I would like to see carried into effect, but I would not trust any licensing bench to fix the district from which a petition should emanate. I think Parliament should fix a definite radius in this measure. In conclusion I would like to say that I took the opportunity of speaking before the leader of the Opposition moved the adjournment, because I will probably be away during the rest of the week. An hon. member who does not agree with me in regard to the main principles of the Bill has been kind enough to grant me a pair on the main principle as to when local option shall come into force.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you going to Geraldton, too?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes.

The Premier: You cannot find a member to give you a pair.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, a member of this side of the House who voted against that principle last session. I am

sorry to say he has not changed his opinion, but he has promised to pair with me. If he had not been kind enough to do so I would not have gone north this week. It is the hon. member for Leonora (Mr. Foley). He makes no secret of the fact that he opposes the immediate application of local option. I again congratulate the Government on this bona fide and determined effort to give the people of Western Australia absolute control of the liquor traffic on a bare majority vote. I hope this Bill will become law, and I will be very disappointed if some hon. members on this side of the House do not reverse the vote they gave against this great democratic principle last session, particularly the hon. member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. FRANK WILSON moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

The Premier: No; this Bill is the same as the one which was before the House last session.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	18
Noes	17
Majority for				1

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Brown	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Green	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Harper	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller).
Mr. Monger	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1913-14.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 6th November; Mr. McDowall in the Chair.

Mines Department (Hon. P. Collier, Minister).

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier): As much information of a statistical character relating to the mining industry was supplied by the Premier in the Budget speech, I do not purpose taking up the time of the Committee by covering the same ground. In 1912, the tonnage of ore milled amounted to 2,688,968 tons for a yield of 1,282,653 fine ozs. of a value of £5,448,385. That, of course, was a decrease on the value of the output for the preceding year, amounting to £374,690. As is well known by hon. members, this was a decrease for the ninth year in succession as from the time when the industry reached its zenith in 1903, when the value was £7,770,000. It is pleasing to note that that downward trend has, so far as the present year is concerned, been stopped. For the ten months of the present year up to the end of October, the yield was 1,084,011 fine ozs. for a value of £4,604,588 or a proportionate increase on the ten month's operations of £84,268. When we consider the fact that for nine years in succession the trend had been downwards to the extent of several hundred thousand pounds it is a matter for satisfaction that the present year promises, by the time we reach the end of December, to be something like £100,000 in excess of the value for last year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is about what the Bullfinch turned out, about £130,000.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Bullfinch is not the only little ewe lamb in the mining industry, as the hon. member is apt to think.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I want you to acknowledge that the Bullfinch has contributed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It has done its share; it has done something; but it is not the only new field

which has come into existence during the last year.

Mr. George: You cannot build up a block in a day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nor is it the only mine in the Yilgarn district which has reached the profitable stage during the last year or two.

Mr. George: Is it any good?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have never said a word against the Bullfinch mine.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your colleagues have.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, nor my colleagues. The hon. member is driving at the criticism regarding the construction to that field of a railway.

Mr. George: And the whole House agreed with us.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The whole House did not agree.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I say emphatically that the whole House did not, and if the railway had never been constructed the Bullfinch would have turned out as much gold as it has done.

Mr. George: No.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why did you vote for the railway?

Mr. Harper: But the railway was justified, was it not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We will come to that directly. Many new fields have come into existence during the last year, and there has also been a revival of many of the older fields. In the Black Range district the year was a record both in tonnage and yield, and shows an increase of 16,000 ozs. over the preceding year. For the present year it is also looking promising. The Maekatharra district shows a record in tonnage, but the yield was slightly less than in 1911. The Yilgarn district shows a record both in tonnage and yield, and in the old district of Yalgoo there was an improvement of some 5,000 ounces on the preceding year, and even coming to the mother town of the goldfields, that of Coolgardie, last year was the best for some six years, at least since 1907, the increase having been 8,428 ounces. Com-

ing to the Yilgarn field in which is included the famous Bullfinch mine, we find that the increase for the 10 months of the present year over the corresponding period of last year was over 34,000 ounces, and I am free to admit that the Bullfinch mine itself, which at present is a good low grade proposition, contributed largely towards that increase. Right throughout the whole of the belt, however, extending from Mount Jackson to Parker's Range, a distance of more than 120 miles, new fields have come into prominence. At Marda, which is 10 miles to the north of Mount Jackson, there is now a promising and prosperous little field. At Marvel Loch and at Parker's Range matters have improved also, and the district of Westons, where there are two promising mines operating, has also contributed to the increased output, so far as Yilgarn is concerned. I want to say emphatically that neither I, nor any of the other members of the Government, have anything to say against the Bullfinch district or the Bullfinch mine. Exception was taken by the members of this party to some of the methods which were employed in order to boom that particular property. We are pleased that the mine has at last turned out to be a regular producer. In the Meekatharra district the amount of ore treated in 1912 was 72,194 tons, and it yielded 50,558 ounces, and for the first nine months of the present year the tonnage increased by 21,000, and the yield by 2,000 ounces. This will thus be the best year in the history of the Meekatharra field. It will be observed from the reports which have appeared in the Press that the new developments there absolutely assure, so far as we can possibly get an assurance, that that district will live at a great depth. I have been told by a person who returned from Meekatharra recently that at the 800 feet level of the Fenian mine there is a lode 20 feet wide, giving good values, and that generally the mine is looking better than it has ever done in its history. That opinion also has been confirmed by reports which have been made by one of the most prominent geologists, Dr. Mc-

Laren, who recently visited the district.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Did he inspect the Fenian?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Dr. McLaren's report has not been published, but I am speaking from the knowledge I have of the confidential report which he presented to those who employed him.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You will have to be careful or you will put the shares up.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : My references, although slightly eulogistic, are mild indeed in comparison to those of the hon. member in that famous speech of his. It is pleasing to know that at Meekatharra we have, and are going to have for many years to come, an important mining district, and one which will be second only to the Golden Mile, and which perhaps in years to come will equal the output of the Golden Mile.

Mr. George : Are there any good buying propositions just now?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I am not going to advise the hon. member. Turning to other new fields, we have Comet Vale, which is a promising district, and where there are two or three mines which have reached the producing stage, and where the prospects so far as they have gone, are very promising indeed. Not the least of the districts to have contributed to the improved output is that of Ora Banda, and if the leader of the Opposition desires to take to himself all the credit for the output from Yilgarn, through the operations of the Bullfinch mine, I am going to take a good deal of the credit for the position as it is to-day at Ora Banda. I am pleased to say that we have there now a regular producer.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I think Mr. Gregory opened up Ora Banda.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : That is one of the mistakes the hon. member has made. Mr. Gregory was certainly there many times, but I do know that the district was in a sorry condition two years ago. On the occasion of my first visit I do not think the population ex-

ceeded 200 people. To-day it is carrying a population of between 600 and 700 people, and the position is better than it ever was in the history of the district. The Black Range district during the year showed a slightly decreased yield, but a slightly increased tonnage. Of course the principal producer, as has been the case for many years past, has been the East Coolgardie goldfield. No less than 59 per cent. of the total yield has come from East Coolgardie, or practically from the Golden Mile. The ore treated last year was 1,763,265 tons, and the yield 788,785 ounces, of a value of £3,350,546, or, as I have stated, 59 per cent. of the total yield of the State. That brings home to one the enormous richness of that comparatively small area of country situated in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. It is also pleasing to note that some of the mines are looking as well to-day at the bottom levels as they have ever done.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I wish they all were.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is asking too much. If they all looked well at the bottom level——

Hon. Frank Wilson: I meant the mines on the Golden Mile.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Even then it would be a phenomenal thing to expect.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It has been phenomenal.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And in many respects it is phenomenal at the present time, but we know very well with regard to mining, where operations have been carried on for a score of years on a large scale, and especially when great depth has been attained, the richness of the ore has not been maintained. In one mine on the Golden Mile they are about to commence to sink another 600 feet from the 2,850ft. level. This will take them down to 3,450 feet. This is being done on the advice of Dr. McLaren, so that the future of some of the mines in that district is assured for many years to come. Of not the least importance is the labour which is employed in that district. There were at the end of last year 5,518 men employed on the Golden Mile

alone, and as I have frequently stated, the conditions of employment in the deep mines have become very irksome, and in this connection it is to be hoped that the Bill now before another place, which has been designed to improve those conditions, will receive sympathetic consideration at the hands of that Chamber. To minimise some of the dangers attendant on the risks in those mines, two additional inspectors have been appointed during the year, and it is hoped in that way to make the lot of those employed underground somewhat easier than it has been hitherto. Perhaps the most important work of the department is that in connection with the geological surveys. Some few years ago the staff of this branch of the department was increased by the appointment of several additional geologists, and as usual all have been kept very busy during the year. Their work is most important, and their reports and the information collected from time to time is compiled in bulletin form and is made available to the general public, and to prospectors and others who desire to avail themselves of it. During the year detailed geological surveys have been made of Kalgoorlie, Southern Cross, and Ora Banda districts, and flying surveys have been made of the South-West portion of the Murchison goldfield, including Cue, Day Dawn, Cuddingwarra, Weld Range, Moyagee, The Island, Mainland, Webb's Patch, Tuckanarra, and other places, and detailed work has been carried out at Poonah and Coodardy. It will be remembered that early in the year there was a discovery of emeralds made at Poonah. Mr. Woodward, of the Geological Department, visited the district, and he reported that whilst at the present time the emeralds are not of a very high value, it is possible that at a greater depth they may improve in quality, and to that end the department is rendering assistance to the prospectors. Flying surveys have been made of portion of the East Murchison including Mount Keith. This is a new district, which is situated between Mount Sir Samuel and Wiluna, where a new battery has been erected during the year, and where the first round

of crushings promised very well indeed. It is rather a bright district which is carrying 60 or 70 men and the outlook is very favourable.

Mr. Foley: They are all strenuous men there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Since last year the services of a geologist of the department have been lent to the Agricultural Department to investigate the limestone deposits in the South-West, including Pinjarra, Capel, Busselton, Waroona, the metropolitan area, and the coastal plains between the Murray and Collie rivers, and as a result of that investigation it has been proved, I believe, that valuable limestone deposits exist in the State. The continuation of the detailed geological survey at the north end of Kalgoorlie is in hand, and also with regard to Yilgarn, and the same applies to Meekatharra and Kookynie. The continuation of the investigations of the limestone deposits in the South-West will be carried on until it is completed. A flying geological survey of the country to the north of Peak Hill, extending to the Pilbara goldfield, is also in hand, as well as the continuation of a flying survey between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie.

Mr. George: What about the lime at Lake Clifton?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I referred to those investigations while the hon. member was out of the Chamber. I am not fully acquainted with what the geologist is doing. He has been lent to the Agricultural Department and he is at their service, and has been for a considerable portion of the year doing work for that department and is still at their disposal.

Mr. George: There are millions of tons which only want digging out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If that is so there will be no difficulty in locating it and making proper use of it. One of the most difficult problems of all is how to devise the best method by which the industry can be assisted. It has been held, and I hold also, that two of the principal methods are by Government assistance in the direction of water supplies, and the provision of crushing facilities.

Since we have been in office, a very considerable sum of money indeed has been expended in providing water supplies on the newer fields. That work has now been transferred to the Water Supply Department and is not under the control of the Mines Department, but the needs of the districts have been recognised and the work is carried out to-day just as it formerly was under the Mines Department. As regards the crushing facilities, it is interesting to note what is being done by the State batteries system. The output since the inception of the system to the 30th June of this year was as follows:—Tons of gold ore milled, 927,077; value of bullion recovered, £3,426,830; tons of sand treated, 510,202; value of bullion recovered, £96,086. We have two tin-crushing plants in the South-West and another leased in the North-West, and, from these plants, there was also returned, since their inception, £77,447 worth of tin from 61,282 tons of ore milled, or a total output from all plants since their inception—which I think was in 1898, for I heard the member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) state the other evening that he was in office when the first Government battery was started—of £4,060,365. When one thinks for a moment of what that amount of money means, he will realise what the State battery system has done and is doing at the present time. Many of our best fields have been opened up by the aid of Government batteries, amongst them Youanmi, Black Range, and Meekatharra. Those places owe their existence and the prosperity they are enjoying to the fact of the Government coming to their assistance and providing crushing facilities. In that connection, I have endeavoured to do all I could. I have realised that if the prospectors are going to take risks and to endure hardships in seeking to discover new fields, it is the duty of the Government to go to their assistance with crushing facilities. During the last two years, no less than nine new batteries have been erected in different parts of the State, and during the financial year 1912-13 new five-head batteries were erected at Mount Ida, Meekatharra,

Mount Keith, Bamboo Creek, Ora Banda, and Norseman. Six in all have been started, not counting three erected prior to the last financial year. I believe that is a record in the history of the department, and in my opinion, it is absolutely essential that the utmost assistance should be given to the industry in that direction. I have found in the department that very little benefit has followed the doling out of small sums of money, £100 here and £200 there, to individuals and small prospecting parties. In a large percentage of cases, the granting of this money has only resulted in the recipients holding on to a property for a few months longer while the money lasted, and then when the Government assistance was exhausted, they were in the same position as they were prior to the time when the assistance was given. A legitimate means of assisting the mining industry is to assist small prospecting parties to discover new fields, and the best means of doing that is to see that an adequate water supply is there for them and that crushing facilities also are provided. In this connection I may say that the cost of the erection of batteries during the last year or two has been considerably less than in former years; in fact, much under half the former cost. Five-head batteries that formerly cost £5,000 and £6,000 to erect, are now being erected for between £2,000 and £3,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why is that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Increased efficiency, better management, and better supervision.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It cannot be that; give us details.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I could give the hon. member more than one instance. In previous years when it was decided to erect a battery in some outlying district, an erecting engineer was sent to the district immediately the decision was placed on record, and frequently he had to wait there for months until the plant came along. Perhaps the part to arrive first would be the roofing, and the bed logs, which should be the first to arrive; would come last, and so

on. This haphazard system absolutely doubled the cost of erection. All that has been altered, and now the necessary plant is forwarded before the officer is sent out to erect the battery, and no time is wasted in waiting for the material. If the hon. member desires it, he can be furnished with particulars showing that plants are being erected to-day for half the cost in former years.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had better give us a return.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will be pleased to supply it if the hon. member will move for it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will move for it if you will make the motion formal.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will make it formal, and I will be very pleased to let the hon. member have the information. There has also been a considerable amount of money expended in remodelling and improving some of the older batteries. The difficulty which the department found was that many of the plants had been in existence for a number of years and were worn and out of date. It might be that a district did not warrant the pulling down of the old plants and the erecting of new ones, and the consequence has been that we have been expending a considerable amount of money in improvements and remodelling.

Mr. Harper: Of course the officers would make the most of that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The cost of remodelling some of them has run into a very considerable sum. The Ravelstone battery out from Meekatharra, has been improved and remodelled at a cost of £150. The batteries at Marble Bar, Burtville, Mulline, Linden, Payne's Find, Yerilla, Mount Sir Samuel, and Leonora—in fact the whole of the plants have had attention in this connection, and a considerable sum of money has been spent, and it may be well to point out that the loss on the operation of the battery system last year is largely attributable to the expenditure from revenue on repairs and renewals.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Of course you have had to do that. You would not take that expenditure from Loan funds.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I have charged Loan funds with expenditure that could be legitimately charged, but, as I have already stated, a considerable amount has been expended from revenue. At the beginning of the year there were 31 operative batteries under departmental management which were controlled by 19 managers, and at the present time 36 batteries are managed by the department with 20 managers; in other words, five additional batteries are being worked now with only one extra manager. This has been made possible by re-grouping the batteries and re-arranging the managers, and, as showing that the management of the batteries department has been economical and careful, I may say that the total cost of treatment including milling, tin, sand and slime treatment, for the nine months ended 30th September, 1913, was 10s. 11d. as against 11s. 1d. for the corresponding period of 1912, an improvement of 1.4d. per ton on 69,317 tons, or a saving in gross working cost of over £400. There has been a considerable agitation, which I suppose will continue till the end of time, for a reduction in battery charges, but it has been impossible to accede to that request unless we are prepared to incur a much larger loss than the batteries are showing at the present time. Having regard to the fact that of the 36 batteries in existence only two showed a profit last year, namely, Black Range and Wiluna, and those profits were small sums of about £50 and £177 respectively, we have considered it impossible to make any reduction in the charges, but I do think the State is justified in granting what may be called a subsidy in the form of the loss incurred in the working of a battery. The loss of £9,000 or £10,000 on the battery system may be viewed in the light of a subsidy to the industry, and it is money well spent. for, after all, if the erection of one new battery results in the discovery or the bringing into existence of another field like Meekatharra, the State will be well compensated for the loss over many years that it makes on the battery system as a whole. It may be noted, also,

that during the past two years, the period for which payment is made for tailings has been reduced from 3 months and 6 months to a fortnight, and prospectors are now able to get payment on agreement as to the assay of their tailings within a fortnight after the crushing has been cleaned up. That is done by the operation of the tailings purchase suspense account, which at the 31st May, 1912, showed a debit of £20,140 and assets at £19,921, but at the 30th September, 1913, the debit was £15,189, and the assets £18,134. The position has improved to the extent of £5,000 due to the reorganisation of the tailings treatment generally, the treatment of accumulations of slimes hitherto not treated, and the sale of accumulated slimes, whilst, of course, during the period mentioned current tailings were purchased and paid for as in the past. I do not know that anything can be done other than is being done at the present time so far as the batteries management is concerned. The superintendent is a very capable and painstaking officer, who is doing all he possibly can, and I believe that so far as the prospectors are concerned the State battery system gives a greater degree of satisfaction than it has done for many years past. The only thing the prospectors demand now is that the milling charges shall be reduced, and in this connection, I am making a trial or experiment at the Coolgardie battery, which for six months will be run at a crushing charge of 7s. 6d. per ton. It has been frequently alleged by customers of the batteries, that if the price of treatment were reduced the tonnage treated would so increase as to compensate the department for any loss on the reduced charges. The officers of the department hold a different view, but, in order to set the matter at rest once and for all, we have decided to give the system a trial in a district which after all is one of the most favourable for low grade crushings. The battery has been running for the past month or two and when it has completed six months on the reduced scale, we shall see if the contention of our customers is borne out, namely, that the increased ton-

nage will more than make up for the loss on the reduced charges. The value of the tin output was well above last year's average, and last year was the best since 1903. With regard to Collie coal, 1912 was a record year. The present year promises to establish another record, that is that the output will be considerably in advance of that of 1912. Notwithstanding the fact that some two or three years ago they had an exceptionally good year, because of the strike in Newcastle, 1913 promises to be the best year in the history of the Collie coal field.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The State steamers have not accounted for much.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Evidently they have been able to go on increasing their output without the aid of the State steamers.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: That is no reason for bringing coal from Durban.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: With reference to the lead ore output, we find that for the Northampton district from 1899 (the first year when records were kept), to the end of 1912, the output was 19,896 tons, of the total value of £45,886. That is, covering a period of 13 years the value of the lead output from the Northampton district was £45,886, and for the nine months of the present year the output has been 21,029 tons of a total value of £47,934, or a better yield for the nine months of the present year than there had been for the 13 previous years in the history of the State. So things generally are looking bright in the Northampton district. Some of the mines have been opening up well and there are a good many men employed.

Mr. Hudson: Is it due to the good price of lead?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Lead at the present time is a good price and has been largely responsible for the increased number of men who are working there and for the value of the output. The copper industry has been very quiet for the year owing, mainly, or almost wholly, to the fact, that the Phillips River district has been very dead. I rather regret to say that the company

which had commenced there in a very large way, after sinking a good deal of money, several hundred thousand pounds, had to give up in the end and the consequence is that the field is in a very depressed way.

Mr. Hudson: It would be fair to say the reason.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know I should say it is the fault of the management. I had an opportunity of visiting the field early this year and there I saw one of the finest ore reduction plants, concentrating plants, equal to anything there is to be found in any of the Eastern States, and undoubtedly the values are there, because there is an enormous quantity of copper ore and the values are between 6 per cent. and 10 per cent, but somehow or another the company operating it failed to make a success of it, not because the values are not there, or the field is not a good one, but, so I have been told, because of incompetent management on the part of those controlling it. The question of giving attention to that district is now receiving consideration and it is hoped the smelters will again commence working, because if the field is to have a chance of coming again, or of reviving, there must be opportunities of treating the ore on the spot, as at present they have to send it from Hopetoun to Albany and then ship again to Port Kembla in New South Wales, where it is treated, and consequently the charges are at least double what they would be if the ore was treated in the district. The matter is receiving consideration and it is hoped that something may be done for the district. A considerable amount of boring has also been done during the year and one of the biggest boring undertakings in the history of the State is at present going on in the Southern Cross district, which is to cost something like £10,000 before it is completed. It was undertaken after very careful consideration and the report of expert officers of the department. It was undertaken in that district as having the best opportunities of success. It is a big thing in its way but if it results in the discovery

of lodes of greater depth than have ever been discovered in the Southern Cross district, then the money will have been well expended. In a smaller way in many districts boring has been undertaken, but it has to be entered into with a great deal of caution because, while it may result in the discovery of new lodes at a greater depth, it may also have the effect of erroneously turning down districts which, after all, may be very valuable, so to go boring in a blind fashion in different parts of the State would not be a proper policy to pursue.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Who pays for it if a good lode is found ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : If a good lode is found the cost of boring is refunded to the State by those in whose property it is found. A mortgage over their property is always taken before the boring is undertaken. I have under consideration at present the purchase of a tractor to operate in some of the more remote mining districts. I am thoroughly convinced that if means of locomotion or transit of machinery and goods had been provided in some of the outlying districts, some of the fields closed down during the past year or two would have been working profitably. At Lawlers, for instance, hundreds of men were employed during the past 14 or 15 years, but during the past 18 months the place has been very dull indeed, and I believe it has been due in a large manner to the cost of getting requirements to that district, the cost of paying railway freight for 600 miles and on top of that paying the cost of carting 80 miles by teams. One realises that there must be very rich mines indeed to stand that. The same thing applies to Wiluna, 100 miles further on. The cost of cartage from the railway station to that district is £7 by teams alone, to say nothing at all about the railway freight. There are many other districts in the same position and it is impossible for them to carry on unless they have mines of comparatively high value. The cost of cartage works out at something like 1s. per ton per mile in that part of the country. By some of the tractors on the market at

the present time, and which are at work in the Eastern States, it is stated that the cartage would not exceed 3d. per ton per mile, and the difference between that and 1s. per ton per mile ought to make a big difference between the profit and loss on mines in the districts which I have indicated.

Mr. Green : Has the Minister any particular make of tractor in mind ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : No ; several of them have been offered but a purchase would not be made without very full investigation.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Has the hon. member for Kalgoorlie an agency ?

Mr. Green : No, but there are lot of inefficient tractors on the market.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I believe that is so, but we will be able to judge of their quality by the experience of those in the Eastern States. Nearly all the governments of the Eastern States use them. They are largely used at the present time for wool carting in the back country of New South Wales and Queensland. It is claimed by those who sell them, and also by those who have had experience of their working, that they are a success. If that is so I know of no place where they could be used to better advantage than in our remote mining districts, not only for the cartage of supplies from long distances to the railways but where our Government batteries are operating, as, after all, a fair proportion of the cost is that of carting. In districts where a battery is situated the prospectors cover an area of anything up to 10, 12, or 15 miles and there again the cost of cartage is 1s. per ton per mile. If that can be reduced by the aid of tractors it is well worth consideration. I hope after very careful inquiry to do something in this direction.

Mr. Harper : That would apply to wheat growing districts, too ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Exactly. If they are the success which is claimed for them I believe they will be very useful in wheat districts which are now not served by a railway. However, that is not for me to consider. I do not

know that I have anything further to say in regard to the Estimates generally, except to remark again in conclusion that it is a pleasing feature that the yields for the 10 months of the year show that for the first year in nine the downward trend in the industry has been stopped; we have now turned the corner and are on the up grade, and that must be satisfactory to everyone concerned, not only in mining but every other industry in the State, and particularly to investors. As I have frequently stated, I believe that after all mining is only in its infancy here. We have an enormous area of auriferous country. Only this year I gave assistance to a prospecting party to go inland some hundreds of miles from Derby, so, while there are prospecting parties so far north as inland from Derby, stretching right down through Pilbara, Gascoyne, and the mineral fields right down to the Phillips River district, then I think we can easily say mining is going to play a very prominent part in the development of this State for many years to come. It is regrettable that prospecting has not gone on to the extent in recent years that it did in former times. It has principally fallen off now through the fact that there have not been any rich discoveries made which would attract pioneers or daring spirits, as was the case earlier in the history of the industry. By giving all the assistance the Government can extend, I believe that in years to come we shall have a revival not only in prospecting but in mining generally.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): Like other hon. members he was with the Minister in congratulating the House and the country on the fact that there had been some improvement shown in the mining industry. At the same time he could hardly follow the line of argument in claiming, as had been done on several occasions recently, that such improvement was due to wonderful administration on the part of the present Government. He did not know that any Government yet had been endowed with the power of put-

ting payable ore into our mines, nor did he know that any Government had been able to make a non-payable mine payable by legislation. At the same time, it was very pleasing, to himself especially, to know that this improved output of gold as evidenced during the past eight or ten months, although it was only a moderate increase, was largely due to the opening up of that auriferous belt which lay between Mount Jackson and Parker's Range, the oldest belt in the State if we excepted the Kimberleys, a belt of country which was discovered and opened up long before we had heard anything of the Golden Mile, and which in the early days of his first sojourn to Western Australia was thought to be something that would ultimately develop into a great gold-producing centre. He well remembered that his first experience in connection with the industry was at Golden Valley where as an attorney, he had charge of a mine called the Kathleen.

The Minister for Mines: That was the original number one lease, the original discovery.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: With many others he had always thought that the district would ultimately prove to be payable and result in very great benefit to the State. Inexperienced as he then was, it had seemed to him that the belt was very promising. Hence, perhaps, he had been more enamoured of the discovery of the Bullfinch than other hon. members, because he had been favourably impressed with the district prior to that discovery being made. He was glad to think the Government were accepting all the odium which attached to the remarks he had let fall on the discovery of the Bullfinch, remarks almost equalled by the Minister to-night when referring to Meekatharra. He was happy in the knowledge that the Bullfinch district had contributed practically the whole of the increased output of gold, showing conclusively that there was there a mine worthy of notice, a mine which would last for many years and, he hoped, be a dividend-paying concern; not so rich as had been anticipated, nothing like what it had promised to be

according to the surface discoveries, but at all events a mine which we might hope to be permanent for many years to come, giving large employment and repaying those who had invested their capital in it. It was regrettable to notice that the shares fluctuated in a marvellous manner. Somebody was evidently manipulating the market. A dividend was declared, and then down went the value of the shares. Heaven alone knew the cause of it. Possibly some there were who thought they could make more money by manipulating the market than they could by merely holding the shares they had. At any rate that was a branch of the business of which he had no knowledge. He could not profess to offer an opinion as to the reason for these large fluctuations in the value of the shares of that mine, nor as to why they should fluctuate so quickly and so often, when it was known that the mine was a payable proposition and well worth developing. It was interesting to note that the Mount Jackson district was opening up afresh. He hoped the Golden Valley district also would prove workable and payable. The Mount Jackson district had been in evidence about 18 or 19 years ago, and was thought a good deal of in those days. Ultimately the people working these shows had been drawn away to the eastern goldfields when Coolgardie broke out. Distance ever lent enchantment to the view, and presumably the miners fossicking around Mt. Jackson and elsewhere, directly they heard of the discoveries by Bayley and his partner, were attracted further afield, in order that they might take a share in the riches contained in that new centre. Then, of course, Kalgoorlie had followed on, and so this portion of our mineral area had been allowed to remain neglected. He hoped the verdict of the House three years ago or over, when the railway to Bullfinch was constructed, would be fully substantiated. He did not think the State had lost one penny by that expenditure up to the present. Indeed the State had made money by it, and it only remained for that and other propositions on that line of reef or mineral country to prove

themselves, at any rate payable propositions, to justify everything that had been done or said during that time. Meekatharra, of course, had always been a good centre, from its inception. To-night the Minister had told us that it might in a very short time equal the Golden Mile. He hoped that would be so. It seemed absurd to think that we had not perhaps other good centres, if not equal to the Golden Mile, at any rate centres that would approach that portion of our mineral country, and which would give full employment to any capital we might attract to our shores, and provide large employment for labour. The problem as to how to assist our mining industry had been the cause of much anxiety to many Ministers and many governments since the discovery of our Eastern Goldfields. He was not prepared to-night to accept the theory that the only way to assist the industry was to grant water supplies and to give crushing facilities.

The Minister for Mines: That is the principal way.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That was not at all certain. Water supplies were, of course, a necessity, but as for the State battery system, he doubted very much whether we had been on the right track in putting down these batteries here, there and everywhere, to enable men to prospect a certain belt and then throw up the shows out of which, to use the ordinary term, they had taken the eyes, out of which payable ore had been removed, and on which no systematic permanent development had been undertaken. The proper way in which to develop our fields was to instil confidence and to attract capital to this country. However hon. members might scout the idea of the necessity of capital to the continuous development of a large industry which had been of such enormous benefit to Western Australia, it seemed to him undoubted that if we had not capital put into this industry it was still going to languish, to gradually get smaller, and eventually it would be somewhat a thing of the past.

Mr. Foley: Have you ever heard hon. members flout the idea of the value of capital in our mines?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Hon. members representing the Labour cause in Western Australia had been heard to congratulate themselves that they could do without foreign capital, and did not want it, that the mining industry did not want it, that they could develop any industry in Western Australia without the aid of bloated capitalists who were sucking the life blood from our industries and from our people—congratulate themselves that Meekatharra was locally owned, that it could be developed and become a second Golden Mile without having the hated capitalist interfere. And this, contrary to the attitude of the Premier, who in his dire necessity went on the London market to raise capital at any and every opportunity, at any and every price that might be offered him. The excuse the Premier had given the other night was that we must have the money, that we wanted the money, that without it we would have to put up the shutters, pay off the works programme and bring financial chaos to the State. When the Liberal Government were in power carefully administering the affairs of the State, when the Liberal Government were cautiously borrowing at favourable prices and developing the industries of the State and encouraging individuals to develop those industries and work them properly, when the Liberal Government were instilling confidence into the outside capitalists to provide the necessary funds to keep all going well and strongly, then hon. members had denounced the capitalist. Would the hon. members supporting the Government bleed these men out of existence and frighten them away from Western Australia?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I have always supported your Loan Bills, and regretted that they were not larger.

The CHAIRMAN: Did this pertain to the argument?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, to the argument of capital as regarded the development of mining.

The CHAIRMAN: It was very far-fetched.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: All the capital possible he had brought into Western Australia, but he had been cautious in his methods of obtaining it, resting on the sure knowledge that the people were responsible, and would have to repay it. That did not seem to bother the present Government. The first essential was capital to develop the industry, which could not be done by muscle alone. It could not be done solely by the labour of the men who were doing the strenuous work of prospecting and opening up shows. The wherewithal to develop the mines and equip them with machinery was essential to make them a permanent success. Were we inducing capital to come to our State, as it had done in a riotous manner 20 years ago? In the early days of the gold discovery capital poured in. At one time one could sell anything; it had only to be pegged near to any mine which was known abroad, and the capital was forthcoming whether it proved to be a duffer or something payable. The next thing required was freedom for those investing in the mining industry and those employed in it. Let them work out their own destiny, and make the most they could of it. We did not want to be constantly legislating to restrict their operations, or attacking, as supporters of the Government were doing, those who had invested their money. We did not want to be constantly legislating in a two-penny halfpenny way to interfere with the management, or with those responsible who had built up the industry to what it was at present.

Mr. Underwood: We want another Bullfinch boom.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The industry should not be hampered by class legislation—a sample of which we had had in the recent Mines Regulation Bill.

Mr. Turvey: We want to study the lives of the miners.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, of everyone to a moderate and reasonable extent, but he would not agree to protect the hon. member if, when walking down Hay-street, he foolishly crossed in front

of a motor-car, or if he was travelling on a train and alighted before the train stopped, and got hurt. All reasonable precaution should be given to every employee in the industries of the State, but something was expected from the employees in return, and that was to take due precautions for their own safety; but employees often became familiar with danger, and took risks which they ought not to take, and many accidents which had been attributed to defects in the mines or the management might be traced to the neglect of the men.

Mr. Harper: Ninety per cent.

Mr. Green: You want them to die or be damned.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not use language of that kind.

Mr. Green: It was not used in a blasphemous sense.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw. This sort of language must cease.

Mr. Green: I withdraw.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It seemed that some hon. members on the Government side always wanted to go to the full extreme in everything. They forgot that moderation and compromise were the groundwork of success in any business undertaking, and that whereas an employer of labour was bound, if he did his duty, to see to the interests of the workers under him, and that if he was a man of business he would do so, recognising that if he neglected his workers he would get a smaller return from their activity, there was also a duty from the worker to the employer to give of his best for the wages he demanded for his labour. Hon. members opposite seemed to think it should all be on one side—that a man who employed labour was the enemy of his employees, and that a millenium would only arrive when labour had been able to crush out of existence those who at present provided the means of their subsistence. He did not mean to claim that any employer was a philanthropist to the extent that he carried on business solely for the sake of paying wages. We would have no advancement in the world if that were so. Men going into indus-

trial pursuits and employing labour did so to get a return from the capital which they had invested, and he hoped they were reasonable, straightforward, and honest enough to give proper conditions and proper remuneration to those in their employ.

Mr. Dwyer: That is the very point at issue. We say they do not always do so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, the point at issue was to bleed the capitalists out of existence, to cause strife between the employer and employee. The return, so far as the State batteries were concerned, was not altogether satisfactory. It was not in keeping with the Premier's announcement when he delivered his Budget Speech that all those who benefited by the service of the State were to pay for the cost of that service. He did not want to detract from what the Minister was doing. He did not want the Minister to construe his words into any suggestion that he should increase the burden of those endeavouring to utilise the State batteries, but wanted to impress him with the fact that the State batteries had been a great loss so far as the State was concerned. They showed a deficit of nearly £400,000, and, considering the number of the population, the State had done generously by the great mining industry.

The Minister for Mines: That is the capital cost.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, the gross loss, including depreciation, up to the 31st December, 1912, according to the Minister's own report, was £371,000. It was idle for him to say he was going to construct and erect these batteries for 50 per cent. less than they cost previously. He could quite understand that if batteries were erected many miles from a railway and had to be carried long distances where labour was scarce, they would cost more than those erected on or near to the railway system. To say that the actual cost of purchasing a State battery to-day had by increased administrative ability been reduced by 50 per cent. was something which his common sense would not allow him to accept. He was glad that the cost of crushing had

decreased somewhat last year, namely by 2d. per ton, and that a saving all round of £400 had been made. That was a step in the right direction, but it all depended where the crushing was, what quantity had been crushed at each mill, and whether the work had been continuous or intermittent. The work was never fully continuous, but it might have been more continuous than in the period with which it was being compared. Reduced charges might and so far as was compatible with the financial exigencies of the State he hoped always would attract a greater turnover. That is so in the ordinary commercial walks of life. He doubted very much whether the rate of 7s. 6d. a ton in the crushing charges of our State battery system would result in an increased tonnage which would reduce the loss under which the battery system had been worked. If after cutting down to the cost price we went lower, any increased tonnage meant an increased loss, and not a reduction in the loss under which the system was worked. The Minister was justified in endeavouring to attract business where batteries were erected; he was justified in endeavouring to encourage a larger supply of ore for those batteries, and he (Mr. Wilson) commended him for making the experiment, but hoped he would carefully watch the results and not go too far in the way of making a loss by carrying out this experiment. The Minister's remarks with regard to Collie coal led one to the conclusion that in the coalfields of Western Australia we had a very valuable asset indeed. The industry had been responsible for the subsistence of a large number of workers and their families, and those who contributed to their support, shopkeepers and others, for many years past. An industry which had to fight and labour against untold difficulties, difficulties as regarded the nature of the coal, difficulties as regarded the quality and weight of the coal not being equal to that produced in New South Wales, and yet the industry had battled its way until to-day the Minister could tell of a largely increased output not attributable to the establishment of the State Steamship ser-

vice by any means; but to the fact that those who had been handling the local collieries had been able to induce foreign and other shipping visiting our ports, to take a certain proportion of local coal for bunkering purposes. He pointed this out to the House in order that members might appreciate the fact that the Collie coal industry as it existed to-day had been a continual fight, that tens of thousands of pounds had been sunk in the industry and lost before it attained the position it was in now, notwithstanding the fact that different Governments had lent assistance to it to a considerable extent by utilising the fuel on the railways. Was it not right that that should be so? Was it not fair that an industry of this sort which meant so much to the State should at any rate receive preference so far as State consumption was concerned? That principle had been beneficially carried out on the railway system and he could go further and say that it was a crying disgrace that the State steamship service up to the present time had not yet taken a continuous supply of local coal for bunker purposes. We had an admission by the new manager, Mr. Stevens, that the local coal could be burned successfully on the "Kwinana," but Mr. Stevens declared that it could not be burned on the "Western Australia," because, forsooth, that steamer was a fire eater. What Mr. Stevens meant by that, he presumed, was that it was a boat which consumed a large quantity of coal, and that the capacity of that vessel was not sufficient to enable it to be bunkered with local coal in order to make a round trip.

Mr. Gill: Did he not say something else?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member could prompt him if he wished.

Mr. Gill: Did he not say something about the speed of the vessel?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It did not matter what was the speed, Mr. Stevens declared that the steamer was a fire eater and that statement boiled down, meant that if the vessel consumed 70 tons of coal a day, and had a capacity for, say, only a five days' trip, when going

on a ten days trip she would have to carry fuel in the space which was provided for cargo. In the best sense of the term, was not coal mining one of the most important mining industries, or the second mining industry in Western Australia? Of course it was. The industry was entitled to every assistance and every consideration, and he hoped the Minister for Mines would make it his duty to bring pressure to bear upon his colleagues to see that the State steamers used local coal. With regard to the northern portion of the State, that around Northampton, it was pleasing to hear that mining for lead had received a new lease of life. Here again, he might freely and honestly take some credit from the fact that the Government with which he had been associated had opened up the whole of that district around Geraldton by railway construction, and it was the Ministry with which he was associated whose duty it was to initiate that railway construction, and not only make that part of the State a great pastoral and wheat growing district, but also provide the necessary facilities of transport to bring the lead ore to market. Had it not been for the construction of the railway towards the Murchison river, the number of men employed in the lead mines would not be anything like what it was to-day. Therefore, it was pleasing to note that the courage displayed by the previous Ministry in bringing these railway propositions before Parliament, and the support that was given by Parliament at that time towards the construction of these railways had been justified by the good results to which the Minister had referred earlier in the evening. The Minister suggested that he might be able to do something in the way of assisting this industry by knocking off the small grants made from time to time to various shows and providing better facilities of transport. He agreed with the Minister in that respect. It did not do a scrap of good to give bonuses of £50 or £100 to prove any mining show. It was much more rational to endeavour to assist those who were engaged in this industry as a whole, and if we could do that by making

cartage £2 or £3 or even £4 a ton cheaper than it was before, we would be doing something which no one could cavil at, and something which would receive the hearty endorsement of hon. members, and which would receive the approval of the people in the particular area which was being served. If the Minister could introduce tractors as he had suggested, the use of which he had told the House was under consideration, tractors which could carry goods to and from our mining centres away back from the railway system, at one-fourth the present cost, that would be doing something to assist the industry to a greater extent than had been done even by all the grants which had been made with the object of instilling new life into the industry. The Minister referred to the prospecting which was going on inland from Derby. There was an enormous belt of auriferous country from Derby right down to Pilbara. He (Mr. Wilson) had had a prospecting party out there 14 or 15 years ago, and he owned a copper mine at one time some distance to the south-east of Derby. Unfortunately there was a slump in copper and though he had done his best to make a profit out of it by sending the property home, it was turned down, and with his usual bad luck, he lost the profit that he had hoped to earn and the State lost the development of what might have turned out to be an important centre. With the prospecting which was going on now, however, even at this late hour, the district might be beneficially developed by those who were endeavouring to unearth the known riches there.

Mr. Hudson: Who was Minister for Mines then?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member who was sitting behind him, the member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy). The only criticism he had to offer so far as the proposals of the present financial year were concerned was that every sub-department in these Estimates indicated an increase, slight though it was; but added together the various amounts would make a respectable sum. The Geological Survey Branch, for instance, showed an increase of only £4 in the aggregate; that

increase was hardly worth mentioning, but the general Mines Estimates showed an increased expenditure of over £1,000, and the sub-departments right through, including of course the State batteries, showed increases for the present financial year. That was regrettable in view of the acknowledged financial tangle in which the Treasurer found himself to-day. The shortage of cash had become so accentuated that the Treasurer was almost desperate, and had to accept almost any terms that were offered to him by those capitalists who gathered round him on his recent visit to London, and who were moved by his assurance that capital had nothing to fear in Western Australia, that the administration of the Labour Government had been maligned and misrepresented and that they might freely invest their savings not only in Government securities of this State, but in every other branch of our industrial world. If we were in a tight corner financially and had to pay nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for our borrowed money, then it was the duty of every Minister to carefully watch his departmental expenditure in order that not one pound should be wasted. The Minister for Mines was like his colleagues who simply allowed his Estimates to go through regardless of the fact that the amounts were somewhat increased. The Minister had failed, according to the evidence members had before them, to make reductions. His increases were not great, it was admitted, but they showed an evident laxity in the desire to meet the financial position, even as the Premier's estimates had done. They showed that Ministers were not concerned too much with regard to the enormous deficit which was piling up on our Revenue Estimates. Notwithstanding that this was the position, it was to be hoped that the Minister for Mines would exercise great care and supervision over his departmental expenditure, and that though his vote might be passed as printed, he would economise in every direction and set an example to his chief in order that the country might, when the financial year closed, be in a better position than it was at the present time, and that the amount of the deficit

we would finish up the financial year with, would be reduced considerably below that which the Treasurer had stated.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): If there was one matter which should be approached from a non-party view by all members, it was the question of the mining industry. There was no doubt that mining had made Western Australia what it was to-day and whether members sat on the Ministerial side or the Opposition side their desire should be to foster and encourage the industry in every direction. It was well known that of recent years the industry had drifted to some extent and that the value of the output had fallen to five and a half millions sterling. Fortunately this year we had seen a check in the decline. In all probability lack of encouragement to prospectors to keep them at their work had had some effect in bringing about a reduction in the gold output of the State. In all probability if more encouragement was given—and the present Minister was doing all he possibly could in that direction—in the near future there would be an upward movement in the industry instead of the continued reduction which had been taking place in late years. There was no doubt that a well-defined policy was necessary in connection with the mining industry, and we ought to do all we possibly could to see that every encouragement was given. The State had benefited a great deal in the past through prospectors going out, and he was pleased to say that he represented perhaps one of the most promising districts in Western Australia. There was no district in the State which showed as much improvement as Meekatharra, or the future success of which seemed more assured. Not many years ago only a few scattered prospectors had worked in that district, but the introduction of a State battery had given them that assistance which had been the means of opening up a place that was returning probably the second highest gold yield of any district in the State. It was pleasing to know that the deeper the mines went down the better they appeared to be, and that was notably the case in the Fenian mine, which, at a depth of 700

or 800 feet, showed better prospects than it had ever shown at the higher levels. That fact went to prove that this district had come to stay and was going to be one of the places which would assist in making the mining industry much better than it had been for many years past. The State battery was still running at Meekatharra, but it was not altogether satisfactory. Many small improvements were necessary, and he took this opportunity of impressing upon the Minister for Mines the necessity for giving some little attention to the requests of those who had been battling so long in that district. Many of the men who were prospecting there to-day had been in the district from its commencement and they were asking for a few little improvements, but owing to the fact that the man in charge had some little prejudice against those improvements the prospectors could not get what they required. He urged the Minister to give those men encouragement by providing them with the means of saving the gold which they believed they should have. That could be done at a cost of a few pounds. It was all very well for Mr. Howe to speak with authority, probably from knowledge gained at a school of mines, but when it came to a practical question, the men from whom one could gain the most points were those who had been engaged in the industry all their lives, and when requests which involved the expenditure of only a few pounds were made by a large body of men, the Minister should endeavour to give them every consideration. The same complaints obtained in regard to the battery at Wiluna. The battery there had turned out many thousands of pounds worth of gold, and to-day a number of improvements were required. On no occasion had there been any cause for complaint as to lack of expenditure, but the money had not always been spent in the right direction. He felt sure that a little more encouragement to the prospectors there, by giving them what they required, would meet with more success than the policy in the past. It was a matter for regret that in a place like Wiluna, which con-

tained the largest lodes known in Western Australia, the volatilisation process had not turned out a success. The Government should step in and investigate this matter, and possibly by the expenditure of a few thousand pounds they would make a discovery by which many thousands of tons of good ore could be treated and one of the largest mining centres yet known in this State would be established. Lately he had had the pleasure of travelling through the North Coolgardie Goldfields to Wiluna and across to the Murchison fields, and there was no doubt that if some process could be discovered by which the gold could be extracted from the refractory ore to be found throughout the whole of that territory, there would be thousands of men employed where there were only a few scattered miners to-day. He would urge the Minister and those controlling the mining industry to give all the encouragement they possibly could to the opening up of the back country which contained so many lodes of great promise. The gold was there beyond a doubt, and all that was required was the discovery of some process by which the metal could be won. At Ruby Well, some 60 or 70 miles north of Meekatharra there was another discovery of great promise. A battery was at work there, mainly through the assistance given by the present Minister, and the district was doing very well. The prospectors going out from Ruby Well had made another discovery at a place called Holden's Find and there were about 100 men engaged at that place. One of the greatest drawbacks to the development of this find was the fact that men could not get water with which to carry on their work. In his opinion the Mines Department had made a great mistake by allowing the mines water supply to pass under the control of another department. It was a matter of impossibility to work the water supply on the goldfields from a commercial point of view. It was the system of the Water Supply Department to look upon the opening up of a water supply on the goldfields as a commer-

cial proposition rather than from the point of view of benefiting the industry, and he hoped it would be possible for the Mines Department to again assume control of the mines water supply, because only then would a success be made of that sub-department. At Holden's Find a bore had been put down which was supposed to supply about 80 or 100 men and their horses. After putting down the bore the party were taken away without any well being sunk. Then when a request was made for a well the men had to be sent back to do that work at great expense. When they had a party on the spot, those men should have put down a well and provided a good water supply, with the aid of which probably another centre equal to, if not better than Meekatharra itself, would be opened up. Personally he had not seen the district, but from reports he had received the place was going to be of some use in increasing the gold yield. In regard to Holden's Find, he hoped that if the place proved a successful mining centre those who had made the discovery would receive the reward from the department which any prospector was entitled to who located a good field. He suggested to the Minister that he should not wait for a request to be made for the reward, but should make a grant by way of a reward to those hardy prospectors who had discovered this very promising field. At Mount Egerton there had been some trouble, but he was pleased that the Minister had seen fit to meet the requests of the men engaged there by reducing the high battery charges, and he hoped this concession would result in making Mount Egerton a real live centre. Mount Keith, a new district at which the Minister had opened a public battery recently, was turning out well, and, contrary to the usual order of things, the third round of crushings was much better than the first. At this place again the question of a water supply cropped up, and although hundreds of pounds had been spent at that spot, the people had not been able to get a water supply sufficient to keep the place going.

The Minister for Mines : We spent £2,300 on the battery.

Mr. HOLMAN : The expenditure on the battery had been heavy, but nevertheless if a place was to be a success it must have a water supply, and he hoped the Minister would push that matter forward. Peak Hill, one of the oldest mining fields in Western Australia, gave every promise of being a prosperous district. Ruby Well was only 17 or 20 miles distant to the south-west, and to the north there was a copper and gold discovery to which the Minister had sent a geologist to report. He trusted that when the report was made the Minister would allow the local people to have it at the earliest possible moment. It would be wise for the Minister to instruct the geologist to hand a copy of his report to the local Press, so that the local people might know the geological conditions of the district at the earliest moment, instead of the information being sent first to Perth and then having to filter back to the district through the metropolitan Press, which did not do all that it should do to assist mining. It would not be giving away anything from the Minister's office, because, if the report contained any private matters that should not be divulged, such matters could be withheld from the Press. He had merely risen to say a few words on behalf of the district he represented. Many of the mining districts were in the same position as his own. The people were struggling along and endeavouring to make the mines prosperous and to provide work, but they had to face great difficulties. The regulations introduced some time ago had not been of much assistance to the industry, and he only hoped that the experiment which the Minister was making at Coolgardie would be a success and that the whole State would have the same opportunity as the people at Coolgardie were enjoying at the present time. He did not know what progress was being made with the experiment of reduced crushing charges, but he hoped the success of this innovation would be such as to warrant the Minister bringing about a wholesale reduction in crush-

ing charges throughout the State. Speaking of Peak Hill and the surrounding districts, embracing the copper shows north of that place, he would like to impress upon the Minister the necessity of doing something to keep a mining registrar up there. Although the place itself was not very lively at the present time, yet with all these centres opening up around Peak Hill it was necessary to have some head-quarters where business could be transacted. It was pleasing to note that an effort had been made to standardise our gas producers, and there was no doubt that they would bring about a tremendous reduction in the cost of our battery system. The water question was a serious one, but he felt sure the Minister would set about giving the necessary facilities to outback centres by way of tractors. So far as he (Mr. Holman) was personally concerned, while he was speaking now a little parochially, he was doing it with a desire to point out to the Minister the necessity of giving some little attention in the direction he had indicated. He was prepared to look at the mining industry from a non-party point of view, and he hoped that the efforts being made to better the conditions of the wage-earners in the industry would meet with the success they deserved, so that it would be possible for the men to work at the greatest possible advantage. So far as the coal question was concerned, this was a matter which affected this State, and he did not think one hon. member would say a word against the opening up of the Collie coalfields. Probably we were all sorry the coal was not of as good a quality as we would like to have it, but at the same time this coal was in our own country and we should give it every possible encouragement. He sincerely hoped, in regard to what he had asked the Minister to do for his own district, that the Minister would do as much for every mining district in Western Australia as well.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies): It was pleasing to notice that the Minister, in introducing his Estimates, had been able to point out that for the first time for many years back the continuous decrease in the gold production of Western Aus-

tralia had been arrested, and that there was a probability, or almost a certainty now, that this year we would have an increased gold production as compared with last year. While he agreed with the leader of the Opposition in his remarks that the present or any other Government could not take credit upon themselves for this state of affairs, and that no Government could put gold-bearing or payable ore in any mine, he (Mr. Mullany) would also say that a Government could by judicious assistance to the mining industry endeavour to assist those engaged in the industry to take that ore out, wherever it existed, and that was all that the present Minister for Mines had claimed that his Administration had brought about. The leader of the Opposition also, while congratulating the Minister upon having provided water supplies, was not quite so sure whether he could congratulate him upon his efforts to improve the conditions of crushing at the State battery plants in this State. In fact, the hon. member went so far as to doubt whether we had been on right lines in continuing to encourage the State battery system at all, whether it had not been a mistake from its very inception. It was difficult for him (Mr. Mullany) to understand how any man claiming to have the faintest knowledge of mining conditions in this State should be under such an impression as this, but when the hon. member went on to say that in the early days capital poured into this State and it was possible then to sell anything, we got some idea as to what were this gentleman's ideas of assisting the mining industry. He (Mr. Mullany) took it that the hon. member thought it would be a good thing now if it were possible to sell anything. Did the hon. member mean that people engaged in the mining industry in Western Australia ought to lay themselves out to induce people in outside countries to invest their money in mining propositions that were worthless? This was the procedure followed years ago, when capital poured into this country, and the mining industry was now suffering the reaction which was inevitable in such practices. This was where the public battery system came in.

It was idle to say the public battery system had ever retarded the development of any one mine. We knew perfectly well that the public battery system had been the means of many thousands of ounces of gold being produced and placed upon the market in Western Australia, which would otherwise have been in the ground to-day. A great quantity of gold produced by the public batteries had come from small shows which under no circumstances would have attracted the attention of outside investors, as the ore bodies were not wide enough. The public battery system had been instrumental in many instances in proving that mines were worthy of investing capital in, and to-day these public batteries were prepared to assist the prospector to genuinely develop his mine. This was a far and away more satisfactory state of affairs than existed before the introduction of these public crushing plants. As the leader of the Opposition pointed out, it was possible then to sell anything. People did not try then to work their mines to get any profit out of them or prove whether they were worthy of attention or not, and it was almost possible to sell anything. By this the leader of the Opposition meant that people entrusted with capital by outside investors were robbing those who entrusted this capital to them, as they were prepared to buy practically anything. Was that desirable? He (Mr. Mullany) said no, and further that practices such as these, which the leader of the Opposition appeared now to endorse—

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is not fair. I never endorsed such practices.

[*Mr. Male took the Chair.*]

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member said it was then possible to sell anything; so it was.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No. I did not imply that.

Mr. MULLANY: Mining was now being carried on in a fair manner and a manner which was going to give increased profits.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I ask you, Mr. Chairman, whether the hon. member is in order in saying that I approve of these malpractices, the selling of worthless mines to the British public. I ask the hon. member to withdraw it.

Mr. MULLANY: The word "malpractice" had not been used by him.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member made use of such a word he should withdraw it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The hon. member referred to malpractices, that is the selling of worthless mines when capital was rushed into this State, and that I endorsed this kind of thing. I never endorsed it.

Mr. MULLANY: It was his wish to deny having used the words "foul practice" in any portion of his speech.

Mr. George: Did you not charge the hon. member with bolstering up worthless mines?

Hon. Frank Wilson: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the imputation.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member made use of the word complained of he should withdraw it.

Mr. MULLANY: It had not been used by him.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. member tell the Committee what he did say?

Mr. MULLANY: His argument was that the leader of the Opposition said that at one time it was possible to sell anything. He (Mr. Mullany) claimed that that was not in the best interests of mining, but that the hon. gentleman approved of these practices.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that. It is most offensive.

Mr. MULLANY: Now that he clearly understood what the hon. member required he would withdraw. He was going on to say that prospecting and mining in the State to-day were evidently conducted in a fairer and more honest manner than they had been in the past, and he was pleased that such was the case. This, he believed, would have a tendency to give that increased confidence in mining in Western Australia, the lack of which hon.

members opposite so often deplored through, as they said, the present Government having been placed in power. The Minister, in introducing his Estimates, was pleased to point out that several new centres had arisen, which were producing a considerable quantity of gold. The Minister more particularly referred to Ora Banda and Comet Vale. It was pleasing indeed to see the satisfactory manner in which the Ora Banda goldfield was opening up, and here the present Minister must be given the credit, and great credit indeed, for his prompt action in having taken steps to provide this field with an adequate water supply, so that they could keep their battery going. Comet Vale was one of the most promising and solid mining fields outside Kalgoorlie to-day, and it was more gratifying to note that this field had been opened up to its present condition entirely with Western Australian capital. Here again the leader of the Opposition had rather misconstrued some remarks made by hon. members to the effect that we would be better off without foreign capital. It would be difficult for that hon. gentleman to point to any member who had ever made such a statement, although of course it had been frequently said that if we could get local people to invest their money in our mines it would be the best possible method of opening up those mines. There was no conflict between members of the Ministerial party and capital, nor was there any conflict between capital and the legislation those members desired to introduce. But while capital was being invested in this State it ought to be insisted upon that the men employed in the industry should have consideration given to their needs. Hon. members were entirely justified in asking that, and he trusted the Government would never neglect to attend to it. Another very pleasing development in the mining industry had taken place in his own district. The Menzies Consolidated mine, which had been continuously working for the last eighteen years, had never paid a dividend. Yet during October that mine had had the most successful month's run in its history.

They were down 1,400 feet, they had the best reef they had ever yet worked, and during last month they had crushed 2,417 tons for 1,207 ounces fine gold, valued at £5,405, leaving a profit of approximately £1,300 on the month's operations. The previous month's operations had resulted in a profit of £700. This was in a district which in the past had been absolutely condemned, of which it had been stated by mine managers, geologists and others that the gold would not live to any depth, although certainly some of them had excepted this Menzies Consolidated to which he referred. This mine, to the credit of the management, had held on through all sorts of difficulties, and through times when it had looked almost hopeless. To-day, through their perseverance, they had about 150 men employed, and were showing a reasonable profit. This sort of management was in marked contrast to that employed in many other mines in the same district. For instance, the Lady Shenton mine, which in the past had produced 132,656 ounces of fine gold had closed down eight or ten years ago, when the management had £30,000 in hand. This mine had been closed down for the simple reason that there was some dissatisfaction between the directors and the manager, and because the mine was not looking too promising in the bottom levels and they had not sufficient faith in the mine which had turned out all this gold, and so they had practically abandoned the place to the water. Also, in the Queensland Menzies lease, which had turned out 76,928 ounces of gold, a similar state of affairs existed. Both of these mines had been abandoned at about 600 feet from the surface; yet the Menzies Consolidated, only a few miles away, was now showing a profit at 1,400 feet. The same state of affairs existed at Davyhurst, where a mine like the Golden Pole was in the same position, although it had turned out over 71,000 ounces of gold.

Mr. Harper: It turned out 75,000 ounces.

Mr. MULLANY: It was well for every man interested in the mining industry to try to devise some means of keeping up the gold production. Whilst he quite

agreed with the Minister in endeavouring to assist the prospector to go farther out and discover fresh finds, he thought there was too great a tendency to run away from old established fields in the hope of finding more distant fields which might be rich on the surface. The mines in a portion of his own electorate had not had a fair mining chance, and there was there a field for the investment of capital which offered great possibilities. In the old days the Government had been induced by the finds made on the northern fields to construct railways, spend many hundreds of thousands of pounds in providing water supplies, erecting public buildings and establishing Government officials of all sorts there. To-day these places were being left on the hands of the Government. This was not the fault of the fields, but of the extravagant management which had existed in the earlier days. Could it be said that leases which had turned out the amount of gold mentioned by him had been given a fair chance, when closed down after having been merely scratched to a shallow depth? The Great Fingal at one period of its existence had been almost condemned, but by continuing to go down further had found payable zones at greater depth. He believed that if some of those places mentioned by him were opened up again to-day, with the improved methods of treating ore, and an improved knowledge of mining conditions, they would probably prove profitable, not only to the investors but also to the Government who had spent so much money in developing these places. The Government had not been treated fairly by the men controlling these propositions in the past. The time would come when capital would be again seeking investment in Western Australia, and notwithstanding what members of the Opposition might say to the effect that there was no confidence in mining or in any other investment in Western Australia under the present Administration, he thought the fact that the gold production had increased under that Administration tended greatly to disprove such an assertion. He believed there would be a reaction, that capital

would be again invested in Western Australia, and that some of those places mentioned would be revived, and would materially assist the gold production of the State.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): The hon. member who had just sat down had been very elaborate in his criticism of mine management. It would be a good thing for the Government to find that hon. member a mine to manage, and see how he would get on. It was very easy to criticise those who managed mines. The hon. member had referred to a number of mines, for instance, the Menzies Consolidated. From the first it had been patent to any experienced visitor that that mine would live down to a great depth. It was on a long line of reef, consistent in size and uniform in values, and so was very different from a mine like the Lady Shenton, which had rich chutes of a patchy nature. Nor was the Lady Shenton abandoned to-day, as the hon. member had said. It was being worked by Mr. Faulkner, who had done very well out of it. The same applied to the Golden Pole. All these mines had been rich near the surface, down to 200 or 300 feet. The hon. member had referred to speculation in mines, and to the advantages which the State battery system had conferred upon the mining industry. It was well to inform that hon. member that apparently he knew very little, if indeed he knew anything at all, about it. Mining in Western Australia was of an extremely speculative character. In the early days gold had been found in many places. Many chutes had existed near the surface, in respect of which no living expert could say whether or not they would go down. At that time Western Australia was comparatively unknown in regard to depths at which gold would live to, and of course people had come along and speculated on the chance. Prospectors had had a much better time in those days than they had to-day. Every encouragement ought to be given to those prepared to bring capital to Western Australia. Hon. members supporting the Government were prepared to retard mining by legislation of a very drastic nature, and at the same

time to assist it in other directions by putting up State batteries, and providing water supplies. Water supplies were very necessary to mining, but as to State batteries, while they might look a good thing, he could tell his friends opposite that there was no more expeditious way of crippling mining than by the introduction of State batteries. As the Minister had pointed out, it cost 7s. 6d. per ton to crush at a public battery. On the other hand, at a private battery it could be done for 50 per cent. less. Three shillings was the cost for treatment at a mine which had its own battery.

The Minister for Mines: For milling?

Mr. HARPER: Absolutely. Small parcels of ore could not be treated at public batteries for the same cost. He was finding fault with the State battery system. There were very few men in Western Australia who had left a mine and had continued crushing at a State battery. When all the carting was taken into account and the extra cost of handling and cyaniding, it cost about £1 a ton less to treat the ore at a mine which had its own battery. If he owned a mine he would exert every effort to get a battery erected on the mine.

Mr. Foley: Whether it was worth it or not.

Mr. HARPER: A battery was not required to test the value of a mine.

Mr. Mullany: If you proved a few hundred tons to be payable and not enough to work a battery, what would you do?

Mr. HARPER: If he had a few hundred tons of good ore at sight he would give an option over it to someone. There were other ways of dealing with it than by crushing. If one discovered a decent chute it was easy enough to dispose of one-half or one-fourth, or three-fourths of the interest in the show, and if the mine was equipped with a battery and provided with proper machinery it was infinitely cheaper than treating the ore at a public battery which showed a loss of £1 a ton. That was the difference between a mine which paid and a mine which did not pay. It was the opinion of many prospectors that State batteries were not in the best interests of mining.

Mr. Taylor: They have been responsible for keeping four millions of money in this State.

Mr. HARPER: The Minister's statement showed that State batteries had produced about four millions worth of gold; that was not a great proportion of the 109 millions worth of gold produced in the State, and we had 36 batteries in Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: The batteries have been incidentally responsible for a fair proportion of that 109 millions in addition to the four millions.

Mr. HARPER: Nothing of the kind. The State batteries were responsible for only the four millions actually produced. Many times four million pounds worth of ore had been left in the mines after the State batteries had worked them out. In many of the mines there were other chutes besides the first one which was worked out, but that was the position in regard to State batteries; they were not in the interests of the development of mining. There was a tendency to work out the chutes; as soon as the end of the chute was reached the mine was finished with. That was not proper mining. In the interests of mining it would be better for the State, whether it suited the individual or not, that more encouragement should be shown to companies to develop their chutes. He had had experience in mines which he had controlled where the original chute did not last very long, but with capital at his disposal he had been able to develop other chutes many hundreds of feet away from the original chute. That was hardly ever done when people had the facilities to crush the ore at a State battery. This was a matter which should be carefully considered. If the Minister consulted the State Mining Engineer, he would find that there was a great deal in this contention. State batteries appealed to people and most of the prospectors had a very exalted opinion of the mines they discovered, but after a good deal of hard work they generally found that they left the mines with little capital and thus much harm was done through a lot of ore being left undeveloped owing to the facilities

of State batteries. Reference had been made to the Youanmi, Meekatharra, and Comet Vale mines. They were not developed by State batteries but by companies.

Mr. Mullany: The Comet Vale crushed its first thousand tons at a State battery.

Mr. HARPER: When the Comet Vale was first discovered he was in the district.

The Premier: You are in a comet now.

Mr. HARPER: It would be a good thing for the country if the Premier were in a comet. That district was developed by local men and he was glad they had had the courage to develop it. It did not matter whether it was local or foreign capital, strong financial companies were needed in Western Australia so that when a chute of ore pinched out or deteriorated they could go on developing the mines and finding other chutes. The Great Fingall mine had developed a large amount of ore through having an excess amount of capital. Reference had been made to the Golden Pole cutting out. At least £40,000 had been spent in trying to find other chutes of ore in the Golden Pole. The mine had been exploited down to 800 or 900 feet and 300 or 400 feet below where the ore was payable in order to find other chutes, and if those in charge had erred in any direction it had been in spending too much money to look for doubtful ore chutes. The management had not left one single point which had given any encouragement whatever without exploiting it. The management had done all that could be desired of them. Much had been said about getting cheaper freights for the mines. The railway was built from Coolgardie to Norseman and the costs of mining were not reduced in consequence. The men asked for better wages because of the fact that the company had not so much to pay in the way of freights. It was all very well to talk about giving encouragement to mining but the essential point was what it would cost. The less it cost the greater would be the quantity of gold produced. Going to Southern Cross, Parker's Range, Mount

Jackson and Golden Valley, and along that line of reef, the fields at Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Kurnalpi and other discoveries further out had made great demands on the employment of labour in Western Australia, and had drawn the people further east. The green fields existed far away and the people left the older settled mining districts for the new ones. The great disadvantage which the miner had endured was the enormously increased cost. Wages and cost of living had gone up by leaps and bounds since he came to Western Australia 21 years ago. When he was manager of Fraser's 21 years ago freight amounting to £30, £40 and £50 a ton had to be paid from York. He was managing a low grade mine of 6dwts, which paid small dividends and another mine, Hope's Hill, producing only 3dwts, which had to truck the ore something like four miles by means of horse trucks, paid expenses for years. It was the enormous increase in wages and the higher cost of living which had retarded mining more than anything else. It was all a matter of the cost of production; and if that could be reduced there would be a greater production of gold. In the Southern Cross country nearly all the propositions were low grade ones and if some of the present day facilities had been in existence years ago, there would have been a large population in that district now. In regard to water, he had paid £1 a 1,000 gallons to run the battery and under all the disadvantages Fraser's mine had been made to pay. The same applied to Hope's Hill, which had had to rely on water containing about 30 per cent. of solid matter. That showed what had been done in the old days of mining before the increased cost of production. The Minister had mentioned that it would cost about £10,000 to complete the boring. If that was done gold might be discovered at depth and then the question would be to find the capital. It was no good having gold at depth unless the capital was available to develop it. That was where the shoe would pinch, and where the trouble would start. It was all very well to go in for a big system of boring, but

it would cost a lot of money which we could ill afford. At the same time it would be well to know that if they did discover gold of a payable nature, that capital would be forthcoming for the development of the leases. It would be well to have a guarantee in that direction. Members were all glad to see the industry go ahead, but the desire was that it should go ahead on a sound and business-like basis.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn): It was gratifying to notice that there had been a turn in the tide of affairs and, with other hon. members, he joined in expressing pleasure at the progress which mining had made during recent years. It was pleasing to hear that the district of Yilgarn had had so much to do with the recent progress. The leader of the Opposition had admitted that that district had been largely responsible for the great increase that had been shown in the output of gold during the past year or two, and particularly during the present year. On looking at the report of the Mines Department it was found that there were more leases by about 1,000 in that particular district than in any other mining district in Western Australia, and as many of these leases were being worked at the present time, he felt confident that the future of the district was assured. He congratulated the Minister upon the amount of money expended in the district. The money had been wisely spent and the Minister should get an ample reward for the efforts he had made in that direction. Of course there were some who complained that the district was neglected, that sufficient money had not been provided, but on examination of the reports it would be found that the advancement of the district had been due to the assistance given by the Government and particularly during the past two years. The districts of Mount Jackson, Marda and Golden Valley were perhaps entitled to greater consideration than had been shown them in the direction of better facilities, but he felt sure the Minister would treat generously any applications which might be made to him. If, however, the finances had been in a

better position than they were at the present time he was sure greater facilities would be afforded to the prospectors. The southern portion of the Yilgarn district had advanced to such an extent that the Minister would be justified in having the water scheme extended from Marvel Loch on to Parker's Range or in some other way provide greater facilities in this direction. The member for Murchison raised the question of the wisdom of transferring the mines supply branch to the control of the Minister for Works. Whilst that action might result in effecting economy it was not working well in the interests of mining. There appeared to be among the officials in that department a want of sympathy towards mining and there seemed to be no connection with the developmental policy which had been propounded by the Minister. When one made application for a water supply for outback places it was immediately said, "Will it pay at once?" That was not the manner in which mining development could be advanced. The old policy should be adopted of getting water supplies immediately prospectors went out. Indeed he would suggest that water should be found in advance of prospecting. Whilst a change need not necessarily be made in connection with the management of Mines Water Supply Department, there should be some change made in the manner of the working of that office. Without saying anything detrimental about the ability or the earnestness of the Under-Secretary the fact remained that that officer had no knowledge of mining requirements, nor had he any sympathy with mining development. The Phillips River had been referred by the Minister, and it was a pity to find the district languishing. The member for Pingelly spoke of the introduction of capital there, and he made some reference to the establishment of State batteries, and it was presumed that his observations extended to such works as State smelters. The hon. member might be reminded that a large amount of capital had been expended in the Phillips River district. The late Government sold the Government

smelter to a company and that company secured a monopoly of mining leases and a monopoly of smelting. What had been the result? A great effort was made by that company, and a great deal of money was spent, not wisely he was prepared to admit, but now the position was that they had sold and practically abandoned all their propositions, and deserted the district and left it in a state of collapse. An appeal was now being made that, private enterprise having failed, the Government should purchase the smelter for the benefit of the people now there and those who were likely to go there. The Minister should see that there was justification for giving assistance to the district, and it was a question as to what form that assistance should take. Although the company had lost a considerable sum of money in the Phillips River district, they possibly, as the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) suggested, followed primitive methods. The fact remained, they lost their money and they put the district in a hazardous position. Nevertheless he was pleased to hear the Minister explain that it was not the fault of the district itself, and that the mines there were now producing large quantities of ore which were being shipped out of the State for treatment. This ore had to be picked and bagged, and the expenditure was more than double what it would cost if the ore were treated in the district. The Geological Department had not been treated properly in these Estimates. There was an increase of the paltry sum of £4. We had large belts of auriferous country that might well be inspected even ahead of the prospector by the geologist, so that when a man went out he would have an idea of the country he was likely to come across. It was to be hoped that the Legislative Council would treat properly the Bill that had been sent to them from this Chamber dealing with the conditions of the workers in the mines. The member for Pingelly was opposed to that measure, and it had been hinted by the leader of the Opposition that it was likely to be detrimental to the interests of mining. We had always heard that story when legislation had been intro-

duced in this or in any other Parliament to prevent accidents or to preserve the lives and limbs of the workers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are going to stop the night-shift in the mines.

Mr. HUDSON: This had its purpose, as had been explained.

Hon. Frank Wilson: On account of the health of the men?

Mr. HUDSON: It was not his intention to enter into a discussion at that stage on the Mines Regulation Bill. He would merely point out that there had been no accusations made by members on the Ministerial side against mine managers, but the fact remained that those who were placed in charge of mines were forced by their English directors and shareholders to take risks.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. HUDSON: The directors were callous and it was for them that we had to legislate because they did not know the conditions or the nature of the work which had to be done by the men. All that they clamoured for was a reduction of the costs. It was to be hoped, therefore, that the measure would have a safe passage through another place.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are casting a slur upon the directors.

Mr. HUDSON: Some were callous, but it was not to be said that all were, and it was necessary to have legislation of this description.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): Everyone must be pleased to find that the gold yield was once more on the up-grade.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do not proclaim it too loudly.

Mr. McDOWALL: The increase might only be small, but still it was rising and the probabilities were that it would continue to go up. It was gratifying to listen to the speeches that had been delivered during the evening on the mining industry from both sides of the House. The leader of the Opposition was very pleased to treat this question as a non-party one. The gold-mining industry was one of the greatest, if not the greatest industry, in the State, and it certainly

should be treated in that way, just as members would treat the agricultural industry. All realised that it was only by doing that we could make the State become great. The leader of the Opposition had contended that State batteries had not been in the best interests of the State, whilst the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) went further and talked about crushing for 3s. per ton and made out that the State battery system had not done all that was claimed for it. Those contentions were simply ridiculous, because the battery system had done for the State what nothing else in the world could have done. He would like to quote one or two things that had happened recently in the Coolgardie district, and he was quoting Coolgardie for the simple reason that it afforded a very good object lesson in connection with State batteries. The Minister for Mines had stated that he had given the people of Coolgardie an opportunity of proving whether they could keep a State battery going for a period of six months at treatment charges which represented a 25 per cent. reduction. Since the commencement of that experiment on the 1st September, 2,500 tons of ore had been put through the battery for a yield of 1,500 ounces and that yield had been obtained by 40 different persons. In the last issue of the *Coolgardie Miner* was published a list of crushings which showed that the tonnage mentioned had come from 40 different people. Could any system other than the State battery system have produced those results? Had Coolgardie been compelled to rely upon a private battery this result would never have been attained, and it would be understood at once what wealth would have been lost to the State. Amongst recent crushings had been the Bega Gold Mine, Limited, Laverton, 14½ tons for 130 ounces; Nil Desperandum at Burtville, 168 tons for 847 ounces; the Althone Prospecting Area at Mount Jackson, 100 tons for 149 ounces; Benjamin George, Coolgardie, 245 tons for 545 ounces; Prospecting Area 461, Norseman, 40½ tons for 132 ozs. 17 dwts.; Inglis-ton, Meekatharra, 85 tons for 309 ozs. 18 dwts.; Grand Schlam, Mount Keith, 136

tons for 132 ozs. 10 dwts.; Great Unknown, Mount Jackson, 112 tons for 254 ounces; Casino at Leonora, 77½ tons for 112 ozs. 9 dwts. That little list proved most emphatically how the batteries were operating throughout the length and breadth of the State. Were it not for the State battery system, those mines would be undeveloped and their wealth would be lost to the State. The State batteries enabled people to become independent, to go out and prospect, to raise a few tons of stuff and have it treated, and to live in that way rather than working for wages and overstocking the labour market. In the *Coolgardie Miner* on Saturday last had appeared a paragraph in regard to a prospecting area. The fact that the property referred to was a prospecting area showed that it had not been proved rich enough for the owners to place machinery on it, and were it not for the State batteries, areas such as this could not be tested. The paragraph referred to stated—

A parcel of 50 tons taken from Prospecting Area 961, held by Messrs. C. Sparks and party, has just put through the State battery for a return of 104 ozs. 5 dwts., or an average of a little over 2 ozs. This, coupled with the result of Twigg and party, is most encouraging and again shows that we have rich ore about the place. Messrs. Sparks and party are highly elated at their splendid success and have made application for a G.M. lease. The party have only been operating for a few weeks and have sunk two shafts of 30 and 40 feet respectively. Development work will now be proceeded with and another crushing will be got out as soon as possible, and, judging from present indications, the lease is likely to turn out a splendid proposition. One or two shows of this description will give the town all the advertising that is necessary.

Then another paragraph went on to say that Messrs. Twigg and party had put through a parcel which averaged 1 oz. 17 dwts. over the plates, and so on. He would ask the leader of the Opposition and the member for Pingelly how these

men could have obtained such results had there not been a State battery at Coolgardie. It would have been impossible, and he hoped the Minister would pursue his present policy of encouraging State batteries throughout the whole of the State. He was pleased that the Minister had erected an up-to-date State battery at Ora Banda. This was likely to be one of the best mining centres in the State. The ore was certainly low grade, but there was a large quantity of it. The battery had been kept going continually since its commencement, but the people in the district now wanted a cyanide plant, because they argued that it was impossible for them to work low-grade ore unless there was a cyanide plant so that they could obtain the value of their tailings. He knew that these matters involved expenditure from which it was difficult to obtain a return, but the mining industry was of such importance to the State that every inducement should be given to the miners and the prospectors to do the best they possibly could. Under the circumstances he trusted the Minister would very shortly be able to meet the wishes of the people of Ora Banda by providing a cyanide plant there. It was not his intention to speak at any length on these Estimates, because he felt sure it was quite unnecessary to do so. Members must realise the importance of the industry and how advisable it was for the Minister to encourage it in every possible way. Reference had been made to water supplies. He knew it was a very difficult matter for the mining districts to deal with the combined Water Supply Department. That department was unsympathetic in regard to everything but pounds, shillings, and pence; everything must pay.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It does not pay according to the Treasurer's statement.

Mr. McDOWALL: At any rate, the department was endeavouring to make everything pay and its transactions were regarded from that point of view. He must confess, however, that the Minister for Mines had been gracious in that respect, for in one or two instances in which it had been shown that the price of

water was prohibitive, he had granted money from the Mines Development Vote to assist deserving miners. That was one way out of the difficulty, but at the same time, it placed on the mining industry a charge which it should not bear. However, he did not think it was necessary to labour the question. He was pleased indeed to find mining once again in a good position; it had never been in a bad position, it had only been, comparatively speaking, poorer than in 1903, but it had always maintained its supremacy over all other industries. No single industry could compare with mining; in fact, mining had accounted for over half the total production of the State up to within the last year or so. So, when we spoke of the mining industry and its position, we must always speak comparatively, because it was an industry that was yet going to give the State a great impetus. Therefore, he hoped the industry would receive every consideration and that the questions of water supply, crushing facilities, and cyanide plants would have sympathetic treatment from the Minister in future as they had done in the past.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie): As usual, the Minister's speech had been pithy and bristling with facts regarding the mining industry and it had been a pleasure to listen to it. The hopeful tone of the speech was justified by virtue of the fact that for the first time in nine years mining was on the up grade. That altogether discounted the statement of the leader of the Opposition that in order to boost along this industry it was necessary to get capital into the country, but that capital could not be got while there was a Labour Administration in power. During the years that the supposed defenders of the monied classes, but actually the defenders of certain doubtful speculators, had been in power the industry had been on the wane. There was a Biblical quotation, "By their fruits shall ye know them," and if the mining industry was to be judged by that standard it would be seen that under the Labour regime the industry was about to look up. At the present rate of progress, judging by the results for the first nine months of the year,

the value of the gold output this year would be £5,507,906, as compared with £5,448,385 for last year, and the dividends on the same basis would be £843,943 as compared with £840,092. It was an old and wise adage not to count one's chickens before they were hatched, but the fact that there was an increase for the first nine months of the year went to prove that the yield might be safely assumed to reach the figures he had quoted. The Minister had with a great show of reason, taken a considerable amount of credit to himself for the result of the State batteries, but when they found on the Opposition side members who had the audacity to rise and decry that well known and proved system, it went to show that the atmosphere in this Chamber, so far as the Opposition were concerned, was not congenial towards the mining industry. On the erection of State batteries in this State, according to the *Government Gazette* of February last, only £280,000 had been expended for a return of nearly four million pounds. He would like to draw attention to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition that the State had done well by the great mining industry and that the paltry increase of £3,000 in the Estimates was really regrettable.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Because it shows lack of proper administration.

Mr. GREEN: It was his desire to fasten that particular phrase on the hon. member as showing his attitude towards the mining industry.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Which you misrepresent.

Mr. GREEN: And to the fact that the rabbit-proof fence, which returned nothing, cost £311,900, and over £17,000 for upkeep last year. What was the hon. member's attitude to work of that kind?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your batteries have cost £400,000.

Mr. GREEN: The gold-mining industry had been responsible for over half of the total value of exports, and yet the hon. member regretted that extra expenditure was contemplated. Did that show a desire on the hon. member's part to help the industry? Nay; did not it

show a desire to crush the industry, because it failed to return members of the political opinions vaunted by the hon. member? The Minister had spoken of two necessary provisions to the furtherance of the mining industry—cheap water and an extension of the State battery system. He agreed with the Minister as far as he went, and he thanked the Minister for affording facilities—

Hon. Frank Wilson interjected.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member had had his say and now declined to listen to anyone else. Cheap water had been granted to several low-grade shows having vast ore bodies at the north end of the field in Kalgoorlie with beneficial results. The School of Mines fees in Kalgoorlie would be abolished from the 1st January next, and that would be a considerable aid to lads on the Golden Mile to acquire knowledge of gold treatment. Some time ago hon. members were asked to send in particulars of requirements for the Estimates, and many which he had suggested did not appear, but there was one more than any other the non-appearance of which he regretted, and that was an experimental treatment plant consisting of a three-head stamp battery and amalgamating, cyaniding, and concentrating plant for the School of Mines. This would have been of immense service to students, many of whom had not an opportunity to get immediate employment, and if the Minister could not provide for it this year he hoped he would take the earliest opportunity to do so. The Minister had shown clearly that as far as Southern Cross was concerned the boring plant had been a great success. It had been reported in the Press that a company was making preliminary overtures with a view to launching £20,000 capital in Fraser's mine. That was a direct result of the information gleaned by the experimental boring plant.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who are the company?

Mr. GREEN: Some time ago a prospector in the Kalgoorlie district applied to the Mines Department for camels, and the department found it impossible to supply him. Following on that he (Mr.

Green) asked several questions, but not until he had got information from the department as to the number of camels available. Some time ago the department had 120 camels for prospecting parties, but at the time he made his inquiries there were only 18, and they had aged considerably. It took them all their time to walk on four legs, so that they were hardly fit to help a prospector who wanted to travel 120 miles into the desert. The applicant in question, Mr. Craig Cooper, who was a well known prospector, was unable to get the camels he desired, and he was in a position to know that there were several men in Kalgoorlie who were prepared to put in money for prospecting if Mr. Cooper had been able to obtain the camels. The cause of the depletion in the number was largely on account of the mines water supply having taken over many of the camels from the Mines Department, and he was informed on pretty good authority that during the Bullfinch boom camels were loaned from the Water Supply Department to the Mines Department with a view of assisting prospectors to get out into the back country. He trusted that the question of boring would continue to receive attention of the Minister. Whilst Dr. Mac-laren was in Kalgoorlie he called on him to get first hand information as to the efficacy of diamond drilling. There was a considerable difference of opinion with regard to the utility of boring for mining purposes. Mr. Richard Hamilton, the manager of the Great Boulder, had had eight miles of boring done, and Dr. Mac-laren's opinion was that 250 to 300 feet was a safe depth at which to trust entirely to boring. From that he considered that the use of the diamond drill in the bottom of several shafts which were down 300 or 400 feet would mean a great saving to the prospector, as it cost only one-third of sinking a shaft, and considering the immense output of the Golden Mile, and that the rich chutes had not continued to a considerable extent outside that area, it seemed a fair proposition to use the diamond drill just outside that area. The leader of the Opposition in referring to the mining industry damned with faint praise, to use a quotation of

Pope's, the increase in the mining vote. The hon. member stated that the £3,000 increase in the vote was regrettable, as he thought the State had done well by the industry. Yet the State had spent more on the rabbit-proof fence than on the State battery system. Members on the Government side had never on any occasion opposed anything that would help the agricultural industry, and yet the agricultural industry and every other industry combined did not produce one-half of the wealth of the mining industry. On the 30th April last there was £135,000 outstanding in the shape of land rents, and the usual amount outstanding in April was about £30,000.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Oh, no.

Mr. GREEN : The hon. member must have seen this statement when it was made by the Minister for Mines at Cunderdin, and if it was incorrect and he had neglected to refute it before, he had not done his duty. Never under any regime in this State had any prospector or the proprietor of any mining shows escaped from being brought to book when in arrears with their mining lease payments, except in a few instances under the present Minister. The gold production during 1912 amounted to £5,448,385, while wheat, oats, barley, hay, potatoes and wine were responsible for £2,000,000. The total export of all products last year was £8,941,008, of which £5,448,385 represented gold. He had thought when the member for Pingelly was speaking and had learned from the Minister that gold mining was again on the rising tide as regarded production, that he would have congratulated the Ministry and the country upon the bright outlook for the industry, especially when the hon. member had benefited tremendously financially from the industry, but he had listened in vain for a word of congratulation from that hon. member. Last session no man did more than the ex-mining manager, the member for Pingelly, to damn the industry, not only in the eyes of this country, but in the eyes of other countries, or to keep foreign capital out of the State, and no one had given the industry

a worse advertisement than the hon. member had done through the medium of *Hansard*. The hon. member might at least have tried to make honourable amends by admitting frankly that he was pleased the industry had made an upturn, but no remark, favourable or otherwise, escaped his lips in regard to this industry. The attitude of the Opposition towards this industry could be characterised as nothing but base ingratitude. It was an industry that had lifted this State from a puny settlement to one of the greatest States of the Commonwealth, and we might at least have expected some fair treatment at the hands of members opposite, but the attitude of a lot of the agricultural members went to show that they had absolutely no time for the mining industry.

Mr. S. Stubbs : I object to that statement; it is not true.

Mr. GREEN : As one who with great pleasure helped last session to forward every railway measure that went through this House, he protested against that narrow and unfair attitude, and trusted that the hon. member to whom he had referred before, who damned the mining industry every time he got up in this Chamber, would adopt a different attitude in the future.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet) : The few remarks he wanted to make in regard to the mining industry would be confined to the advantage of the several systems which had done a great deal towards making the industry what it was to-day. Some doubt had been expressed respecting the utility of the public battery system and he was surprised, in view of the great advantage that system had been to Western Australia and the mining industry, that there could be any room for doubt whatever. It must be remembered that a great many of our new fields would not be existing to-day, but for the fact that the State established batteries, and from those persons who doubted the utility of the public battery system he would ask for a suggestion respecting some other way in which the industry could be better ad-

vanced. He had heard this system condemned on two or three occasions in this House during the last two or three years—

Mr. S. Stubbs : Only by one or two people.

Hon. M. F. TROY : But what suggestion had these to offer by which the industry could be better advanced than could be done by the present system ? If their suggestion was a good one he was sure that it would commend itself to the mining members of this House. He agreed with the Minister that the best way in which to assist the mining industry in the initial stages was by the provision of adequate water supplies so that prospectors might be able to get out into the back country and prospect for gold; and secondly, after the mines had been discovered the State should step in at the earliest possible moment and erect State batteries and cyanide plants. That was the best he could suggest from his experience of the industry, and if there be any doubt whatever about this he would ask hon. members to remember that to-day outside Kalgoorlie the most progressive and prosperous fields in Western Australia had had their beginning through the introduction of the State battery. Take, for instance, Meekatharra. Meekatharra was to-day one of the most prosperous mining districts in the State, and a district which was becoming richer as the mines went down. It was a district with a great future before it, and would not be in existence to-day had not the Government some years ago erected a battery and assisted prospectors to test their lodes. After the tests had been made people with capital came in and purchased several mines, and as well as locally owned mines there were mines worked by companies, and the district was very prosperous as a result. Take the district of Black Range, of which he also had knowledge. When it was discovered capital did not go there of its own accord, in fact very little capital went there until the mines had been

proved, and that generally was what happened in Western Australia, except in the case of a mining boom. In a time of a mining boom capital might be introduced and mines taken up without any test, but in the great majority of cases mines had to be tested, their value proved, before capital would be forthcoming to purchase those mines. In Black Range to-day we had one of the most promising and prosperous mining districts in the State; a district with a population of from 3,000 to 4,000 people. There were several hundred men employed on wages in the mines, and besides them a number engaged in prospecting, and following occupations dependant upon the mining industry. Had it not been for the State battery the mines would not have been proved at Black Range, capital would never have been introduced, and the district would not be in the happy and prosperous condition it was to-day. Like Meekatharra, Black Range to-day was more prosperous than it had been at any previous stage in its history, and he believed this prosperity would continue for many years to come. Take the adjacent district of Youanmi. It had been discovered by prospectors after the Government had provided water supplies. Some time ago he advocated that the Government should send out parties to put down water and after water was found prospectors were encouraged to go out, with a result that new fields were opened up. After the mines had been opened up capital was again introduced and to-day we had in Youanmi a very prosperous district. In the three districts he had mentioned there would not have been that prosperity of which he had spoken had it not been for the public battery. No better means were forthcoming by which the industry could be developed, and if we judged by experience, we had to admit that the battery system had been responsible for developing to a great extent the mining industry of Western Australia. It had produced millions of pounds value to this country, and would, he believed, in the future give the mining industry a greater impetus than it had had in the past. Therefore,

he commended the Minister for his activity in regard to the excellent State batteries. To those persons who cried out that there was a loss on the State battery he asked them to remember that with many other facilities for the assistance of industries there was a loss likewise. In the agricultural industry, which all supported and hoped would prosper, there was a loss on agricultural railways. We were not complaining about that loss, as we knew it was made up in other directions through the development of the industry. In other directions there was a loss on the facilities provided for the assistance of industries, but it was recognised that this loss was more than made up by the value to the State by the progress of the industries referred to. Personally he did not think that in respect to the present crushing charges in connection with State batteries the Minister could ever hope to make those batteries a paying proposition, and it was not possible for the Minister to increase charges. He (Mr. Troy) would prefer that the Minister should reduce charges, but he was told that that was not possible either. At the same time he hoped the Minister would not be disheartened because there was a loss, but would bear in mind the great advantage resulting to the industry by the introduction of the system. The public battery in the Black Range district, by opening up the field, would more than compensate for the loss on a hundred State batteries, and the same could be said of Meekatharra and Youanmi. With regard to Payne's Find a great deal of doubt had been expressed concerning the possibilities of this field when it was first discovered. A great many mining prospectors went there, and the Government came to their aid with a battery. The result was that although the field had not yet turned out to be as prosperous as Black Range and Meekatharra, there was a large number of prospectors there who had made good and received a fair return. The locality, he was happy to say, was going ahead. The act of erecting a battery at Payne's Find had not only been responsible for winning a

great deal of gold from Payne's Find itself, but had encouraged prospectors to prospect the district, with the result that more mines were working to-day in the Yalgoo district, and prospects were brighter in that district than had been the case for the past 10 or 12 years. This was due to the erection of a battery at Payne's Find, which induced prospectors to come from near and far. Although some of them had not succeeded at Payne's Find they had prospected the country around, with the result that to-day new mines were opening up, and he believed there was a good future before the Yalgoo goldfield. He considered that the State battery system had been of great advantage to Western Australia, and he congratulated the Minister on the fact that wherever he had seen the possibility of a field being opened up by the introduction of a State battery he had not hesitated to put a battery there. He (Mr. Troy) was in a position to say that he had little to complain of in regard to the administration of the Minister. He had gone to him with many propositions since he (the Minister) had been in office, and without making odious comparisons so far as the Minister's predecessors were concerned, he could say that when he had brought forward a proposition the Minister had met him very promptly. He wanted to pay that compliment to the Minister because he thought it was due to him. In connection with Payne's Find, although doubt had been expressed as to the possibilities of the field, the Minister said he would give it a trial, and a battery was put down without any loss of time—he (Mr. Troy) believed it was placed there in record time. He wished to say only one word more in regard to the mining industry and that was this, he hoped the department would pursue the policy of previous years in providing water supplies in districts where gold might be found, but in which prospecting could not be done without a water supply. There had not been a great amount of prospecting in Western Australia in recent years. But that had been due to the drought. Prospectors had not been able to get out.

There was neither feed nor water, and though in places the Government had provided water, the want of feed was a great handicap. To-day there was plenty of feed, and all that was required was water. In the Mount Marion district, which was 40 miles north of Sandstone, some very good developments had recently taken place, but a water supply was badly wanted. If bores were put down in the surrounding country these would help prospectors. They could make those bores their depots, and from them they could get out and prospect the country with bright results. The only other matter to which he desired to refer was that something might be done to assist the old prospectors. Western Australia owed more to its old prospectors than to any other body of men in the State, and these people were to-day in their declining years. He had come across them in the back country, and to use their own expressions, they were "down on their luck." Their luck had gone out. They had made money, it was true, but in a majority of cases they had put it back into the industry, and as was well known those who were engaged in the mining industry could make money quickly if they got on to anything that was good; but at the same time it could be lost just as readily. Many of those old prospectors had devoted the best years of their lives to the development of the industry. Those who had made money had put it all back into the ground, and unfortunately to-day many of them were in poor circumstances. They were generally proud men and of high spirit, and the only way in which the department could help them would be by a well regulated system of backing. If this were done and some of them were sent out to prospect, good results might follow for the State. If these men went on mines to seek employment they were not wanted because they were too old. They, therefore, had to depend upon their own resources. Therefore, since the State owed so much to these men, he would recommend the Minister to devise some means by which they might be sent out prospecting under a well regulated system of backing. It was

admitted that it would probably be difficult to pick out the best men, but he felt sure the wardens could be relied upon to do that because they came into contact with most of them. The country was to be congratulated that the industry was no longer on the down grade. After a lapse of ten years it was on the up grade, and this year it had been more prosperous than for a considerable time past. It was making good again and in some of the localities in his own electorate, although not very prosperous, the people who were there were in better heart than they had been for a considerable time. They were opening up old fields again, and some of them would again respond to development. So far as the Murchison goldfield was concerned, it was on the up grade and much of that was due to the assistance which had been given to it by the Mines Department. The State was to be congratulated on the fact that the mining industry was showing such an improvement. It had many years of prosperity before it, and would continue to advance the State. He complimented the department on the work it had done and he hoped it would continue to do everything possible to encourage the industry and those interested in it.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): It had not been his intention to say anything in connection with the Mines Department Estimates but for the fact that the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) had not once, but several times, made reference (and his remarks had remained unchallenged, and no doubt his constituents in Kalgoorlie would be led to believe them) to the agricultural members of the State by saying that they were absolutely antagonistic in every shape and form to the progress of the mining industry.

Mr. Green: I did not refer to them all.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It would be left to *Hansard* on the following day to show whether he (Mr. Stubbs) was right or wrong when he said that not only once, but on several occasions during the course of his remarks the member for Kalgoorlie stated that the agricultural members, and he did not single out any one in par-

ticular, were antagonistic to the mining industry.

Mr. Green: I referred to the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) and stated so.

Mr. S. STUBBS: *Hansard* could be relied upon to prove the correctness or otherwise of what the hon. member stated and he would be prepared if necessary to withdraw what he had said. He had however, yet to learn that he was wrong, because he had listened carefully to the remarks of the hon. member who did not single out the member for Pingelly. He was voicing the sentiments of every member representing an agricultural constituency when he said that all rejoiced on hearing that the mining industry was in such a prosperous condition, and it would be wrong on his part if he did not stand up and say so, especially after the unfair remarks made by the member for Kalgoorlie. In many of the agricultural centres there were people who had spent a great number of years on the goldfields. In his own constituency there was a number of these men and it was a pleasure to be able to meet and converse with them. These men were worthy of being called the finest settlers we could have in Western Australia. As an old business man of the City he had on hundreds of occasions in years gone by listened to the tales of these men who had done so much to make Western Australia what it was to-day. The remarks which had fallen from the Speaker a few moments before, when he expressed the hope that the Government would see their way to devise some means of assisting those who had blazed the track, appealed to him. Those old prospectors were the men who carried their lives in their hands for so many years in endeavouring to locate the best auriferous belts in the State, and they should not be allowed to go through their old days feeling the want of the necessaries of life. If there were any of these men left here still willing and able to, again go out and prospect our vast areas, it was to be hoped that not a single member would begrudge any vote that might be submitted to the House to help in this direction. As a member representing an agricultural constituency, he

had pleasure in saying that he hoped every penny that the Minister had asked the Committee to grant for the support of the mining industry would be passed without the slightest objection from any member of the House. After the remarks made by the member for Kalgoorlie, it was his (Mr. Stubbs') desire to put himself right with his constituents and to say that neither he nor any other agricultural member had ever been antagonistic to a single item that had for its object the furtherance of the mining industry. There was not a single voice raised against the water scheme when it was submitted to Parliament and that was a work which had done wonders in the way of making the State well known throughout the English speaking world. Although at the present time that scheme might not be a paying concern, every elector in the State was quite willing to bear the annual loss in connection with it. He hoped that the Minister's estimate of the gold yield for the coming year would be realised and that it might even be greater than his anticipations. It was hoped also that the recent improvement in the gold yield would be well maintained and that it would be proved that we in Western Australia had the finest auriferous belt not only in Australia, but south of the line, and that as years went on we would be able to prove to the outside world what a splendid asset we had not only in our minerals but in agriculture as well. It afforded him very much pleasure to support the Estimates which had been brought down by the Minister for Mines and he hoped that next year the Minister would have an even better tale to tell the House, that was, if he had the honour of still being Minister for Mines. Whilst supporting the Mines Estimates, he desired again to deprecate the language used by the member for Kalgoorlie.

Personal explanation.

Mr. GREEN: On a point of explanation; the member for Wagin had made a statement, the accuracy of which he (Mr. Green) had denied. He (Mr. Green) had applied the terms the hon. member had referred to, not to all the agricultural

members, but to one member only and he asked that the hon. member for Wagin should be made to accept that explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Wagin could not be made to accept the explanation.

Debate resumed.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): It was pleasant to hear the member for Kalgoorlie acknowledge that he did not charge the agricultural members with ingratitude. He had listened very carefully to the hon. member's remarks and he too had taken them to apply generally to the agricultural members. He was, however, prepared to accept the hon. members's explanation. At the same time, it would be more fitting on the part of the hon. member if he were to endeavour to encourage a better feeling between the agriculturists and those engaged in the mining industry. As a representative of an agricultural district he had upon every occasion, when publicly expressing his political opinions, acknowledged the great benefit the country had derived from the development of our mining industry. Everyone must acknowledge that the enormous wealth produced by this industry had in a large measure given our agricultural industry its start. That was generally acknowledged, and he deprecated any remarks that might fall from hon. members opposite to the effect that agricultural members failed to realise this fact. The time had gone past for hon. members to pit the one great industry against the other. There should be no occasion for any such attempts when we realised that the future prosperity of the country was wrapped up in the development of our primary industries. As agriculturists he and others could, if necessary, say a very great deal in respect to the responsibilities they had undertaken in helping to develop the agricultural industry. He was prepared to acknowledge also the pluck and endurance of those prospectors who had gone out and discovered the mines. It would be madness on the part of hon. members to do anything that would tend to hamper

the mining industry. He had been pleased to hear from the Minister that there was a revival in the gold production, and he hoped that in the near future, with careful administration and a reasonable amount of capital at the disposal of the Minister, we would see the great mining industry flourishing and expanding once more. Only yesterday he had met some settlers from the Ravensthorpe district who had journeyed over by road to take part in a tour of the Great Southern districts with some Albany people. He was very much impressed with the confidence those settlers had evinced in the Ravensthorpe district, not only as a mining but as an agricultural centre. Since the Minister had visited that district and realised its great possibilities he hoped that something would be done in the direction of re-opening those smelters which, unfortunately, had been closed down for months past. He urged the Government to take into consideration the request on the part of the people of Ravensthorpe that some means of road communication between Ravensthorpe and some point on the Great Southern railway should be provided. That, of course, would come under the control of another Minister, but it represented only a small expenditure and would go a great way towards improving the means of transit from Ravensthorpe to the Great Southern, and so bringing the people of Ravensthorpe within reasonable distance of the capital of the State. He hoped the Minister for Mines would use his influence with his colleague to provide something on the Estimates for opening up this projected road. The road, of course, would be the forerunner of a railway, but even the clearing of the road would mean the saving of a great deal of time. Under present conditions the Ravensthorpe people had to journey to Hopetoun and take boat to Albany, very often in bad weather, whereas if this road was provided the people of Ravensthorpe could leave their homes in the morning and reach Perth next day. He trusted, therefore, the Minister would endeavour to use his influence with his colleague to bring about the introduction

of that work. He hoped the industry would go on thriving, and that in a very short time we would see the gold production even greater than it had been a few years ago.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): With other hon. members he had been sorry to hear from the lips of the leader of the Opposition and the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) the remarks they had made regarding the State battery system. The member for Pingelly was a man of wide experience in mining matters, not only in this State but in New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania. The leader of the Opposition had recounted his first experiences in Western Australia, some 20 odd years ago, in mining in the Yilgarn district. He (Mr. Taylor) could not but deprecate the statements made by these two hon. members concerning the State battery system. However much we might disagree with, perhaps, the management or the administration of that department as a Government concern, we must recognise the great value it had been to the State. As to the expense it had been to the State, he ventured to say the leader of the Opposition had been somewhat astray in his calculation when stating that it was about £400,000. He thought a quarter of a million would be nearer the mark. The system had been responsible for about four millions of money being earned and spent in the State—whether it was spent wisely and well it was not for him to say—but it had been earned by that system, and had been held by the people of the State and circulated within our own borders. He was not taking a stand which could not be defended, when he compared the assistance given to the mining industry through State batteries with what had been done for other industries in the State. He was sure that the vote of the Committee would not be in keeping with some of the remarks which had been made by members of the Opposition to-night. On every occasion within his recollection any vote for the development or assistance of the mining industry had been supported by all sides of the House, irrespective of whether

members were representing agricultural, metropolitan, or timber areas; whilst the mining members, on the other hand, when they were only few in number, had supported everything that tended to improve the agricultural industry. However, to compare the shortage on the battery system with what the country had done to assist the farmers in one direction alone, it must not be forgotten that Parliament had voted something over £300,000 for the erection of a fence to keep rabbits off the agricultural and pastoral areas.

Hon. J. Mitchell : About the same amount has been spent on State batteries.

Mr. TAYLOR : But what was the actual return from the rabbit-proof fence?

Hon. J. Mitchell : What is the return from State batteries?

Mr. TAYLOR : The State batteries had yielded four million pounds worth of gold, which had been spent in the country.

Hon. J. Mitchell : The rabbit proof fence has protected four million pounds worth of property.

Mr. TAYLOR : It was of no use agricultural members taking up an attitude hostile to the expenditure on the State battery system.

Hon. J. Mitchell : We have not.

Mr. TAYLOR : Such an attitude had been taken up by the leader of the Opposition, and by the member for Pingelly, and other members had tried to excuse that attitude. The attitude of the leader of the Opposition had been followed by the only member on the Opposition side who was supposed to know something about mining, and who would speak with authority, not only in Parliament, but in the Press of the country. The Press knew that the member for Pingelly had had long experience of mining, and any reference he made to the industry would be allowed some weight. The leader of the Opposition had prefaced his remarks by stating his early experience in mining. The hon. member had stated that in his younger days he had believed that the Yilgarn district had a great future, and the discovery of the Bullfinch was only what he had expected. Perhaps the

leader of the Opposition had been justified in making his eulogistic remarks about the Bullfinch, having regard to his first impressions of the district, as a young man. He believed the hon. member had made his remarks in all honesty, and with no object other than to do his best for the State. Listening to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition this evening, his mind reverted to districts which he, when younger, had believed were going to turn out well, but he was sorry to say that the results had not fulfilled his early anticipations. He was not going to criticise the vote other than to make a few remarks about the requirements of his own district. He particularly wanted to emphasise the remarks made by the member for Yilgarn in regard to the separating of the gold-fields water supply from the Mines Department, and attaching it to the combined Water Supply Department. Although the Mines Water Supply was still under Mr. O'Brien, the officer who had controlled it under the Mines Department, that gentleman did not seem to have the same authority as he had exercised when the supply was controlled by the Mines Department. Linden, a centre in the Mount Margaret district, had made application for the erection of a dam nearly two years ago. Last year which was particularly dry, small prospectors were carting fresh water 12 and 13 miles for four and five months in the year. Hon. members would realise that carting water that distance meant that men in a small way had to almost close down on their work. The people in the district had made a strenuous endeavour to have the dam erected, but as the money required had to come from loan funds it was not provided for in last year's Estimates, nor was it provided for in the present Estimates.

Hon. J. Mitchell : You would not have had to wait long in our time.

Mr. TAYLOR : It was necessary to wait even when the hon. member's Government were in power. He hoped that when the Loan Estimates came down this item would be remembered. If he took up the attitude which hon. members re-

presenting the farming areas had assumed when they advocated that the Minister for Lands should not press for rents and should reduce freights, and the member for Forrest when he urged with great vim and force the necessity for doing away with licenses to cut timber, and that other sources of revenue should be cut off, he might naturally ask why the Minister insisted upon miners' rights and upon collecting rents for leases. Why not cut off these sources of revenue and help the people in that way? The Government of the country could not be carried on without revenue and these sources of revenue were just and fair. If it was fair for the miner to pay ten shillings a year for a miner's right to go out into the country and prospect on Crown lands for gold how much more justification was there for a man to pay half a crown a month to go into a forest to cut timber. He did not have to prospect for the timber; it was there.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He has to pay a royalty.

Mr. TAYLOR: The timber was there and the timber cutter could wade into it with an axe, but the prospector had to go through the country at his own expense, and in many instances, though not so much now as in the past, at the peril of his life, to locate the riches. He had to pay at one time £1 for a miner's right to go into this unknown country and locate the wealth, and he had done it without a murmur. There were no guides or pamphlets, or literature, such as were distributed by the Lands Department, and no expert officers at every siding to direct him. He had to pay his £1 and cut the track for himself, in order to locate the riches, and he had done it without a murmur. Now the Government were asked to reduce the fees charged to those who went into the virgin forest to cut timber, and they were asked by representatives of the agricultural areas to reduce rents and freights.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Quite right, and the Government will be asked again.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Government were asked to cut off every source of revenue.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not every one.

Mr. TAYLOR: Nearly every one that affected the agricultural areas.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No. Give them reasonable treatment.

Mr. TAYLOR: And the Government were asked to give greater facilities still.

Mr. Lewis: They are socialists.

Mr. TAYLOR: They were socialists when anything affected them as agriculturists. They were willing that the Government should buy sheep and fowls for them and supply them with agricultural implements.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And steamers.

Mr. TAYLOR: No, they appeared to be a bit bilious about the steamers.

Mr. Lewis: State flour mills.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member for Northam spoke of State flour mills about every three years.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is in your platform; you had better get that plank Powellised.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member had worn it so bare that it required a steel plate. There was room to exercise a little socialism in regard to the mining industry. The Minister was doing as much as he could with the funds at his disposal, but reforms were necessary in that department. There were matters which the Minister, on calmer consideration, would agree should receive attention. He had made application for a geological survey in one portion of his district, but the surveyors were busily engaged elsewhere.

Mr. Green: On the agricultural areas.

Mr. TAYLOR: That might be right. There was a place at Erlistoun which was being developed with great success, and a geological survey was required. It would be wise if the Minister strained a point to send up some officers from his department so that they could advise the men who were purely prospectors as to what was best to be done. Geological bulletins were issued by the department and something like two shillings apiece were charged for them. He did not think it would mean much to the department if they were issued free to those who made application for them. If the Minister realised the value of them to any prospector who had sufficient scientific thought

to appreciate their value, he should agree to have them supplied free upon application being made for them. We should give to the prospector, the layman, the man who had not had an opportunity to acquire School of Mines or other scholastic training, the benefit of all the scientific knowledge which the department possessed. It would aid him considerably. He hoped the Minister would consider the matter. Men in the back country—and he himself had been there—realised the value of these bulletins, and any scientific knowledge would be of great value to those men in the bush. In regard to the Lands Department, all that was necessary was to make application, and the applicant was flooded with lithos and all possible information. If, however, we wanted any knowledge in connection with the mining industry, we had to pay for it. He was not finding fault with the freedom of the Department of Lands and Agriculture, but pointed out that there was some justification for his statement in reference to the attitude of the Mines Department to those who desired to go in for mining. The latter should be offered the same facilities as those who desired to embark on any other industry.

Mr. Harper: Why not apply to Texas Green for information?

Mr. TAYLOR: Who was the gentleman? If the hon. member would tell him in what part of the Mines Department he was, and what office he held, he would apply to Texas Green, but he was not aware that anyone of that name was in charge of the geological department. If he learned that such was the case, however, he would not delay longer than tomorrow morning in applying to him. If the hon. member for Pingelly made any application in connection with farming, he would want a cart to carry away the information procurable, literature costing pounds and pounds, whereas if a man wanted anything in connection with mining, he had to pay from 1s. up to 2s. 6d. for the information.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Then let us move a vote of censure on the Minister.

Mr. TAYLOR: It should have been moved years ago, the position having been established largely by the tyranny of the Government of which the hon. member for Northam was a member, and the present Minister had probably not had the matter brought under his notice, but he (Mr. Taylor) felt confident that now the present Minister would put literature necessary for prospectors on the same footing as the Lands Department had put literature for those who desired to embark in agriculture.

Mr. Green: They send it all over the world.

Mr. TAYLOR: That was not desired by him in connection with mining, but he asked that any prospector or person intending to embark upon mining should, if he wrote to the Minister's department for information, be able to get it free of charge. With reference to battery charges the Minister had told us he was experimenting at Kalgoorlie. It would be as well to point out here that there was not enough experimental work so far as mining was concerned. Hon. members were quite prepared to vote money galore for agricultural experimental farms, for experiments in potato growing, and in other ways in connection with agriculture, but we could not get an experiment in mining. Private enterprise had to do experimenting in the mining industry.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Look at the Auditor General's report; a loss of £3,000 on a trial shipment of potatoes.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no demur about how much we lost on potatoes or in connection with agriculture, but if we wanted to experiment in the mining industry, it was said that the experiment would be a failure, that there was no chance, etcetera. A sum of money should be placed on the Estimates for experiments in how to treat our refractory ores.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where are you going to get the money from?

Mr. TAYLOR: We had tons of money. Of course we would have difficulty in meeting the liabilities the hon. member left us.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I left a surplus.

Mr. Allen: Would the hon. member for Mount Margaret tell us what the Auditor General had to say about it?

Mr. TAYLOR: That was all right. We were always anxious for experimental work except in the mining industry, an industry which lent itself to experiment. We had many different classes of ore in this State, which it was absolutely necessary we should deal with and bring the very best brains to bear upon. We could not do that without paying. The State was in a position to pay and he hoped the Minister for Mines would initiate a scheme of that kind.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You will have to pay out of the deficit, then.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no worry about an overdraft so long as we were experimenting in agriculture; hon. members opposite, notwithstanding the deficit, advocated doing away with rents on conditional purchases, also reduction in railway freights.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Of course we do, and insist upon it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The proposition he was putting up in regard to the mining industry was absolutely feasible, irrespective of the deficit at all. We had certain grades of ore in this State which it was the duty of the State to test, it was the duty of the State controlling that industry, and there were very few industries in which the State had played so prominent a part in controlling as mining, as it was that industry which had made the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The State made the industry.

Mr. TAYLOR: The State was here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And the gold was here.

Mr. TAYLOR: And as soon as the people found the gold it made the State. It was absolutely the duty of the State to carry on the necessary experimental work to deal with our different grades of ore, and also for the State to classify the various lode formations, so that the ordinary prospector would know fairly well, as soon as he struck something strange to him, how it was classified in geology. That would be of great value. He hoped

the Minister would take these suggestions in the friendly way in which they were given.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We will sleep on them.

Mr. TAYLOR: They would not hurt the hon. member. The leader of the Opposition had, he thought, slept on some of his suggestions for many years, and preferred sleeping on them to sleeping on lobster.

Mr. Underwood: They would not produce a bad dream.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was to be hoped the Minister would adopt some of the suggestions made by him and do something in the directions he had indicated.

This concluded the general debate on the Mines Estimates; votes and items discussed as follows:—

Votes.—*Mines Generally*, £41,847; *Explosives and Analytical*, £5,286—agreed to.

Vote—*Geological Survey*, £11,153:

Mr. FOLEY: When geologists went out to inspect a district or make a geological examination, the same procedure should be adopted as was adopted by the other departments in the agricultural areas, namely, to see that the geologists met the representatives of the industry and discussed matters with them in a manner which would be understandable to those men as ordinary laymen. The Minister, it was understood, had already taken into consideration this question and it was sure to do a great deal of good.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Government geologist, who was now in the Leonora district, had, hon. members would have observed, delivered a lecture before the Leaseholders and Prospectors' Association, and it was gratifying to know that the address had been very much appreciated by the mining community there. This was following out the instructions which had been issued several months ago, that when a geologist visited a district and made an examination of the surrounding country, he should call the prospectors together and

place at their disposal any information that might be of advantage to them.

Item, Clerk, 5 months, £92; 7 months, £120—£48:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There was a typographical error in this line. He moved an amendment—

That the words "Clerk, 5 months, £92, 7 months, £120" be struck out and "cadet" inserted in lieu.

This would not have the effect of altering the vote in any shape or form, because the estimated amount which was put down in the various columns was correct.

Amendment passed.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—*Inspection of Machinery £6,314; Mining School £5,692*—agreed to.

Vote—*State batteries £56,329*:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was his desire to express his appreciation of the work which had been done by Mr. Howe, the superintendent of State batteries. So far as he could see Mr. Howe was the best officer the department had ever had filling this position. This officer was now drawing £504 a year, whereas his predecessors had always drawn £600. The Minister might make an effort to see that the officer received at least the same salary as his predecessors. He (Mr. Underwood) could not speak of Mr. Howe's ability in the department, but he knew of the value of his work from the point of view of the prospectors and leaseholders who raised stone to be crushed at State batteries, and there was no doubt that Mr. Howe had given the prospectors a better deal than any man who had preceded him in the position.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was gratifying to hear the remarks of the hon. member regarding this officer. He was aware that Mr. Howe was most painstaking and capable. The salary was perhaps not equal to that paid to the predecessors, but Mr. Howe was appointed on probation at the minimum of £504 and it had been his (the Minister's) intention, if Mr. Howe was permanently appointed, to increase the amount. So far, however, he had not been able to

carry out that intention, mainly because it had been considered undesirable to raise the salaries of the higher paid officers during the past year or two, owing to the unfortunate financial position of the State. If it was possible, however, to induce the Treasurer to stretch a point he (the Minister) would be very pleased to recognise the valuable services which had been rendered by Mr. Howe.

Item—Working and all other maintenance expenses, also additions and improvements in connection with the running of State batteries, £54,296:

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member for Murchison spoke of an improvement he would like to see in connection with our State battery system. He (Mr. Foley) had had some experience in battery work and he could candidly say that the improvement the member for Murchison would like to see would work detrimentally to the men who would have crushings put through. The hon. member had referred to a silver-well. Fortunately the superintendent of the State battery system, through a practical knowledge gained in this State, had decided that it would be unwise for the men to work it. The men on our mines to-day were getting a better return for their outlay than they would if the system proposed by the member for Murchison had been introduced.

Vote put and passed.

This completed the Estimates of the Mines Department.

Progress reported.

BILL—TRAFFIC.

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 11.23 p.m.