

that it was within your power to allow the papers to leave the Table for a stated period. In view of that, what embarrassment could be placed on the departments by the tabling of the papers? It cannot be argued that the installation has not advanced sufficiently far to enable the construction to go on without daily reference to the papers, for the installation is so far advanced that no reference to the papers is now necessary. This is within the knowledge of every member, because all matters relating to generating costs and agreements entered into have been widely discussed in the House and we have been told what the Government are in a position to do relating to every enterprise that desires to take current from them. The statement was made in another place that the cost would be not greater than from £220,000 to £230,000; yet the expenditure has risen to approximately £300,000 to date and the work is still incomplete. I hope the House will insist upon the papers being laid on the Table, in order that, next Tuesday, members will have an opportunity of perusing them. If this is done it will be seen that the arguments advanced during the past week, although without avail, have been at least worthy of those who used them.

On motion by Hon. F. Connor debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 4.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 16th September, 1915.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Further report by the Auditor General concerning the audit of State trading concerns accounts for the year ended 30th June, 1915.

QUESTION—WATER AND SEWERAGE DEPARTMENT.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Minister for Water Supply: 1, What was the total amount of revenue received by the Water and Sewerage Department from the metropolitan area for the financial year 1914-15? 2, What was the cost of administration for these services during the same year? 3, (a) What is the total capital amount debited to 30th June, 1915, for the water and sewerage service for the metropolitan area; (b) what amount of interest and sinking fund was charged for the year 1914-15?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: 1, Actual cash receipts amounted to £120,130. Revenue accrued amounted to £141,646. 2, £42,772. This includes management, revenue collection, and all operating and maintenance expenses. 3, (a) £1,784,014; (b) interest, £62,903; sinking fund, £23,982; total, £86,885. The foregoing figures are exclusive of the following transactions on sewerage house connections deferred payments account:—Capital expenditure unrecouped, £178,408; interest received for year, £6,207; interest paid for year, £6,180.

QUESTION—CIVIL SERVANTS' INCREMENTS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to pay to those civil servants, about 40 in number, who have recently petitioned the Premier, and whose grading was raised by the appeal board, the same increments as have already been paid in 1911-12, 1912-13, and 1913-14 to all officers similarly graded by the Re-classification Board? 2, If so, when? 3, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, 2, and 3, The Government, after careful consideration, and notwithstanding financial difficulties, decided to respect the decision of the appeal board by placing officers on the minimum of the grade as fixed on appeal, and to pay such rate as from 1st July, 1911, and whilst recognising the equity of the petitioner's claims, it is regretted that present conditions will not permit of more liberal treatment in the direction desired.

QUESTION—WHEAT FREIGHT, REBATE.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it a fact that the Federal Government propose to retain the $3\frac{3}{4}$ d. per cent. rebate usually given by the ship owners? 2, Seeing that it is estimated that the rebate will approximately mean the loss of 1d. per bushel to the farmer, and a total loss of about £250,000, does he propose to urge the Federal Government that they should not endeavour to make a profit out of the transaction, but should grant full rebate to the producer, less actual working expenses?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: With the permission of the House, I would like to explain this matter as it is impossible to make the position clear in the course of a brief reply to a question. Under the terms of the agreement made with the charterers by the Commonwealth Government, it was agreed that a 5 per cent. commission would be paid. That is the usual commission paid for the chartering of vessels, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. goes

to the charterers and the other $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. to the shippers. In this case, the Commonwealth and States really become the shippers, and consequently they get the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. It has been stated in the South Australian Parliament, more for party reasons I think than anything else, that the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. represents some £250,000, and that it means that the farmer will get 1d. per bushel less for his wheat. That statement is absolutely ridiculous because the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. is only earned by those who ship the wheat. There is quite a number of buyers who do not charter vessels, and there is quite a number of big buyers who do charter vessels, but who at the same time send their wheat away in parcels—that is, in a portion of the ordinary shipping space—to oversea ports. The shippers of wheat do not calculate on the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. in purchasing their wheat. That is demonstrated by the fact that, day by day, wheat does not fluctuate as between buyer and buyer. The rate is fixed, and it does not matter whether a shipper is sending his wheat away under parcel rates or in a vessel he has chartered, the price paid to the producer is the same. The price is fixed on London parity without any regard to the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. I am prepared to admit, and this was discussed at the conference, that at times they work on the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. If a shipper has a vessel in port and finds he has not enough wheat to fill her, the competition is such that it might pay him to give a little more than the existing market rate in order to get sufficient wheat to fill her, and for the payment of that he has to recoup himself from the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. This, however, applies only in exceptional circumstances, and I repeat that the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. which goes to the shipper has no bearing on the price of wheat, and generally speaking does not go to the farmer or have any effect on the price paid to the farmer for his wheat. It must be borne in mind that the Commonwealth and States, as partners, are the shippers and are taking a certain amount of risk, and those farmers who are talking about the loss of the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. overlook the possibility of there

being many a slip in regard to the shipping—we may have to pay a certain amount of compensation for loss of time owing to difficulty in loading, or there may be difficulty on the railways in getting the wheat down; all such expenses have to be borne by the Government because we are the shippers and the farmers will not pay us for such losses. Consequently, the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. to be shared by the Commonwealth and States will enable us to recoup ourselves against losses of this description. Supposing we have a run of really good luck and sustain no losses at all, which is unlikely to happen, the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. will be distributed among the Commonwealth and States, and if we do make a profit on the transaction that money will go to the Government, and, in the ordinary course, the agriculturists will get a share.

Mr. Harrison: Would the Western Australian Government get a pro rata share of such profit?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Mr. Thomson: How much would the Commonwealth get out of it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They would get a share.

Mr. James Gardiner: Would that be one-sixth?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, Queensland and Tasmania are not parties to the agreement. The parties are New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, so that we would get one-fifth.

Hon. J. Mitchell: One-fifth of the whole of the Australian charters?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I take it that we would get our proportion of one-fifth of the profit on the amount of shipping we get out of the pool.

Mr. Harrison: I wish to be quite clear in regard to the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. plus the $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. In the ordinary way of business no portion of this 5 per cent. would appear to the farmer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. In other years it has always been a 5 per cent. proposition and the farmer knew nothing about it, but this year it

happens to have come out in the agreement, and the opportunity has been seized upon to make it appear that the farmers are being robbed by the Governments of the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., which, on the face of it, is ridiculous, because we are taking all the risk in connection with the chartering, and are simply getting the ordinary trade risk for it, and the farmer is not paying more than previously for freight and is not getting less than previously for his wheat.

Mr. James Gardiner: The 5 per cent. has been an established custom with the broker for years past.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, ever since we have been shipping wheat.

QUESTION — RETURNED SOLDIERS, CONCESSIONS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Has the concession originally granted to members of the Australian Expeditionary Forces in regard to free travelling on the State railways been in any way modified or withdrawn? 2, If so, to what extent? 3, Will arrangements be made for the soldiers to travel on the railways free of charge in future?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Originally, military warrants, entitling holders to a free ticket, were issued by the Defence Department to the members of the Expeditionary Forces, whenever they desired to travel, but, owing to the large number travelling from Black Boy Hill camp to Perth, and the consequent inconvenience both to the Railway Department and the travelling public, the Defence Department restricted the issue of these warrants to men desiring to return home to complete their private affairs, or travelling on duty. Men on short leave from the camp have therefore to pay their own fares. Returned wounded soldiers are permitted to travel free in the suburban area or to their homes in the country on presentation of an order from the military doctor. 3, It is not proposed to grant any further concession than mentioned in No. 2.

QUESTION — STATE SINKING FUND, CONTROL, ETC.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier: Is it his intention to lay on the Table of the House a return showing—1, Amount of sinking fund provided on loan accounts up to 30th June, 1914? 2, How the fund is invested. 3, With whom is the control and direction of this fund entrusted?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, On pages 116 and 117 of the Public Accounts for last year, which were laid on the Table of the House on the 14th inst., the position of the various sinking funds is detailed against each class of stock and debentures current, the total amount of contributions from revenue being—£3,073,456 10s. 9d., and the total Sinking Fund £4,068,888 5s. 6d. The investments of the funds are also set out in detail. 3, The Sinking Funds for loans raised since Responsible Government are controlled by trustees in London, one of whom is the Agent General. For loans raised previous to that period, of which £1,116,653 is still current, the control is in the hands of the Crown Agents for the colonies.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Sale of Liquor Regulation.

2. Permanent Reserves.

Transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [4.49]: The Minister for Lands in introducing the Bill fully explained its provisions to the House, and I do not think there is anything in it with which the House can disagree. It has evidently been brought forward with the object of improving the principal Act, to give assistance in certain cases to settlers, and at the same time to safeguard the Treasury in every

possible way. It is distinctly a Committee Bill, and one which I think scarcely deserves much consideration on the second reading. It deals principally with amendments to the present Act which are considered to be of benefit in many ways. It provides for cases in which advances can be made and for the extension of the operations of the principal Act to the 31st December of next year. I think that this may be needed, and that it is needed in the unfortunate circumstances which render the Act necessary. No doubt many of those settlers who have received assistance under the Industries Assistance Act will, during the forthcoming year, need further assistance to tide them over their difficulties. I am pleased to think the Government have brought the measure forward. The operations of the Act have scarcely come under my immediate notice, because in the districts which I represent there are very few settlers who have been able to seek the assistance of the Act, and there are many who have not required to do so. Consequently, I know little or nothing about the working of the Act. There are, however, hon. members in the House who have in their districts many farmers who have been obliged, unfortunately, to seek this form of assistance, and who will be in a better position to speak with regard to the operations of the Act as it now stands than I am myself. I will, therefore, leave it to them to deal with the general operations of the Act because they know more about it than I do. The Bill also provides where advances are made upon implements, live stock, etc., that the Treasurer may exempt from the operation of the security the crops and chattels of the applicant. That is a concession to the farmers, and it is a wise provision which the settlers, I am sure, will welcome. The Bill also provides that, where an applicant has a mortgage the Treasurer can only make advances, subject to such mortgage with regard to the land, on the security on the crop. This is the amendment by which we are effecting an improvement to the particular clause which was introduced in another place. We must all agree that the

section will be improved by the addition of the words which it is proposed under this Bill to add to the principal Act. There are other provisions under which the Treasurer may insure the crops. That is only right and proper. The country has to be protected, and if a settler will not insure his crop and the mortgagee is the Government, then the Government should be protected and should be permitted to insure the crop so as to safeguard the country also. There is no need to discuss this Bill at the present stage for it can be better discussed in Committee. So far as I can see, after going carefully into the Bill and comparing it with the present Act, there is nothing in it that this House is likely to object to. On the other hand, I think the provisions contained in it should meet with the approval of the members.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [4.55]: Like the hon. member who has just sat down I endorse this measure, because I feel sure it is a very necessary one. While endorsing it I wish to say I appreciate the work which has been done under the principal Act. Although inconvenience has resulted from what may have appeared to be unnecessary delays, still, considering the great volume of business, it is only reasonable to suppose that there should be some delay in the handling of so many applications as have been handled under the principal Act. This is a necessary measure. I do hope the Minister will give us his assurance that, when handling the proceeds of the harvest, particularly in the matter of the payment of land rents, and recouping the board for their outlay, the fullest consideration will be given to the condition of the farmers who have had occasion to obtain assistance under the Act. The unpaid rents and other liabilities due by the farmer to the Crown, in many instances, total a very large sum of money. It is almost impossible to the people to make this good out of one crop, even if it is a phenomenal yield. Although I have had it in an indirect way from the Minister that it is not the intention of the Government to impose heavy burdens on the farmer or to be unfair in the mat-

ter, I should like him to assure the House that such is the intention of the Government when recouping themselves for their outlay. When we reach the Committee stage we shall be able to further discuss the various clauses.

Mr. BOLTON (South Fremantle) [4.57]: Whilst hon. members may believe in the necessity for the amending Bill I am hopeful that they will believe in the necessity for amending it. Hon. members who have any knowledge of the Agricultural Bank will know that under the horse and machinery loans to farmers, farm vehicles, wagons, drays, etc., are included. Under the Farmers' Assistance Board, however, wagons are not included, and it follows that all the money which the board have advanced to the farmer to put in his crop and for machinery to take it off is not safeguarded until something has been provided in which to cart the products to the nearest siding. Cases have been brought under my notice, one from a place called Nangeenan, where the farmer has to cart his produce 17½ miles. The area under crop is, I think, 530 acres. The amount of the tender to cart the wheat to the siding is £80, which the Government have to pay, of course, to get the produce to that particular siding. This man desired to obtain a wagon with which to do his own carting. He had the horses and the labour, but under the Farmers' Assistance Board he could not obtain that wagon. The cost of a wagon is £68 10s., and after he had carted his crop he would still have the wagon which would be an additional security to the Government. Yet under the board, this settler cannot get a wagon because it is not provided for in the principal Act. It is not the case of a man who has received all the assistance the board could give him, as I will be able to show. I have letters received from the Farmers' Assistance Board in reply to numerous applications for wagons. In my hand I hold a list containing 46 applications to one firm to supply wagons. This list contains the file No. of the Farmers' Assistance Board

in every instance. In one instance a reply was sent to this effect—

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 7th inst. in regard to a dray which Mr. Willis, of Newcarrie, desires. All the board can do is to guarantee the first payment of £15. You will have to look to Mr. Willis for the balance.

The firm cannot obtain a bill of sale over the wagon although they sell it to the man, taking the risk of a payment of £15 on account of a purchase of £75; and in the case of the whole 46 applications I have referred to they declined to build the wagon on those conditions. If members will turn to Schedule 3 they will find that from any surplus remaining over from the proceeds of the crop there are eight items which must be paid for before payment can be made for a wagon; and, optimistic as members may be, I do not think they would regard it as a fair thing for any merchant or builder to wait until the other eight have been paid before getting his money for this very necessary article. Members will surely agree that a wagon is as necessary to the farmer as a harvester. Because if he has to cart for any distance a farmer must have a wagon, dray, cart, or some other means of conveyance. The Farmers' Assistance Board say they will provide the seed for the crop, they will take the crop off but will not do anything towards taking the crop to the siding. Still in the same breath they say they will pay for the cartage of the crop to the siding, will make a contract with someone in the district. The cost of carting under such contract would be greater in many instances than the cost of the wagon; and that to me does not seem reasonable or sensible. In many districts, in view of the number of farmers who have had assistance from the board, there are not sufficient wagons to take the crops to the siding. Besides a farmer owning a wagon would require it for shifting his own crop. Let me proceed by reading one or two of the replies received from the board—

Sir,—With reference to your letter of the 23rd ultimo I beg to inform you that the board regrets being unable to approve of the spring cart required by the above settler.

In this instance the Assistance Board referred the matter to the Agricultural Bank. If this particular settler had received the full amount of loan under that Act, then he would be turned down, showing that the Assistance Board does not, and will not, advance money for the building of wagons to take crops to the siding. Here is another letter—

With reference to your letter of the 7th ult., addressed to Messrs. Atkinson Bros. & Joseph. of Upper Chapman, I beg to inform you that these settlers requested the board to authorise the purchase from your firm of a wagon costing £71, but I regret that we are not able to authorise this expenditure at present in connection with these settlers' farming operations.

No reason is given there as to why; but it may be a reasonable inference to say that these men had had as much assistance as the board could give them, they had gone to the limit. I want to say, before reading any more letters, that both the board and the Government are safeguarded by the fact that before the firm can build a wagon for a settler the board must be convinced that the man is in urgent need of that article. Therefore they need not approve the building of a wagon unless they know the man to be genuine and know that he is in urgent need. Here is a letter from Wongan Hills—

I am in receipt of your letter of 24th ult., *re* request from above settler for the supply of one farm wagon, cost £60, and have to inform you that this has been referred to the Agricultural Bank, and upon receipt of their decision you will be further communicated with.

In the case of the letter I have just read, this settler, Hodgson, had not received the full amount allowed by the Agricultural Bank Act horses and machinery lien, and therefore the Agricultural Bank immediately gave authority to the firm

to build the wagon for this man; but not under the Industries Assistance Act. It was a matter which would have been arranged apart from the Assistance Board, because the Agricultural Bank would have lent the money. Here is another—

In reply to your letter of the 23rd ult. requesting authority to supply Messrs. G. Wilson & Sons, of Bendering, with a 5-ton box wagon, I beg to inform you that this matter has been referred to the Agricultural Bank, and I am now in receipt of that institution's reply to the effect that they are prepared to assist them in the direction indicated.

We have now found that these men, Wilson & Sons, had not exhausted the amount the bank would lend them on the improvements, and so the Agricultural Bank approved the building of the wagon. But in no instance at all has the Assistance Board advanced one penny, or offered to advance one penny, to help the settlers to get their crop to the siding. The Agricultural Bank has done this for years under their own Act, so this has nothing to do with the Assistance Board. All the Assistance Board does is to communicate with the Agricultural Bank, who communicate in reply with the Assistance Board and the latter then communicate with the applicant. Another form of reply from the Assistance Board is as follows—

Re A. D. Lindberg, Wogerlin. In reply to your letter of the 23rd ult. requesting authority to supply the above settler with a table-top wagon, I beg to inform you that this matter has been referred to the Agricultural Bank, and immediately we receive their reply you will be further communicated with.

Showing that the whole thing is going through the Agricultural Bank instead of the Farmers' Assistance Board; showing that the board is prepared to assist the man to put his crop in, will provide him with machinery to put the crop in, will supply him with machinery and horses to take the crop off; but there they leave him. They say they are prepared to make a contract with some near neighbour or

settler to take the farmer's crop to the nearest siding. The cost of carting the crop under that contract is generally more than the price of the wagon. Besides there is this aspect, that if the farmer were supplied with a wagon there would be available after the carting was done at least the value of the wagon. Members who know anything of the subject will know that a wagon does not suffer very severely through working one or two years. The board could supply wagons at less than it costs to contract for the carting of the wheat. To prove what I say, I have brought a few samples of the letters we have received. I will not read them all, but only those portions which are of interest in view of the remarks I am now making. This is one from Carter & Son, of Nangeenan. I give the name because they are well established settlers—

Just a line to you in reference to the wagon. The Industries Assistance Board guaranteed me the wagon before I left to have it delivered to me in two months' time. I will want it in one month from now. I am writing by this mail giving them a shaking up. I am telling them that you want an immediate reply from me, as I purchased the wagon from you, only waiting for them to give their sanction. Tell them you hold me responsible until I cancel my order with you. Please go up and send the wagon as soon as you can, for they must supply me and pay for it. It will cost them £75 or £80 if they pay for carting, and then they will have to wait the convenience of the carter. There is no chance of borrowing this year; that is what they want me to do.

Any hon. member who knows the situation of that man's farm will know that the tender he had received for carting his produce, £75 to £80, was reasonable. The price quoted to the Farmers' Assistance Board for a wagon for this man was £68 10s. It does not seem to me a business proposition to pay £75 to £80 for the carting—and the Government must pay for the carting, that is through the Assistance Board—

Mr. Thomson: The farmers' have to pay that in the end.

Mr. BOLTON: The question is that when the crop has been taken off, the Farmers' Assistance Board, in order to get a return of their money, must cart the crop to the siding; and if the board has to pay from £75 to £80 for the carting, hon. members will realise that after paying for the carting there is not anything left but the wheat at the siding, whereas, if the man had been given a wagon in which to do the carting himself, the board would have a lien on the wagon. It would be cheaper if the board were to go further into this question and allow those settlers who are urgently in need to obtain the necessary money to pay for the wagons they require. I have another letter, from "Studley Park," dated the 5th August of this year—

Would you be good enough to give me a quote for a farm wagon, special measurements as follows:—

Then is given the size of the axles and the different measurements.

A light but strong wagon is needed, and when you know that the carting is 17 miles to the siding, and through four miles of heavy sand, you will better understand our wants and see the reason for wanting three horses in the shafts.

That explains the special measurements they want.

And three in the front. I find this is a better method of getting a more direct pull, and the horses work better. You may send your specifications as well. This wagon is needed by the 1st October. This order is subject to the approval of the Industries Assistance Board, and I am now awaiting their final approval for same. My crop is 580 acres.

Now, 580 acres to be carted 17 miles, four miles of it through sand, will, I think, show that the cost of carting that crop, without the railing, will be enormous indeed. The letter proceeds—

If we decide to do business, it must be clearly understood that the payment for the same will be made by the Industries Assistance Board, who have

full control over my crop and the distribution of the proceeds from same.

That is signed "Edith J. Bull"—I think some hon. members know the property. The board are thus shown to have full control of the crop and full control over the proceeds of the sale of the crop; and they would also have full control over the wagon. Naturally, the firm declined to build wagons on those conditions. I bring this question forward because it may be possible under this Bill, when in Committee, to permit a wagon, dray, or other vehicle used by a farmer to be treated in the same way by the Farmers' Assistance Board as under the Agricultural Bank Act, under which horses, machinery, and wagons are included as security. In the Industries Assistance Act there is no mention in Schedule 3 of wagon or dray; and it is also provided that any surplus remaining over from the amount derived from the crop taken from the land is to be allocated as provided in Schedule 3. In that schedule everything is included for which payment or part payment has to be made, except the wagon which the farmer wants. This should be an opportune time to amend this Bill in that direction. I do not claim any personal knowledge of farming, but those members who have a practical knowledge of that industry will at once admit that a wagon is just as essential to a farmer as a harvester or binder.

Member: This amending Bill provides against that.

Mr. BOLTON: It is entirely unsatisfactory to those wanting to build a wagon. Let us not forget that. The greatest difficulty of the farmer is that if he has to pay for cartage it goes on to the cost. I am prepared to give the names and addresses of everyone of the 46 applicants for wagons whom I have mentioned, in order to show that they are genuine. Additional acreage under crop means additional farm machinery, and also additional vehicle power to take away the crop. Hon. members will recollect that the Premier, in introducing his Budget, spoke of 500,000 acres additional being under crop this season. If the

House agrees with me that there should be some provision of the nature I have suggested, there will be an opportunity for making it during the Committee stage. For the present I content myself with bringing the matter under the notice of hon. members. Some assurance should be obtained from the Minister for Lands in regard to future actions of the Farmers' Assistance Board.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.17]: According to my reading of Section 9 of the principal Act, the argument of the last speaker is wrong.

Mr. Bolton: Wagons are not included.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think they are.

Mr. Bolton: The Crown Law authorities have declared that a wagon is not included.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think they would declare a wagon to be included if the Farmers' Assistance Board desire to supply wagons. Mr. Sayer, I fancy, would rule either way. So far as I can see, the wagon is intended to be covered by Section 9. The amendments desired by the Minister are merely designed to give effect to what were the intentions of Parliament when passing the Act. It is true that the time limit of the Act is to be extended by a couple of years or so. That in my opinion is a wise provision. Then, the Minister intends to charge a commission to the farmer on moneys disbursed on the farmer's behalf outside payments to the Crown. That is reasonable, seeing the farmer would have to pay the commission to others; and I daresay that the people receiving the money will find the commission. Another new provision is in regard to caveats. The Act provides that a caveat may be lodged when the applicant for assistance has signed what is practically an order for supplies. Even there, however, no amount is stated; so that by agreeing to the Minister's suggestion we shall not be doing the farmer an injustice. A letter from the farmer will afford just the same protection as an acknowledgement which does not state an amount. There is, however, another amendment which ought to be made. Injustice will be worked unless the Bill is further amended in the direc-

tion I have indicated on the Notice Paper. Some confusion appears to have arisen in the drafting of Section 23 of the principal Act, because it is not clear that the wheat sold by the farmer, which he has failed to deliver, is identical with the wheat sold by the purchaser from the farmer and the sub-purchaser under that purchaser. The amendments I have on the Notice Paper will at any rate assist in affording the protection which we intended to give when framing the Act, and which I think Parliament will desire to extend to all who follow the farmer, namely, the purchaser and all sub-purchasers. The Bill contains one or two other minor provisions which are needed to protect the farmer. I trust the amendment I have placed on the Notice Paper will find favour with hon. members. I suppose it was impossible to foresee, in drafting the principal measure, all the little troubles which might arise; and it is quite natural that we should be asked to amend the Act. If the Act continues in force I daresay we shall from time to time find something to amend in it. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.23]: I should like to say a few words in support of the second reading. I am pleased to notice the amendments placed on the Notice Paper by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) relative to wheat contracts. Considerable difficulty has arisen in that connection throughout the agricultural districts. I think the position indicated by the amendments is due partly to the fact that in many cases the applications for assistance signed by the farmers in good faith and sent forward have not reached the Farmers' Assistance Board. There have been many complaints on that score in my own electorate, farmers who understood that they were applying for assistance, and who had signed and sent on applications for relief from their contracts, finding that those applications have never been lodged at the local court, with the result that the farmers have not received the relief to which they are entitled. The position of those farmers is

a very serious one, and defence committees have been formed at Wickepin and elsewhere to deal with it. Some hon. members at all events must regret that wheat contracts were not entirely cancelled when the principal measure was before Parliament at the beginning of this year. Another point to which I desire to refer briefly is that the present Bill perpetuates the interest charge of 6 per cent. on all advances made. As regards actual money advanced by the Government in payment for commodities supplied to the farmers, I do not think that under existing financial conditions anyone would complain of paying 6 per cent.; but I do think that a charge of 6 per cent. on the amount of land rates being paid in such a generous degree—I think the Premier told us that £115,000 has already been paid on this account—is too high.

The Minister for Lands: Is it generous to pay your just debts?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Really, the transaction amounts only to a bookkeeping entry. The least the Government could do would be to charge a lower rate of interest on the money advanced for rents.

The Minister for Lands: Would the hon. member agree to abolishing the 6 per cent. interest and enforcing the fines? The Land Act says I must fine for non-payment of rents. Would the hon. member agree to that?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Nothing of the kind. As regards money paid for land rent, interest at the rate of three per cent. would be ample.

The Minister for Lands: Plus the fine?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Without any fine whatever. The predecessor of the Minister for Lands promised to waive the fines, and did waive them to drought-stricken settlers for a good many months without Parliamentary authority; and I congratulate the present Minister for Lands on having continued that policy so far. I am sure Parliament will endorse his action when there is a chance of doing so. But this is the position to-day. We are disposing of Crown

lands on the leasehold system, and the rental charged is for rural lands only 3 per cent. on the value, while for town lands it is 4 per cent. That is the law of the country in regard to the disposal of town and rural lands at the present time. Yet to the farmer who is in arrear with his land rents—rents which in many instances are assessed on a basis out of all proportion to the value of the land at present—we say that we will pay his arrears for him and charge him 6 per cent. per annum interest on the amount. In a number of cases arrears to the extent of £100, and even £150, have accumulated. If the Government had to find the money in hard cash—

The Premier: We have to.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No.

The Premier: Then who is finding it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If the Government did not pay these land rents out of loan, they would not get them. The farmer could not pay them. The Government simply transfer the money from loan to revenue and charge the distressed settler 6 per cent. for a book-keeping entry. The Government have to raise the money to finance the deficit by a book entry. They utilise it for the purpose of paying these land rents and transfer it to revenue.

Mr. James Gardiner: Have the Government been financing their deficit out of Loan funds?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, and they would still be doing it on an immense deficit if this particular provision had not been passed: because before utilising the money they book it up to the farmer—it is a mere book entry—and then they charge him 6 per cent. interest. They charge that interest for an entry made in the books of the Lands Department.

The Premier: Absolutely incorrect. Is not the money brought to account on the revenue side?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Of course it is.

The Premier: And expended?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If it were not brought to account in that way, the deficit would simply be so much the larger, and the Treasurer would not be

drawing 6 per cent. interest, or any interest, from the drought-stricken farmer, because of that book-keeping entry.

The Premier: It is costing us the interest on that proportion of the deficit.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Government would not get the money, because the farmer who has suffered from the drought—and he alone comes under this Bill—would not be able to meet the charge. However, because the Farmers' Assistance Board pay the rent, and incidentally give the Government the right to treat the amount as revenue instead of as loan, the farmer is booked up with 6 per cent. interest. I am sure the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) sees the point.

Mr. James Gardiner: I am trying to understand your methods of financing.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I can only think that the hon. member does not want to see it. I am constrained to that belief.

The Premier: You are an ex-civil servant. If one talks to civil servants about expenditure they always say, "It is just a book-keeping entry." I know all about their book-keeping entries.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The rents are being paid in this way by the Farmers' Assistance Board really for the purpose of assisting the Government in their revenue account, and the farmers as a class pay their proportion of the interest on the general deficit, as well as this special charge on the distressed section of their class. Another point I would like to mention is that I hope the Minister will make some explanation in regard to the circular sent by the Farmers' Assistance Board to the various storekeepers asking for a deduction of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on all accounts paid by the board in the future.

The Minister for Lands: No. We are charging $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on cash payments; we are not asking for a deduction.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: You are asking for discount.

Mr. James Gardiner: They ought to be thankful for $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. discount for cash.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope it is not going to add to the burden that the settlers have to bear in the shape of an increased charge for stores, etc. In regard to the remarks of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) concerning supplying wagons to farmers, I look at the matter from a slightly different point of view, but I must say that, if the Act does not give the Industries Assistance Board power to deal with cases of that kind on their merits, it certainly ought to do so. It would be wise to support the Government in any proposal made to give the board power to buy a wagon for a settler on a well regulated farm, rather than that the board should pay a large sum for carting the farmer's produce. Unless this power is given at the end of the period of the harvest the board would pay this money for cartage and would have no asset in the shape of a wagon. I hope that when the Bill is in Committee the member for South Fremantle will move an amendment in the direction he proposed.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Greenough): [5.5]: As the Act which the Bill seeks to amend was only passed last session to deal with matters which were almost new to us, we did not have much experience in that regard. It is natural, therefore, that the Act should require some amendment at the present time. I think that most of the amendments proposed in the Bill before us will meet the case. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) referred to one case in which a farmer received all the assistance that he required but was left short of a wagon. It appears that the legal definition of the word "implements" does not include wagons, and the board therefore have no power to make advances for the purchase of this farm necessity.

The Minister for Lands: We have any amount of power to make advances for wagons.

Mr. Bolton: But you have not made any advances yet.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: If there be any doubt about the legal definition of the word "implements" it would be better

now, when we are amending the Bill, to take the opportunity of widening the definition so that wagons might be included. I do not say that every settler who applies for a wagon should have his application granted, but I think that applications of this kind like all others which are lodged by settlers should be dealt with on their merits. And, as there is a large area under crop this year, there will be the need for more wagons. If they are not supplied, money will have to be found to pay for the carting. Many of the people who own wagons or drays will use them for carting their own produce to market, and the men who have not got them will have to wait until the end, and then perhaps have to pay more than the cost of the wagon would be. I think it would be a sound business proposition to, wherever possible, make the necessary advance to enable the farmer to purchase a wagon. Another matter in the Bill I wish to refer to relates to commissions. I take it that commission will be collected on the surplus which will be distributed to other creditors. Perhaps that is only a business proposal, but most farmers would like to know what will be the amount of the commission. I think it would be advisable if a scale in that direction were fixed. I will not take up the time of the House any further because the matters to which I have referred and others as well can be dealt with in Committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford—in reply) [5.10] : I appreciate the manner in which hon. members have approached the consideration of this Bill, and I appreciate to a very great extent the statements made by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) in connection with the administration of the affairs of the board. There is no question that the members of the board have had a very trying time indeed, and they have had more kicks than ha'pence from those who ought to have assisted them. More particularly does that apply to the so-called leading newspaper of the State, the *West Australian*, which went to the extent of hampering the board by send-

ing a special commissioner to the agricultural districts to try and stir up difficulties. Those difficulties and many others were stirred up, more, I think, for personal reasons, personal against myself, or for party reasons against the Government, and they did hamper the board to a great extent. I can assure hon. members that, on many occasions, the board became absolutely disheartened because of the little encouragement they were getting from those who ought to have known better. As I pointed out when I moved the second reading of the Bill, the board overcame the difficulties to the extent that they got a much larger area under crop than the State has ever had under crop before. That in itself is sufficient to justify the eulogy which has come from hon. members this afternoon. The member for Toodyay appealed to the Government not to take the full amount of the arrears of land rents out of the surplus of next year's harvest. That is impossible, even if we desired to do so. We have no wish to hamper the settlers; we simply want to see that the land rents are paid, and those who are in arrears to the State should carry the responsibility of those arrears without transferring that responsibility on to the general community. If the hon. member will look up the principal Act he will see by the Third Schedule that it is not until the sixth distribution of the surplus that the question of land rents receives any consideration at all and then we can only take from next year's crop one year of arrears and not the total. It is true, as the member for Williams-Narrogin has pointed out, that we get 6 per cent. on the arrears, but the hon. member demonstrated that he has not studied the finances of the State very closely, because if we had a surplus on revenue account there would be some point in his criticism, but we have a deficiency, and it is met from loan funds and the interest on the loan funds has to be paid by the general community. That deficiency has been caused, to a great extent, by arrears of land rents.

Mr. Willmott: You have already got more in land rents than you expected to get.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. When I introduced the Bill making provision for land rents I made up my mind to get in the arrears. It is true that the executive of the Farmers and Settlers' Association endeavoured to prevent the farmers signing forms, and that did delay matters. If those gentlemen had not taken that course, we would have had less difficulty in regard to collecting the rents, and we might have got more in. But the arrears are coming in and, if the farmers do not pay the arrears of rents, their lands will undoubtedly be forfeited. Only to-day I had a conference with the officers telling them to put up the names of those who had not paid their rents and I would proceed immediately to forfeit their holdings. Hon. members will see the absolute injustice of the position. A man very often goes to the bank and he pays 8 per cent. for his money. The man who comes under the Industries Assistance Board pays 6 per cent. and the man who signs his form and gets the money advanced from the board has been paying 6 per cent. for it, but the man who has been listening to the executive of the Farmers and Settlers has been trying to dodge the payment of that 6 per cent. by not signing the form. I am going to move when the Bill is in Committee that the payment of interest shall start from the time the Act was passed, so that those people shall pay the same interest as the man who takes the straightforward course of paying through the Assistance Board when first appealed to. I have a great deal of sympathy for the farmer and I know his value to the State. I know also that the future of the State depends upon the successful development of our agricultural districts, but at the same time hon. members must realise that the State cannot go on perpetually spoon-feeding the farmers. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) gets on my nerves sometimes with his appeals for the farmers.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And you get on mine occasionally.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He seems to think the State should go on

perpetually spoon-feeding the farmer, that the farmer ought to get a wagon, that he ought to be supplied with a train, and get a machine just whenever he wants it.

Mr. Thomson: You make them pay for it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the member for Williams-Narrogin objects when the farmer is asked to pay. I have travelled through the country just as much as any other member, yet I do not find the farmer always crying out for Government assistance. It is only in this Chamber that we have member after member making special appeals for the farmer. The hon. member apparently thinks that because he makes a special appeal for the farmer he will get some special consideration from the farmer when he appeals to him at election time. Hon. members should get away from these small issues, and realise that we have to pull together to develop the industry, but that it must be developed on sound financial lines, that we cannot go on giving to any one section of the community a special consideration to which it is not justly entitled. However, I am proud to repeat that the farmer does not expect all spoon-feeding.

Mr. Harrison: In respect to those who did pay their land rent, does not Clause 3 still stand?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, that is retrospective. I have pledged my word on that. The next question raised by the hon. member was in regard to the supply of wagons. Under the Bill, we have power to supply wagons and machinery. There has been no question raised as to the power of the Government to advance for wagons or drays or spring carts.

Mr. Hickmott: You have done so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, we have, but what the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) is appealing for is that wagons should be placed on a different footing from other machinery. We made an arrangement with the Chamber of Commerce and agreed that we would advance the first instalment on machinery. Hundreds of harvesters are

being bought on the guarantee of the Industries Assistance Board to pay the first instalment.

Mr. Bolton: Leaving a bill of sale for the merchant.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And hundreds of reapers and binders and ploughs also are being bought in the same way. All that the Industries Assistance Board is doing is to guarantee the first payment. We are prepared to do in respect to wagons what we have done in regard to other machinery. I am not going to argue about the bill of sale. What we do in regard to the purchase of harvesters, we are prepared to do in respect to a wagon; nothing more and nothing less.

Mr. Bolton: And guarantee the bill of sale?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will give the same conditions as the other people get.

Mr. Thomson: What are they?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know, but they are all on the same footing. The hon. member said that in a number of cases when a wagon is bought it is paid for from one year's harvest. That would apply to the harvester or to the reaper and binder.

Mr. Bolton: I did not say any such thing. I said it would be paid for in one year's carting.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, that one year's carting of the produce of next harvest would pay for the wagon. We may say that the proceeds of the next year's harvest will pay for the harvester. Suppose we went on like that, and all had a preference claim, there would be nothing left of the crop. Why does the farmer pay for his harvester, his reaper and binder and his horses on time payment? Simply because he knows that the machine will not be worked out or rendered useless after the first year's crop, but will serve for quite a number of crops, and consequently he spreads his payment over a period.

Mr. Thomson: I do not think the argument applies.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does, exactly. However, I am not going to allow the board to pay cash for wagons to the extent of £60 or £70, when we are not paying in like proportion for harvesters or reapers and binders, or other machinery necessary to get in next year's crop.

Mr. Bolton: You were not asked to pay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have told the hon. member that he will be put on the same basis as others, neither more nor less.

Mr. Bolton: You are a good dodger.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member becomes offensive I can retaliate. This is not in the best taste, coming from the hon. member, seeing that he knows that nobody has a desire to do an injustice to the firm whose case he has advocated. That firm will be put on the same basis as all others. We are already advancing for wagons, and there is no singling out of particular firms or makers of harvesters or other implements I wish to emphasise the point that the board is not advancing money for every machine the farmer asks for. For instance, if a farmer having only 25 acres asks for a reaper and binder, he does not get it. Numbers of them require wagons, and consequently instructions have been given and a definite arrangement made as to the area under crop necessary before a farmer can get a reaper and binder, necessary before he can get a harvester, and necessary before he can get a wagon. The hon. member complained that the board had consulted the Agricultural Bank. We would be in a nice position if we did not do this. We do it in every case in regard to machinery. We have to find out how much the Agricultural Bank has advanced to the farmer for machinery previous to his applying to the Industries Assistance Board. If he has machinery from the Agricultural Bank, he is not likely to get it from the board, and very often, even though he has not had assistance from the Agricultural Bank, if his area under crop is not sufficiently large, he will not

get assistance from the Industries Assistance Board. Again, even though he has a sufficiently large area under crop, if his financial position is such that he cannot carry an extra burden, the board will not do business with him. The whole thing must be run on sound business lines. Moreover, in regard to advances for wagons and other requisites applied for by the farmer, if we make all these advances, where is the use of the third schedule? It simply means that the advances will eat up all the surplus, and the arrears of liabilities due to outside merchants will have to stand aside. If one buys a wagon this year, one has £68 or £70 less to distribute to the creditors, who have been waiting two or three years, and one is taking the risk of distribution as outlined in the third schedule. We have that responsibility to the merchants, and we consider it when deciding whether or not an advance shall be made for machinery. No doubt questions will be asked in Committee. I will be only too pleased to answer them. In regard to insurance, I find there is no justification for the report that arrangements had been made for the underwriters to start insuring farmers' crops from the 1st October. I had previously made arrangements with the Chamber of Commerce and the insurance companies that the farmer should be allowed to use his own discretion up to a given date.

Mr. Harrison: Provided the Government are secured.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If he is not insured by the 15th October the Government will step in and insure, so as to protect their interests.

Mr. Harrison: Would you insure all the crop from the 15th October?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not follow. We are giving every farmer till the 15th October to decide whether he is going to do it himself. If he does not do so, then we will start insuring as we think best, according to climatic and other conditions.

Mr. Harrison: There is his growing crop, and there is another risk in the stack. Different periods will be required.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Industries Assistance Board will not insure for one day longer than is necessary. The farmers will be allowed to use their own discretion till the 15th October. After that we must protect our own interests. No forcing is being done by the board. The farmers can do as they like until the 15th October.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And they must notify you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The insurance companies will notify us.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL — MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [5.57]: That the Bill contains debatable matter is unquestionable, and the Minister is to be complimented on the spirit of equity that characterised his remarks in moving the second reading. The Bill brings back to my mind days of long ago, when I occupied the position now held by the Minister. In those days I desired—as no doubt the Minister to-day desires—to impartially hold the balance between the workers in the mines and the mine owners. The Bill cannot be said to affect any question of general policy, and therefore it may be dealt with on non-party lines. Hon. members on this side will agree with the manner in which I am prepared to deal with it. Still I trust that as I propose to deal with it on non-party lines, I may be credited with having given the matter thorough consideration and studied it from all aspects. I propose to deal with it free from any prejudice and to express my well-matured and considered opinion on the subject. The Bill deals really with only one important question, namely, the appointment of additional inspectors classed as workmen's inspectors. The whole measure hinges on that. To the appointment of special inspectors to deal with particularly technical matters in regard to mining, there can be no valid

objection, and I am certain it is not a debatable matter. Six sections of the principal Act are to be repealed and others substituted for them. The majority of these are merely a repetition of the repealed clauses with, in some cases, slight alterations. The main question to consider, therefore, is purely the appointment of workmen's inspectors. I can quite appreciate the fact that mine-owners and managers might be very naturally jealous of the control of their property being interfered with. Hon. members will admit that this is only a natural course for them to pursue, but at the same time we have to bear in mind that the whole control of mining is directed under the Act and regulations. Mining is controlled from top to bottom, from the surface to the deepest level, by the Act and regulations, so it cannot be said that this is an industry which has never been subject to legislative control. It is not like industries, such as many of us are engaged in, farming and grazing, but is an entirely different industry and one which differs from nearly all other forms of employment. In connection with the work of the men in the mines, one has to approach the subject with a judicial mind. In this particular industry men are subject to greater dangers and risks than those engaged in any other form of industry. From the experience of goldmining I have gathered in this country, and after having travelled as I did through and through so many mines in Western Australia, I cannot help but feel now, even though many days have since passed, some sympathy for those who spend their lives deep in the earth working as miners. Probably there is some fascination about the employment. Otherwise I do not think anyone would engage in it. This work is not like that of the farmer who, day after day, has the heavens above him and the green fields around him, and as he sits on his plough or other implement, his animals in front of him and the birds of the air and sun above him to cheer him in the work in which he is engaged. In the mining industry, a man is shut out from the world and has only his fellow men beside him and, above all is

this consideration, that he is there subject to risks to which other employees are not liable. Therefore, in my opinion, his wishes and desires should receive some consideration at the hands of all those who want to see justice meted out to this section of the community. The Minister has informed the House that the appointment of workmen's inspectors exists in one form or another in all legislation dealing with mining. I should have liked the Minister to be more explicit on this point. I have not gone forth to seek information from any one with regard to this question. I simply desire to judge it from the knowledge I have been able to acquire through long application of attention to matters such as this. I have not approached any one purposely to seek advice, preferring to deal with it as the Minister has done from one's own knowledge and judgment. I have no doubt that when the Minister replies to the debate, he will be able to give, as I request him to do, more explicit information on this point. I have heard it said during the course of the debate that, although the Minister informed the House this provision existed, it did not apply to gold-mining in any other part of the world. Before we deal finally with the measure, I should like the Minister to put the House right on this question. The Minister stated that the Royal Commission appointed in 1904 reported in favour of workmen's inspectors. This was a very strong argument in support of the Minister's case. The Royal Commission was appointed by the ex-Minister for Mines, Mr. Gregory, to inquire into the question of the ventilation and sanitation in mines.

The Minister for Mines: No. by Mr Hastie.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Commission was signed by Mr. Gregory.

The Minister for Mines: That is right. The report was made in Mr. Hastie's time.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Commission was appointed by Mr. Gregory. The Liberal Government did not go out of office until August, 1904. I was in England at the time, and I know this Commission was appointed in April, 1904, and

was signed by Mr. Gregory. The Commission consisted of Mr. Montgomery, Chief Mining Engineer, Dr. Black, Commissioner of Health, Mr. Hewitson, a mine manager with whom I have had long acquaintance and whom I regard as a representative mine manager, Dr. Jack, Mr. Mann, the Government Analyst, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Carr, who represented the Mine Workers' Association. If the object in appointing the Commission is to be achieved, their report, made after taking evidence throughout the length and breadth of the country, should be well considered by this House. The Commission reported in favour of the principle of these appointments, and there was no minority report. I wish to be perfectly fair and will quote the report—

In view of the importance of ventilation and good sanitary conditions in and about mines to the health of the men employed, it seems to us reasonable that they should have facilities for inspection and report in metalliferous mines in the same way as they have in the collieries.

The Minister for Mines: That means the collieries here.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I do not know whether they meant here or elsewhere.

The Minister for Mines: Everywhere, I think; it has been the universal practice.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I take it that they meant it obtained in collieries all over the world. The report continued—

To make the check inspectors' office of the most value, they should be permanently engaged in the larger centres, and not merely employees of the mine told off to go round from time to time, though this might be necessary in smaller places. We are of opinion that they should be appointed and removed by the recognised associations of miners of each district subject to approval by the Minister for Mines—

And this is an important point not provided for in the Bill before us—

who should, however, possess full power to dismiss them if he thinks fit, and they should be paid by the associations with the aid of a subsidy from the State

and they should report through the inspectors of mines.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Before tea I read to the House a report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Liberal Government in 1904 with regard to the important questions embodied in the Bill. If my judgment has to some extent been influenced by a perusal of this report I do not think that any exception can be taken to the fact, when one comes to consider that the report was made by a body of men under a Liberal regime, and appointed by a Government representative of the policy of the Liberal party, a policy as it exists in Western Australia and with which I must be recognised as being fully imbued. If, therefore, I have taken into consideration this report I am sure that no hon. member in this House can take exception to my having done so. The State mining engineer, the Minister stated, has also consistently supported the appointments as laid down in the present Bill. This, I believe, is correct. In my opinion there is no one more competent to judge of a matter of this description than the gentleman who is appointed to such a high position. If we are to have people appointed and occupying these positions for the guidance of different Governments I think we would do well at any rate to weigh carefully the opinions which may be given by those officers. We should see that the person appointed is thoroughly efficient and competent in every way. We should endeavour to see further that as far as possible he is fair minded, free from bias, and, above all things, free from any outside influence. If these qualifications can be relied upon I see no reason to believe that such an appointment can work for anything else but good. I observe that whilst Section 5 of the principal Act is repealed, a very important point has been left out with regard to workmen's inspectors. District inspectors have to pass an examination, but under this Act no examination is required for workmen's inspectors. In my opinion, in order to

get thorough competence in those who may come under the operations conducted by the person appointed as is proposed under this Act, it is necessary that he should be perfectly efficient. For that reason he should undergo an examination. It is not sufficient to say that he has had five years' experience in mining. There are many men who have had more than five years' experience and who perhaps have spent a life time in mining, but who would still be incompetent to fill a position such as this. I am quite sure that hon. members, even on the opposite side of the House, would agree with me in this. I fully realise the fact that the association of mine workers would endeavour to see that the man appointed to such a position was efficient. It is to their interests that he should be efficient, and I have sufficient faith in that fine body of men to believe that they would endeavour to see that the man appointed was efficient to fill that position. To give thorough confidence to all those who are engaged in mining—the workmen themselves as well as the mine management—I think that the inspector should undergo some class of examination, to be arranged under the regulations by the Minister for Mines in the same way as is arranged for the ordinary inspector of mines. At the same time I consider, as the Royal Commission recommended, that this should be laid down. There should be no doubt about the matter. The Minister himself, who must be all supreme in mining matters, should have the full right of dismissal. If the Act and regulations are to be properly carried out in Western Australia the Minister for Mines must be beyond all influences. I do not care what that influence is, whether it is the influence of the workers or of the mine managers themselves. The Minister is there in the most important position, I think, that any Minister occupies in Western Australia, and I feel sure that he has those around him who can sufficiently advise him without it being necessary for him to go outside to get the information he requires. If it is necessary that this inspector should have five years' experience

in practical mining as provided, that experience should be obtained—we will not say immediately prior to the appointment because that would mean he would have to be taken straight out of the mine—within a reasonable time of his appointment. I think hon. members will agree with me that, because a man has had experience some years back, it is no reason why we should infer from that that his experience would carry him through so as to enable him to fill such a position, particularly in an industry like that of mining where the conditions change so rapidly and where under the new scientific treatment and improved methods of operations the work in connection with mines has become so entirely different. It would be an improvement if some provision was made in the Act so that practical experience could be obtained within sufficient time prior to the man's appointment so as to assure all parties that this practical experience would be good. It may be argued that the workers themselves, who have the right to recommend this appointment, should be sufficiently able to judge of a matter of this sort. I say that if full confidence has to be given in the man occupying a position of this nature it is well that there should be no stone left unturned to ensure the giving of that confidence. I am in favour of the principle embodied in the Bill. At the same time, it must be considered by some to be open to misuse. All positions are open to misuse. Even our police force is open to misuse.

The Minister for Mines: Look at the powers they have.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The very position of a military man is open to misuse, and we frequently see it and hear of it. I am not one of those who will endeavour to drag a red herring such as this across the path of my consideration in connection with such an important matter. If the principles of the Bill become law it must be left to the fair-mindedness of the men to see that the most capable individual is recommended and made free from outside influence, that he is placed there and left alone, and that no one tries to influence him in the

work he has to carry out. If this is done, and I believe that a large majority of hon. members will strive to arrive at this, then the Bill as proposed should not only meet with the respect of the community but elicit the confidence of employer and employee alike. I suppose it is no use wishing for the millenium, still I look forward to that period when the sense of man will have brought about a better relationship between employee and employer. This question of appointment, or rather the objections to this appointment, of workmen inspectors, comes within that category. The objections are generally raised because he is a workman inspector. In my opinion in an all-important industry such as this, it is well to give to the workman some power or appointment such as we have embodied in this Bill. At the same time, I trust that the departure will tend towards good. While I am on this point, I should like to remind hon. members of a fable written by Aesop, almost 2,000 years ago, in which he said the Members rebelled against the Belly. They said, "We have to do all the work whilst you live in luxury and comfort." They rebelled, and said, "We are not going to have any more of this; we are going to do no more work to enable you to live in luxury and comfort." They refused to do more, and what was the result? They began to dwindle away and became weak, and in the end they found that they were in a worse condition. I think that may be taken as an allegory of the present position in this matter we are now discussing. The Members are the workers, and the capitalists are the Belly. The one cannot possibly get on without the other, one is absolutely necessary to the other. If the Members refuse to do the work the Belly will not support them. I should like to see the time when capital and labour will be able to look upon this question in that light, and I hope the sense of man will some day bring about such an ideal as I have set out. Meanwhile I am prepared to support the principle embodied in the Bill in the firm hope that if the appointment be made, if this Bill becomes law, with

such provisions as may be considered necessary to make the Bill safer and more acceptable, it will work not only in the interests of the workers themselves—that fine body of men we have working in the mines of this State—but also for the benefit of those who manage those mines. I cannot help having some sympathy for this measure, for I have many friends, and I think some admirers, amongst the managers in Western Australia and also among the workers on the goldfields. During the time I lived amongst them, which was for some years, I am pleased to be able to think, from what I have heard, that if I did not entirely win their confidence, I at least earned their respect, even from strangers.

Mr. Green: Many of them speak well of you to-day.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I wish to compliment the Minister on the way in which he dealt with this Bill. I appreciate the fact that he has endeavoured to keep those controversial matters which were in the Bill introduced last year out of the one now before Parliament. I trust, if this measure becomes law, that it will work not only for the general good of the workers but also in the general interest of the great mining industry which has done so much to uplift Western Australia from that position of insignificance which she occupied before the advent of the goldfields; and that it will at the same time in no way retard the working of the mines, or harass the management in the great and important work they have to do. I trust that the first body of men who will have this appointment at their disposal will see that the very best men are selected.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [7.53]: In rising to support the second reading of this Bill I wish to express at the outset the pleasure I have felt in listening to the address of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. It is indeed a pleasure to find that we have at least one man in this Assembly who, in dealing with a measure such as this, can entirely lay aside party feeling and discuss the measure upon its merits alone. I took

much pleasure in listening to the hon. member's address and I cannot but express this sentiment, that it would be much better for this Assembly if more members adopted this style. This measure is undoubtedly one in respect of which party feeling should not be allowed to enter in any shape or form. It is a measure brought forward with the object of doing something to better the position of the workers in the mines of this State. As hon. members know, it has been brought forward on several occasions previously. In keeping with the promise given at the beginning of this session, that no controversial measures would be introduced, the Government have decided to reduce the comprehensive Mines Regulation Bill of two years ago down to practically a one-clause Bill. I trust that during the passage of this measure through both Houses it will be treated in the fair and impartial way in which the deputy leader of the Opposition has dealt with it to-night. I cannot but contrast the attitude of that gentleman with that taken up by the leader of the Opposition in his address upon the second reading of this Bill. It is striking indeed. On the first and only occasion during this session, that gentleman made one of his characteristic and bitter speeches.

Member: No.

Mr. MULLANY: I am making the statement, not you. I have here a circular sent out by the Chamber of Mines to each member of both Houses of Parliament. In my opinion it is clear that the leader of the Opposition had an advance copy of that circular. He adopted a party spirit, and if any member will read his speech in *Hansard* and compare it with the utterance we have heard just now from the member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy), such member cannot fail to notice the difference. I intend to have a little to say in regard to this circular, knowing as I do that many members of both Houses attach a great deal of importance to the opinions of members of the Chamber of Mines.

Mr. Male: Rightly so, too.

Mr. MULLANY: You are entitled to get your information from whatever

source you choose; others are entitled to do the same. This circular, amongst other things, says that the goldfields members of this House do not represent the industry as a whole, but only the employees, and in fact not all the employees, but only those belonging to Labour unions. I say that members representing goldfields constituencies in the Assembly have a greater claim to represent the gold-mining industry generally than the members of the Chamber of Mines have to say they represent the mine owners of this State. The Chamber of Mines, after all, represents only a comparatively small number of the mine owners of this State. They represent only a few, a very few, of the largest companies operating here, and I think it is distinctly unfair, and absolute misrepresentation for that body to send out a circular making statements such as this—that we represent only members of the unions in the constituency represented. Four years ago, on the occasion of the general election, over 1,500 votes were cast in my district. At that time there were fewer than 300 members of the union in my constituency. Over 1,000 persons in that constituency voted for me. A somewhat similar state of affairs exists in other goldfields centres, where business people, mine owners and many others, as well as the members of the union, support the Labour party, the assertions in the circular of the Chamber of Mines notwithstanding. They go on to say they condemn the principle of workmen inspectors and advise members to move in the direction of securing amendments to this Bill, to provide a board such as exists under the New South Wales Act. I would advise members who have been supplied with this circular to look at the clause in the New South Wales Act—it is printed in the circular—and I would also point out that it is not necessary for the Chamber of Mines to go to New South Wales to find such a board. We have an exactly similar board provided for in our present Mines Regulation Act. We know it is there, and we have contended for many years that that section,

No. 16, of our present Mines Regulation Act is utterly unworkable. And so undoubtedly is this proposed clause which the Chamber of Mines have taken from the New South Wales Act. Our own Act provides that the majority of persons employed in a mine may, at their own cost, once in every month or oftener if they think fit, appoint two of their number, or any two practical working miners not being mining engineers, to inspect the mine. I do not intend to go fully into the Act in this respect, but I will ask hon. members just to consider the difficulties which must arise in endeavouring to put that provision into operation. Let us take one of the large mines on the Golden Mile, the Perseverance, the Golden Horseshoe, or the Great Boulder. In each of those mines there is anything from 15 to 20 miles of working faces and passages underground. That mileage is to be found in each of the mines; not in the total of them. Indeed, there are mines with over 20 miles of drives; and there are working faces over those drives, apart from shafts, air-ways, and so forth. The clause which we are asked to adopt from New South Wales legislation says that if any mine or part thereof is considered unsafe by the persons working therein, those persons may at their own cost appoint competent persons to make an examination. The New South Wales section is on the same lines as our corresponding section in the existing Act. I want hon. members to reflect for a moment how they would set about putting into operation such a provision in a mine with from 15 to 20 miles of underground workings? If a man working in one of those mines considered the part where he was engaged unsafe, what would he have to do? Our existing Act says that the majority of persons employed in the mine may appoint two workers to inspect. This in itself implies that there must be some machinery to bring the section into operation. I might happen to be working underground in a big mine and consider the place where I am asked to work unsafe. In the first place, then, I should have to get a majority of

my fellow employees to agree to appoint two persons to inspect. A ballot of some sort would have to take place for the purpose of deciding whether inspection is necessary or not. After that we would come to the appointment of the two inspectors; and another ballot of some sort would be needed in that connection. Would not these be insurmountable obstacles in the way of even a man who really wanted an inspection made? That is how the existing section is undoubtedly unworkable. It requires that in a mine employing 400 or 500 men, every one of those men shall be consulted. A man might work in one of these mines for years without ever seeing more than a tenth part of it. The man goes down the shaft, and proceeds to where he knows he has to work; and that is all he sees of the mine. He has no idea of its condition except in that small part where he himself happens to be employed. As the Minister for Mines has explained, we desire to do away with all that is cumbersome and provide a workable section, one which can be put into operation. We believe that no body of men are so well qualified to look after their interests as are the miners themselves. Members know that there are ample precautions to ensure that suitable persons would be appointed as workmen's inspectors, although our friends of the Chamber of Mines proceed to say—

It is well known that most of the workers' unions are governed not by the majority of sober-minded, level-headed workmen, but by the aggressive majority.

If this circular is a sample of the deliberations of the Chamber of Mines, I certainly consider the miners' unions on the goldfields quite as well qualified to carry on their business, and quite as able to put temperate and level-headed men at the head of affairs, as the mine-owners of this State, who allow such a circular to be issued, reeking as it does with misrepresentations and falsehoods. The circular also states—

Our present district inspectors are highly qualified men, to whom the

managers are willing at all times to defer; but if the Mining Bill becomes law these highly qualified men will for all practical purposes be placed under the control of the labour unions.

I ask hon. members to carefully study the provisions of the Bill in the light of that assertion. Can they find anything in the Bill which will bring the workmen's inspectors under the control of the unions any more than the district inspectors are to-day? No such intention is expressed in the Bill, and no fair-minded man could possibly read that intention into it. Personally, I have a very high opinion of the majority of inspectors of mines in this State. They are doing their duty as well as any body of men could possibly be expected to do it. But their districts are too large. The inspectors cannot possibly go around their districts and maintain that direct and close supervision which is necessary. In reply to that, we are met by the statement that the Government should appoint more direct Government inspectors. It would, however, be impossible under present conditions to appoint enough inspectors to provide the supervision which we consider is required. The member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) said that it would be absurd to appoint men from the unions to look after the members of the unions. I venture to disagree with the hon. member. I say that the miners can be depended upon to appoint men competent for the work, and that it would be to the interest of the workmen's inspectors to keep a check upon the carelessness which may exist among union members, as well as to keep a check upon the operations of the mine owners. I know quite well, as does any practical underground mining man, that there is a tendency on the part of miners to become careless to a certain extent, that familiarity breeds contempt. There can be no more effective check on such carelessness than the knowledge that there is a man appointed by the miners themselves to keep a close, direct, personal watch. I trust members will give this Bill earnest consideration. If they

are satisfied that the measure is necessary, that it will act beneficially in conserving the lives of the miners of Western Australia, then I would ask them to use in favour of the measure any influence which they may have with members of another Chamber. The Chamber of Mines circular, I maintain, is deliberately designed to influence members of another Chamber. At the very outset, the circular asserts that the unions are desirous of obtaining complete control of the mining industry; that to let the unions have their own way would be the means of closing down mines in this State. No statement, I believe, would be more calculated than this one to set against the Bill certain members who have not had much to do with mining operations or industrial unions. The gentlemen who signed the circular are men who themselves rarely if ever go underground. While they are managers of the great mines on the Golden Mile, not many of them are practical underground men. Indeed, many have never had underground experience. Their position is more that of business managers. I daresay they do not go underground once a month on the average. They derive their ideas from their sub-managers, I suppose; from the men who are second in command. The circular states that the mine owners have no representation in the Legislative Assembly and almost none in the Legislative Council, and that therefore this means is adopted of putting forward their views. I appeal to hon. members to drop party feeling entirely in this matter. Seeing there are 14 or 15 members here representing gold mining constituencies, it is reasonable to assume that there are also three or four members in the Legislative Council representing gold mining constituencies. Every mining member here has been sent to this Chamber in order to secure, if we can, such legislation as this. Is it entirely fair that so large a section of the community as the mining members represent should send its representatives for a certain purpose, and that party feeling should debar the passage of the legisla-

tion desired? I trust the Bill will go through this Chamber, and that it will receive in another place more consideration than it has been the fate of Mines Regulation Bills to be accorded during the past few years.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [8.14]: I rise with pleasure to support this Bill. In common with other goldfields members, I have spent a good deal of this session in helping forward legislation to benefit industries altogether apart from mining; to help, for example, the great agricultural industry; to assist that industry in its hour of trial, when the failure of the crops had resulted in a worse position than the farmers of Western Australia had ever known before. The goldfields members are prepared to act in the future as they have acted in the past. We recognise that the industries of this State are to a great extent interdependent; and we are prepared to hold out the helping hand. Now for the first time in this session members representing mining constituencies are coming forward to ask, not that material help should be granted to their industry, but that the men who work underground, deprived of God's sunlight, should at least have a chance for life. That, surely, is not much to ask. The tendency of modern legislation all over the world has been strongly towards humanitarianism; and surely the workers underground, who are to be credited with the great wealth dug out of the Western Australian earth, and who have contributed so materially towards the magnificent progress of this State, are entitled to the sympathetic consideration of this House. The opposition to the measure in this Chamber has not been very great on this occasion. The Minister for Mines has brought forward a measure which is beyond the realms of controversy. The little objections which have been raised have come from the leader of the Opposition, whose one objection to the Bill seemed to be that it would harass the mine owners. We have received a circular from the Chamber of Mines, and the member for Menzies (Mr. Munzie) has been careful to prove that

the Chamber of Mines arrogates to itself a great deal more power, and gives itself the kudos of having much more representative authority than that to which it is justly entitled. Even that Chamber, in the circular which it has distributed, does not make out that the Bill is going to harass the mine owners; it has not even attempted to show that the measure is going to affect the earnings of the mining industry. We know that in the past there has always been great opposition to all reform in the direction of bettering the industrial conditions of the workers, and the cry at all times has been that an attempt in such a direction would end in the industry concerned failing to pay. Fortunately, on this occasion, that cry has not been raised. Even the cost of workmen's inspectors has not been referred to, perhaps because they know that whatever expense is to be associated with the appointments will be borne by the miners themselves. All members have received a copy of the Chamber of Mines circular, which states that the purpose of the Bill is to provide for the appointment of workmen's inspectors, and it goes on to point out that the mine owners have no objection to offer to the principle of workmen's inspectors. Further on it states that the provision for the appointment of these inspectors is part of the mining laws of the majority of the English-speaking countries. I thank the Chamber of Mines for being so unequivocal on that point. That is what we have been trying to explain for years past in this Chamber, and yet it has never been admitted until now. While the Chamber of Mines admits that the principle is good, they go on to explain in the circular that there is no reason why the appointments should be made in this State. The member for Menzies has been at some pains to compare the clause which they wish to see moved as an amendment in the place of the clause submitted by the Government, and he has also quoted Section 16 of the Act of 1906, which is very much better than the clause the Chamber of Mines are striving to have inserted. But what has been the objection offered in this Chamber?

The member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) freely admits that he knows no more hazardous occupation than that of the working miner. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) the other evening quoted figures to show that railway work was considered a dangerous occupation, but the number of deaths and accidents arising out of mining very considerably outnumbered those to which the hon. member referred. The number of people killed and injured in connection with the mining industry in the last few years almost suggests to us that the mines are like the shambles of a battlefield. The battle in Europe may be over in the course of a year or two, but on the gold-fields we have a battle which is likely to go on continually, or at any rate as long as the mining industry lasts. It is therefore our bounden duty, as representatives of the people of this country, to see that as much care as possible is taken to minimise the danger of the occupation. The member for Perth has stated that in the various mines of Victoria there has been no cry for check inspectors, and he has pointed out that the rate of the killed, which was quoted by the Minister when he introduced the Bill, as being much higher in Western Australia than in the other States of the Commonwealth, was an unfair comparison to make, because the mines were deeper in this State than they were in Victoria. That argument has been disproved by other members who have spoken. If the mines are deeper here than they are in Victoria, is that not the very best of reasons for seeing that the most careful supervision is exercised? Another objection by the member for Perth was that the workmen's inspectors would not know that the positions were dangerous. What I want to know is, if a man working in a mine does not know when a position is dangerous, how is it possible for an inspector coming from outside, and who has a great number of mines to go over, to determine whether danger exists? How can that inspector be as closely in touch with the working of the mine as the men who are engaged in it from day to day? The

men who work in mines are able to tell from instinct almost when danger is approaching. Without in any way desiring to detract from the usefulness and honesty of the present inspectors of mines, we should recognise that the feeling exists that the workmen engaged in a mine do not care to report on as many occasions as they might do, the existence of dangerous ground. The reason is obvious. A much better condition of affairs would prevail if the miners were in the position of being able to make reports to men elected by their own organisations. The leader of the Opposition has always been against an amendment being made to the Mines Regulation Act. That is no doubt due to the fact that it has been part of the policy of the Opposition in this Chamber in the past to oppose any amendment to existing mining legislation. The hon. member is consistent in that he is following up the attitude that he has adopted in the past. But reading between the lines, I am inclined to think that the leader of the Opposition was not so keenly against the present measure as he was against former amending Bills. No doubt the hon. member recognised that something has been introduced at the present time which cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be construed into anything that will result in adding to the working costs of the mining industry. When we get a circular like the one which we have received from a representative body like the Chamber of Mines, it makes us wonder whether a gentleman occupying the position that Mr. Maughan does is carrying out his duties with that carefulness and tact which he was wont to display.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The circular is not signed by him.

Mr. GREEN: The circular bears the signatures of Richard Hamilton, President of the Chamber of Mines, R. S. Black, W. A. McLeod, R. B. Nicholson, and J. W. Sutherland, all estimable gentlemen.

Mr. Munsie: And not one of them ever signed that circular.

Mr. GREEN: I can believe the hon. member, but there must have been a cer-

tain amount of unanimity amongst those gentlemen on that occasion, and they agreed that the circular should be signed on the blind, as it were.

Mr. Male: They held a caucus meeting.

Mr. GREEN: I can take that as authoritative, coming as it does from the hon. member, than whom there is no more diligent fighter in the cause of vested interests. But where the interests of the workers are concerned, they of course have to go by the board. The circular of the Chamber of Mines I consider is grossly impertinent, and I can use no milder term. It was sent to every member of this Chamber. One paragraph in it reads, "The necessity for addressing by letter every member of Parliament with regard to this Bill arises from the fact that the mine owners of this State, and it may be said the mining industry, have no direct representatives in the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council." I ought to remind the authors of the circular of what happened to the Mines Regulation Amendment Bills which were sent forward on several previous occasions to the Upper Chamber, and I would like to ask them whether the members of the other place represented the Chamber of Mines in their opposition to those Bills, or whether they were acting as free lances? In any case, they were pretty good henchmen of the Chamber of Mines. The attitude of the Chamber of Mines certainly shows a lack of gratitude, because we find here the leader of the Opposition fighting in the interests of that body, and we even find the member for Perth rising in his place, no doubt conscientiously, and speaking against the measure which is being submitted. Yet we get a circular such as that to which I have referred. It is as much as to say, "You fellows down there never do anything for us; you are not the true merino." Now they want a particular industry represented. What is the matter with them, I would like to ask? Perhaps they would like us to do away with the representation of men altogether. Why should men be represented; why should not the sheep industry in itself be represented?

Why should not the sugar trust have representatives in this Chamber? I think it is unnecessary to labour the point any further. It is generally recognised in these progressive times that with the principle of one man one vote in the popular Chamber the people of the State are represented in that Chamber, and not a particular industry. In the past the mining industry of the State has not suffered so far as the members on this side of the House are concerned, because no opportunity has been missed of voicing the views which we believe to be in the best interests of the industry. We are here because of the wonderful work of the goldfields, and it would be an act of suicide on our part if we attempted to pass legislation which would be a menace to the industry. We well recognise the importance of the industry, and we say that while it has to pay, it is our duty to see that the workmen engaged in it have a decent chance of getting God-given health. The position taken up by the Chamber of Mines with regard to this matter is almost callous; it is altogether different from the honeyed words which usually come with great facility from Richard Hamilton, Esq., R. S. Black, Esq., R. B. Nicholson, Esq., and J. W. Sutherland, Esq., when they are making post prandial speeches—honeyed words towards the Minister for Mines, the member for Hannans and myself.

Mr. Munsie: I have never been there.

Mr. GREEN: Then you should have been. If the hon. member were there he would believe, as I have done, that everything in the garden was lovely in respect to the position of the mine managers and their representatives.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The Minister for Mines is one of their honorary presidents.

Mr. GREEN: It goes to show the gross ingratitude contained in this circular.

Mr. Munsie: One of those alleged signatories never signed it. I am convinced of that.

Mr. GREEN: They go on to say that this particular clause, taken from the New South Wales Act, imported as it is from a Labour State, has worked satis-

factorily at Broken Hill. The circular states—

Workmen's inspectors have for years past been appointed under the above clause and have carried out their duties to the satisfaction of all concerned.

That is an absolute misstatement. Recently a Royal Commission was appointed in New South Wales to deal with the mining industry, and, just as in the case of our own Royal Commission in 1904, it recommended by a majority vote that workmen's inspectors should be appointed on the same lines as our Minister now proposes. As pointed out by the Minister for Mines, Mr. Gregory himself said it was a matter for consideration that workmen's inspectors should be instituted in this State, on account of the great loss of life in the industry.

Mr. Munsie: There has been just as much agitation in Broken Hill as in this State for the appointment of inspectors as provided for in the Bill.

Mr. GREEN: That is so. The circular proceeds—

The clause as printed in the Bill is unfair in principle inasmuch as it is obviously framed to place all the far-reaching powers of inspectors of mines in the hands of the unions.

This is intemperate language which, although excusable in a Domain orator in Sydney, or in a red rag socialist on the Esplanade in Perth, is scarcely to be looked for in an important circular issued by the Chamber of Mines. The circular continues—

Five years' underground experience by itself is little or no qualification for the fulfilment of the onerous and important duties of an inspector of mines.

Yet, forsooth, they want us to do a little scratch-Poll on a New South Wales regulation that when Jack Jones notices and remarks to his friend Tom Smith that the back above him is looking a bit shaky, they and "the persons working in such mine may at their own cost appoint two competent persons to examine and inspect the working." So, while they are standing underneath the shaky back,

although they may at any moment cross the Great Divide, what they have to do must be carried out according to the Act. They have first to see about meeting the cost. Having conducted a tarpaulin muster and eaten their crib, they put on their clothes, take their billy along, fill up their pipes, and go out to get the two competent persons to examine the shaky back. Then, still following the provisions of the Act, they have to give 24 hours' notice to the manager, who may, if he thinks fit, accompany them, "and all persons in the mine shall afford every facility for such inspection, and the persons so appointed shall record the results of such inspection in a book to be kept at the mine for the purpose." They have to get back to the old State school writing form. Imagine Tom Smith and Jack Jones, having found the necessary cost and having discovered the two competent persons, thereupon hunting up the manager and making a record in the book. And if that record states the existence of any danger it is provided that the owner or manager shall forthwith cause a true copy of the report to be sent to the inspector of the district. We will suppose that this true copy is posted in Boulder. As an ex post-office official in Kalgoorlie, without casting any reflections on that admirable department, I may remark that no special mail is provided to meet these special circumstances. The report will have to await the ordinary mail, and so it will arrive at the residence of the inspector of mines probably at 10 o'clock next morning, after he has gone out into the country.

The Minister for Mines: Suppose all this happened at Norseman with the inspector in Coolgardie and only two trains a week !

Mr. GREEN: It all goes to show the utter absurdity of the proposal of the Chamber for Mines, and proves, if proof were necessary, that the gentlemen who signed this circular did so without due consideration. The mine managers in Boulder are among the most astute in their particular business it would be possible to find in Australia, and in case

it should be thought that they really did sign their names to a ridiculous paper of this kind after perusing it, I want to give hon. members my assurance, as one who knows them closely, that I do not think those signatories ever read it. I trust my explanation will be received. I hope our friends on both sides of this Chamber will be found on this occasion helping us with the measure. Without giving away any state secrets I may say that those of us representing mining constituencies are dissatisfied with the one-clause Bill; but we recognise that this is a time of war, when no controversy should be allowed to disturb the good feeling and harmony existing between this House and another place, and therefore we have sent up something which will not cost the mining industry anything. Our only excuse is that there are 6,000 men in this State working with their lives in their hands, and while we cannot make the industry an absolutely safe occupation, it is our duty to see that the men working in this industry have a decent chance against unseen danger. I am satisfied that with the appointment of workmen's inspectors the mines will be nearer the ideal of safety than under any other proposal that could be made. This is the unanimous opinion of mining representatives who have worked in mines for years, and of the men themselves. For years we have all worked for this reform, and I am sure we could not ask less than that the Bill should be passed through both Houses.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.40] : I have listened carefully to the speeches of the goldfields representatives, and I must confess that I am still somewhat at a loss to understand the need for this measure. I speak purely from a non-party standpoint, if only because my leader has already expressed himself to the same effect.

Mr. Bolton: You are consistent.

Mr. PIESSE: And I hope the hon. member will bear with me. I realise that whatever I may have to say will not in any way influence the passage of this measure through the House.

The Minister for Lands: But it may in another place.

Mr. PIESSE: I feel it my duty as a member of this Chamber to give expression to my views. It is the first time I have attempted to take any part whatever in a debate affecting the mining industry.

Mr. Green: And now you are opposing the rights of the workers.

Mr. PIESSE: I do not wish to deal unfairly with the proposal. I understand we have provision in the principal Act for the appointment of workmen's inspectors. We have learnt this evening from the hon. member, not that the existing inspectors are incapable of discharging their duties, but that the workings of the mines are so extensive that the inspectors are seriously hampered in the carrying out of those duties. No accusation has been levied against those particular officials on the point of incapacity.

The Minister for Mines: But men are being killed every day.

Mr. PIESSE: I admit that. Why not let us have further State inspectors to apply that relief which is so necessary. If it cannot be overcome in that way it will require a legion of workmen's inspectors to inspect the mines. One hon. member has told us there are 20 miles of workings in one mine. Therefore, it is a daily task for a workmen's inspector to inspect that mine. If the Government inspector cannot do the work, I fail to see how the workmen's inspector could do it either. If it means further men, let us have an increased number of State officials to carry out the work. The work can be just as capably performed by Government officials as by workmen's inspectors. It must be remembered that the work requires qualified men, and that if we have inspectors in the State service thoroughly capable of carrying out the work they would quickly assist others who may not be at first fully qualified for the duty.

Mr. Foley: Would not workmen's inspectors be capable?

Mr. PIESSE: I believe they would, but I cannot see why we should have a duplication of officials. No tittle of evidence has been given in the House that the men already filling the positions are incapable of carrying out their duty. That being so, I cannot for the life of me understand where the need exists for the appointment of inspectors by the unions. I give the unions credit for all honesty of purpose and also those members who represent the unions.

Mr. Green: Then why are they asking for workmen's inspectors?

Mr. PIESSE: At the same time, it is only common sense to say that the work can be carried out just as well by a sufficiency of Government inspectors as by inspectors appointed by the workers.

Mr. Foley: You discount the opinion of men who have worked in the mines all their lives.

Mr. PIESSE: So far as I am aware the hon. member has not spoken to the effect that the present inspectors are incapable.

Mr. Foley: No, I have said they are the best in Australia.

Mr. PIESSE: Then let us have more of them; if they are the best they must certainly have given satisfaction. Two or three members have referred to the circular issued by the Chamber of Mines. I have not had time to read it, but I have learned something of its contents from the remarks of the member for Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Foley: It is the dirtiest thing that was ever typewritten, absolutely.

Mr. PIESSE: The Chamber of Mines officials have as much right to issue such a circular or pamphlet, which is their only means of reaching members of the House, as the unions have to be represented here.

Mr. Green: But not to cast a slur on representatives of the goldfields as they have done in this circular.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They are casting a slur on the whole of the members of the House.

Mr. PIESSE: The great objection indicated by the circular is that the appointment of workmen's inspectors will

result in the mine managers and owners being harassed. There is some justification for that contention because, under the Bill, it is proposed to give those inspectors full powers to enter the mines at any time in the night or day and to be accompanied by an official of the mine. If the workings are so extensive as has been stated by the member for Menzies, and an official of the mine had to accompany the inspector, it would mean that a considerable portion of the official's time would be occupied in this work alone. These workmen's inspectors, too, are to have all the powers possessed by the Government inspectors. I offer these remarks purely from my own viewpoint of the matter and I trust members will not treat them as being antagonistic or unfair. I have read the section in the Act and the clause in the Bill bearing on this question and am satisfied that the demands could be met by increasing the staff of Government inspectors.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie) [8.48]: I do not intend to occupy much time because practically everything necessary has been said in connection with the main principle of the Bill. I am pleased indeed that the measure has not met with very serious opposition. I congratulate the deputy leader of the Opposition on his fair speech. There seems to be a desire generally that this measure should be passed, or that the mining industry should receive some consideration. I regret that frequently we have to complain that any thing in connection with mining is turned down, while representatives of goldfields constituencies are expected to support everything in connection with the agricultural industry. The goldfields members have been splendid supporters of the agricultural industry of this State, and it is only reasonable that the people of the goldfields constituencies should receive some little consideration from members of country districts. It is useless to say that the goldfields people do not know what they require or that other people who have no interest in the gold-mining industry are better judges than they of their own requirements. The circular from the Chamber of Mines, I

certainly think with other members, is an insult to the representatives of the goldfields. It is ridiculous to assert that a goldfields member represents only the mine employees. We represent the whole of the constituents of our respective districts to the best of our ability, and I believe we do it fairly and impartially. There is no doubt that the measure will be passed by an overwhelming majority in this House, so it is not necessary to say very much more. In glancing at the latest issue of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, I noticed the following paragraph which I shall read in order to give the people generally an idea of the conditions of life on the goldfields:—

Accidents on the Mines—A fractured skull was sustained last Saturday by John T. Duxbury, a shoveller on the Golden Horseshoe mine living near the Horseshoe Inn, through a small piece of rock falling from the back of the stope in which he was working. At Nurse Egan's hospital he was reported yesterday to be doing as well as could be expected. In the engine-room on the Lake View mine last week E. Fenton, cleaner, of Forrest-street, Boulder, cut the first finger of his left hand rather severely through getting it caught while cleaning the wrist plate. At the same mine, working underground, J. Hosking, machine miner, of Wittenoom-street, had the middle finger of his right hand fractured by a stone coming away suddenly. J. M. Chapman, a mill labourer on the Oroya Links, living in Boulder-road, on Thursday sustained painful injuries to his hand. Washing zinc shavings in the gold-room, the metal inflicted several cuts, letting the acid get into his flesh. On Saturday on the Great Boulder Proprietary mine, E. J. Truscott, of Clancy-street, Boulder, had his foot crushed by a falling stone while he was shovelling at the 2,500ft. stope.

The Minister for Mines: That is a daily item in the newspapers.

Mr. McDOWALL: Yes, paragraphs of that description appear in the goldfields Press day after day.

The Premier: That is not a business item and we would not expect our friends opposite to take notice of it.

Mr. McDOWALL: It is, unfortunately, a common occurrence and, in view of the circumstances, there should not be so much controversy about passing a simple innocent Bill such as the one before us. It is not proposed to place any burden on the mining industry. It is not proposed to levy on the mines an impost which will render them unpayable. It is simply proposed to give the men who are deeply interested and who, after all, are human beings with wives and families to support, the consideration which they, from a humanitarian point of view, deserve just as much as the most highly placed persons in the land. The measure asks that these men should have the right and privilege to appoint check inspectors from among those persons in whom they have confidence. Surely this is not asking much. The member for Kalgoorlie ridiculed the provision in the New South Wales Act which the Chamber of Mines propose should be introduced here. In the existing Act, there is a section making a certain provision in this direction, but we know that it is likely to entail hardship on any person who takes advantage of it.

The Premier: That would not have been put there by the then Government if they had not known that would be so.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not at all.

Mr. McDOWALL: The Minister for Mines, recognising that the present is a period of strife and that too much should not be asked for at such a juncture, has introduced this modest one-clause Bill. It must not be forgotten that the people on the goldfields are not satisfied with this measure. They feel that it is a very poor instalment of what they are entitled to, but they also realise that it is not of much use to ask that an impost be placed on the mining industry at the present time, or that the costs should be increased materially. Therefore a Bill of this description, which imposes no hardship on the community, but means bare justice to the people who are risking their lives from day to day, should be passed with-

out cavil and with little or no alteration. I trust sincerely that the measure will become law and that at least this small mede of justice will be granted to the goldfields. We are asking but little. Year after year we sit in this House and nothing is done for the goldfields which have done so much for the State; in fact they have made the State what it is to-day, and I say without the slightest fear of contradiction that they, at the present time, are maintaining the State and causing money to circulate and business to progress where otherwise there would be stagnation. We are asking for this slight measure of justice which will injure no one, and I sincerely trust that not only this House but another place will view it in the same light. I hope we shall not be troubled with any more circulars such as the one issued by the Chamber of Mines, which practically tells us that we do not represent the people of these great goldfields, but that we are here simply as representatives of the employees, just as if the employees do not constitute the major portion of the community, and are not as deeply interested in the welfare and advancement of the mines as the owners themselves. The owners are interested only to the extent of the dividends they obtain from them. The men employed in the mines are interested to the extent that their lives and the lives of their wives and families are dependent upon the mines. Surely no one could have greater interest than this. To the continuance of their work they must look for their sustenance, and no one could possibly be more interested than they are. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill and hope it will be passed exactly as printed, because we are entitled to this provision, and should not be justified in giving away one bit in connection with it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [8.59]: I am very sorry that the member for Kalgoorlie should have seen fit to make an attack on the leader of the Opposition who is not present to-night. When the leader of the Opposition spoke, he spoke without bitterness, and every member must agree that he made a very

good speech. Of course there is room for some difference of opinion. Members naturally hold different views, and it should be remembered that every member is entitled to express his views. Surely the leader of the Opposition was perfectly within his rights in dealing with this matter according to his convictions. In doing so he displayed no bitterness—

Mr. Foley: It is remarkable that he led the Opposition to this measure and has not done so for many weeks past?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is unfair.

Mr. Foley: Yes, to the deputy leader of the Opposition.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member knows well that the leader of the Opposition has been ill for some time, but lately has been a little better and has attended the House occasionally. He dealt with this matter without any preparation.

Mr. Foley: One could tell he had made no preparation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister for Mines made an excellent speech in moving the second reading of the Bill. What the leader of the Opposition said was that he was just as anxious to protect the lives of the workers as any other members here.

The Premier: Anyone can say that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They can say it but they do nothing. For the last four years the present Minister for Mines has been in office. He possesses ample power to appoint as many inspectors as are necessary. If the accidents mentioned by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall) could be prevented by a number of inspectors being appointed, then the Minister, who has power to appoint them, could have done so. There is no reason why he should not appoint a sufficient number of inspectors to protect the lives of the miners. The leader of the Opposition did not say that the mine workers should be neglected, or that their lives should go unprotected, but what he said was that the Minister had ample power to do all that was necessary in that direction. Has the Minister failed to afford the protection that is necessary? Will he admit that he cannot afford to appoint enough inspectors to protect the lives of

the workers? Will he admit that he could get more efficient inspection from the representatives of the unions than from the men he would select himself, or that the unions could make a better choice than he could? There is no reason why he should not appoint, if he wished to do so, the elect of these unions. If we say that the Minister should take the responsibility, surely he has no right to resent it.

The Premier: Wait until the next Bill, you may know something about it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think I know enough about this to know that the Minister is afraid of doing his duty. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) said that the inspectors gave mine managers 24 hours' notice before visiting the mines. I believe that is absolutely incorrect. At any rate I am informed that it is incorrect.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member said that this was the practice, but that it is not the practice now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He said that before a mine was inspected, notice was sent to the manager.

The Minister for Mines: It is not so now, but it used to be.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If it was so, it was wrong. I am informed that inspections are very frequent indeed and that notice is not given to the managers; indeed that they are so frequent that often the manager cannot appoint an underground manager to go round with the inspector. I want the Minister to tell us if it is a fact, as the member for Hannans said, that notice is sent to the mine manager before the inspector arrives?

The Attorney General: It used to be so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I would be willing to----

The Minister for Mines: It is not so now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Take the Minister's word for it if he really does know. Who has to pay these inspectors if they are appointed by the union, and is it the intention of the Minister that these men shall work continuously as inspectors or work a portion of their time as miners? Will this position be reached,

that the workmen's inspector will work on four days of the week under the manager of the mine, and for the manager, and on the other two days of the week will have the manager working under him?

The Premier: Do you think he will get his work done on four days in the week and do his duty at the same time? If you think so you do not know managers as well as I know them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What has he to do in his spare time?

The Premier: He will have no spare time; he will be kept busy.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Is it the intention of the Minister that the men should be continuously employed? Perhaps he will tell us. The Premier knows nothing about it.

The Premier: I have been through the mill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think the Minister should pay his inspectors and control them and engage them.

The Minister for Mines: I pay them and control them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On the last occasion when he spoke on this matter the Minister said first he would pay them, and then stated that he would not pay them. In this debate he said he would pay them one-half of their salary and that the unions should find the other half. I want the Minister to pay everything and want him to have absolute control. He should also have power to dispense with their services.

The Premier: This Bill will not cost as much as it costs to keep up the rabbit-proof fence and keep rabbits out of the squatters' holdings.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What has that to do with it?

The Premier: It is of more concern to you than men's lives are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think the Minister should pay.

The Minister for Mines: If the men undertook to pay they would not repudiate it like some of the squatters on the rabbit-proof fence have repudiated their liabilities.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not think any of the squatters desire to repudiate their liabilities.

The Premier: If the squatters will pay us we will pay the inspectors.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should pay his inspectors and they should not be under the control of the unions.

Mr. Foley: This is another lesson in economy.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I want to know what the intentions of the Government are in regard to the payment of inspectors.

Member: Shut up!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If I looked as sleepy and as heavy and dull as the Attorney General I should shut up.

Mr. Bolton: You could not look like the Attorney General.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I certainly could not. I want the Minister to give the House the information I have asked for. I do not pretend to be able to discuss mining matters as freely as the members who come from the goldfields. Nevertheless, I have a perfect right to ask for information on the various proposals which are contained in the measure. I may say that I am going to vote against the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [9.7]: I have no cause for complaint, on the whole, regarding the reception which has been given to the Bill. Rather have I to express my appreciation at the manner in which it has, generally speaking, been received. Particularly does that appreciation apply to the deputy leader of the Opposition, who, I think, set an example to the House.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I think he was wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He set an example to the House by the impartial and calm manner in which he analysed the contents of the Bill. If the same non-party and impartial consideration were extended to most other Bills which are introduced to the Chamber, I think it would be much better for the legislation concerned and much better for the public as well.

Hon. J. Mitchell: If he gets all he wants in his own way he will be perfectly satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When two such undoubted authorities as the deputy leader of the Opposition and myself are in agreement there is not much room for opposition on the other side.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We need to be careful when that combination gets to work.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is undoubtedly a powerful combination. The deputy leader of the Opposition raised one or two points to which I desire to reply. He asked for information with regard to the application of this principle in other parts of the world. In my introductory speech I stated that the principle had been adopted in most countries of the world, of course in different form. That still stands, but the hon. member desires to know whether that is so with respect to collieries or to metalliferous mines. I may say it applies almost universally so far as coal mining is concerned. Practically for generations past, wherever coal mining has been carried on, there has been a principle of workmen's or check inspectors in operation.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You had check inspectors provided for in the original Bill.

The Premier: A check on inspectors.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It also applied in other countries, namely in Belgium, in Germany, in France, and in Great Britain, where the principle of workmen's inspectors appertained to metalliferous mines in some form or other. It also applied in lead, iron and tin mines and in other forms of mining. Coming to Australia, we find that the principle applies in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, New Zealand, and even in Queensland. It will be seen, therefore, that it is practically universal so far as Australia is concerned.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: You are in agreement with the Chamber of Mines then?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but what I am talking about is the principle. I am not contending that it exists in those countries in the form in which it appears here. The principle of workmen's inspectors has been recognised, and

it exists in some form or other in the countries I have mentioned. I think that should clear up the point raised by the hon. member. Another point touched upon by the deputy leader of the Opposition was in regard to the examination of these workmen's inspectors. He rather held the view that the man who would be appointed to the position should first of all undergo some examination. Personally, I think that the very fact that it is provided that they must have had five years' practical experience should cover all the requirements in that direction. It is quite conceivable that a man might be selected who has had five years' experience, or more than that, but who would not perhaps be altogether desirable. I am not altogether opposed to the principle of some form of examination. The examination would of course have to be very different from that which is provided for our Government inspectors at the present time.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: Certainly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think that the unions concerned would have any objection to a man who was appointed having to show that he was not altogether unfit for the position to which it was desired to appoint him. With regard to the question of dismissal, as I said in introducing the Bill, I have left to the regulation the whole of the questions concerning the appointment, control, and the work which is to be performed by the inspectors. I have done so because hon. members will realise that it will be practically impossible to embody within the four corners of the Act all the duties that the inspectors may have to perform or may not have to perform, and as to how they are to carry out their duties. It is my intention, if the Bill is passed, to take power in regard to the appointment and with respect to the dismissal of these men. It could not for one moment be expected that a man who received an appointment for two years, no matter whether in the course of that time he had shown himself to be unfit to any longer continue in that office, must be allowed to remain there, and that the Min-

ister should not have power to remove him. I think, however, the Bill makes that point clear.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: That would be against the interests of the workers themselves.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I venture to say that no one would clamour more loudly for the removal of an inspector than the men themselves, if he was found to be abusing his trust, or to be unfit for his work. In any appointment on a mine there must be power taken by the controlling body for the removal of a person at any time if so desired. The hon. member also made a point with regard to the use that these inspectors would make of the power conferred upon them. There is absolutely no ground in my opinion for assuming that a man who would be appointed under this Act would misuse the power so conferred upon him. As a matter of fact the journal of the Chamber of Mines—

Hon. J. Mitchell: They must be partisans surely.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are all partisans in some degree or other. But, no matter how partisan the inspectors may be, they have no power to insist upon anything other than the power conferred upon them by the measure.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But that is unlimited.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course it is unlimited. There are unlimited powers conferred upon Ministers by almost every measure that passes this Chamber. What kind of powers are conferred upon the Government by the special legislation which has been passed since the outbreak of this war? Enormous powers, powers which have never been conferred upon any Government, I believe, in the history of responsible Government in Australia before. But it is not to say that because the powers are there that those responsible are going to lose their heads and run amok and misuse the powers. The position of the community nowadays is not such that

any public man can for any length of time continue to misuse powers entrusted to him. Unlimited powers are embodied in the Health Act Amendment Bill which passed this Chamber only last week. Hon. members approved of those powers, and allowed them to go through, because it is recognised with regard to that Bill, as with regard to all others, that the powers given will be exercised with discretion and with judgment. And so it will be with regard to this measure. I contend that the attitude adopted by the goldfields unionists, and their actions, during the past 15 or 20 years, contradict the assertion that those unionists are likely to do anything unfair or unreasonable. In no part of Australia, I believe, where there is such a large body of men employed, has there been maintained for such a lengthy period as 15 years so amicable a relationship as that between the men and the mine owners here on our Western Australian goldfields. Look throughout Australia, and where shall one find an equally large body of men which has not at some time or other been involved in industrial disputes and troubles? We know, on the other hand, that in the history of the Golden Mile, where some 6,000 or 7,000 men are employed and have been employed for the past 16 or 17 years, there has never been one single mine thrown idle for even 10 minutes as the result of an industrial dispute. I say that that fact is a tribute, unequalled in Australia, alike to the common sense and reasonableness of the men and of the managers and all others concerned. Now, is it to be assumed that men who have lived in such amicable relationship are suddenly going to fly at each other's throats because a power of this kind is conferred? I say that it is unreasonable to assume any such thing, and that those interested in the gold mining industry will continue to exhibit that same spirit of friendliness which has characterised their relations in the past. Let me turn to one or two other points which have been raised.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How are you going to pay the workmen's inspectors?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When introducing the Bill, I expressed the opinion that it would be a fair compromise if the Government granted a subsidy equal to half the salary. I expressed that opinion, notwithstanding the fact that Royal Commissions on mining and other authoritative bodies have from time to time recommended that the Government should pay the whole of the wages. In that regard, however, I am prepared to agree to a payment of half. My personal view is that it would not be unfair if the Government paid the whole of the wages.

Hon. J. Mitchell. I think they ought to.

Mr. Willmott: It would be the better way.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In that case the department would retain a greater control over the workmen's inspectors. The department would be more independent if the inspectors looked entirely for the payment of their salaries to the department, and to no other source. The member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) stated that he would be prepared to support the Bill if he thought that it would do anything to lessen accidents. What is the use of making a statement of that kind? We can only have regard to the whole of the evidence that comes under our notice from day to day and year to year. If additional inspection and closer inspection is not going to tend in the direction of lessening accidents, then, to be logical, we ought to say that inspection does not matter at all and that we might abolish the inspectors we are paying at present.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why do not you appoint more?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because it is not necessary to have a Government inspector stationed where there is only one mine. There would be no need for the services of a permanent inspector in such a locality. That would be so in a number of cases under this Bill. There are many cases in which inspection would be required not more than once a week, or perhaps once a month; and there the work of inspection could be

done by the workmen's inspectors. But in the absence of workmen's inspectors, if the work is to be done by a Government inspector in the cases I have mentioned, then it will be necessary to employ an official at £350 or £375 a year merely to inspect a mine once a week or once a month. What would he do during all the rest of his time? Nothing at all. As a matter of economy and common sense and practical work, it is well to have a Government inspector exercising a general supervision over a large district and travelling round and keeping in touch with all that is going on, and to have workmen's inspectors where inspection is required only once a week or once a month.

Mr. Piesse: What rate of pay are the workmen's inspectors to receive?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a matter of opinion. I should say £5 or £6 a week would be a fair salary. It would all depend. There might be justification for a higher salary in some districts than in others. In such districts as the Golden Mile, where an inspector would be employed continuously, I should say £6 a week would be a fair salary. In some of the outlying districts where there would be inspection only once a week or once a month, an inspector would be fairly remunerated for the work to be performed by a payment of, say, £1 or £2 a week. There is not a mining district in this State where there is not some prospecting going on, and where a payment of even £1 per week would not be found useful by some man competent to act as a workmen's inspector. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) argued entirely against the principle of workmen's inspectors. He argued that if there was need for greater supervision additional Government inspectors should be appointed. In that respect the hon. member stands practically alone, because the mine managers themselves and the mine owners and everybody concerned do now advocate, and have for years past advocated, the principle of workmen's inspectors. The party to which the hon. member belongs, in passing the provision in

our existing Act for workmen's inspectors—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Check inspectors.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is nothing in a name. The hon. member may call them anything he pleases, but the hon. member's party in making provision for inspection by workmen under the Act of 1906 adopted the principle of inspection by workmen.

Hon. J. Mitchell: And why does that not satisfy you now?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because I have pointed out what a futile thing it is. The hon. member knows very well that it is ridiculous and impossible task to set a man that he shall go down the mine to-day and work on a machine and then, on appointment by his fellow workers to inspect the mine, the next day go round in company with the manager, who is his boss, pointing out places which the workers consider unsafe, and criticising the management of the boss. Imagine the employee pointing out to his boss the desirability of putting some timber in here or doing something else there, and then, after the inspection has been carried out, going back the next day to take his place on the machine again.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Will he not do that under your present Bill?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. Under the existing Act, the employee would one day be an inspector in a position to discuss with the boss what ought to be done for the safety of the miners, and the next day he would be back in the mine working. I ask, is it a reasonable and commonsense proposition to put to any manager? Imagine an employee of the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) inspecting the hon. member's printing machinery to-day and instructing him as to what arrangements should be made, and then returning to work in the printing office. Hon. members must realise that such a task is an impossible one. We do not need to assume that the employers are all looking to victimise workmen's inspectors. It is asking too much of them, however. It is not human nature to expect that the mine manager could have the same regard, the same impartial con-

sideration, for a man working under him if that man is also from week to week and month to month criticising the management of the mine. The very fact that the managers, after nine years' experience of the Act, are not in favour of this provision is proof conclusive of how ineffective the provision is, and of the light in which the men themselves regard it. There is just one other phase I wish to touch upon. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) has offered his opposition to this Bill, expressing a belief that the provisions of the existing Act are all that is required. I may say that I am rather surprised at the hon. member's attitude, because, after all, the hon. member prefaced his remarks by saying that it was not often he expressed an opinion upon a Bill of this kind, dealing with gold mining. That applies to every other member of this House, because it is very seldom that hon. members are afforded an opportunity of discussing in this Chamber matters relating to mining, or to the welfare of the people engaged in the mining industry. What have we seen for the past 12 months, and in fact for the past three or four years? Aye, for the past ten years? Ever since I have been in this House, just on ten years, I have been voting for Bills and works involving the expenditure of millions and millions of pounds—for what? Largely for the benefit of the class whom the member for Toodyay represents.

Mr. Piesse: You felt justified in voting for them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Let me point out that even when this party sat in Opposition, when this party was composed almost entirely of goldfields members, when it contained at least 12 or 13 goldfields members, there was not a member of it ever cast a vote against any proposal tending to the welfare of the class represented by the member for Toodyay, whether it was agricultural development, or agricultural railways, or harbour extension, or anything else. We sat in Opposition, and year after year voted for these proposals as they came forward. Again, coming down to four years ago, what were we doing? Why,

working day and night to contend against exceptional difficulties, and more especially during the last two years, in the interests again of the people whom that hon. member represents. This Government has incurred odium because of its financial administration. Why? Because we have been borrowing millions to pour out, again to the people represented by the hon. member. Ever since I have been in this House I have voted for every proposition that has come before it which has been for the welfare of the people. I have had sufficient experience to know what is required to build up and make a nation, and I know that the farming community is, and should be, the backbone of a community. We have a circular from the Chamber of Mines which says that the mining industry is not represented in this House and that only the employees are represented here. Has the work of this Government during the past four years shown that they have regard only for the wage earners of the goldfields? Has not practically the whole of our work during the past four years been in the direction of assisting, not the wage earners of the goldfields, but entirely another class?

Mr. Piesse: Did we not build railways and water supplies for the goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have been handicapped during the past 12 months to the extent of a million and a quarter pounds in order to assist people whom the hon. member represents and keep them in their homes. Yet when a Bill like the one we have before us comes under the notice of the Chamber, a Bill which is not going to affect anyone except those immediately concerned, and which is not going to increase the cost of mining one fraction of a farthing, but which will affect materially the health and well being of thousands of people on the goldfields, the hon. member raises his voice against the measure.

Mr. Piesse: I am surprised at you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am surprised that the hon. member should use such arguments. I have always had regard for every industry and every section of the community, and I am getting

sick and tired of sitting here devoting all my time and work to one section alone, and leaving out of consideration another large and important section of the State. Are they to be regarded as Outlanders because they are some 300 or 400 miles away from us? If this Government were representing the wage earners of the goldfields, if we brought down proposals involving the expenditure of millions on behalf of the people on the goldfields, what kind of criticism would we be met with?

The Minister for Works: It could not be any worse than it is now.

Mr. Griffiths: Have not millions been spent on the goldfields in the past?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What has been spent on the goldfields, outside of the water scheme? A mere nothing. We have spent more in two years in the coastal and agricultural districts than has been spent on the goldfields since they were discovered.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You must have been satisfied that what you spent in the agricultural districts was right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course I was. I did intend to say something about the circular of the Chamber of Mines.

Mr. Foley: Tear it up.

Mr. Mullany: Take it as read.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think I will bother about it. I want to strengthen the case for the inspectors a little by quoting from the report of another Royal Commission which was appointed in New South Wales last year and which reported to the New South Wales Parliament in November, 1914. The Commission consisted of Mr. B. R. Wise, K.C., who is at the present time Agent General for New South Wales and whose reputation is well known to hon. members, Mr. Kerr, representing the miners' unions, and Mr. Weir, representing the mine owners. I will read a paragraph dealing with the particular matter we have been discussing. The report is a majority one, the minority being the representative of the mine owners. The

report really embodies the views of Mr. Wise because on most of these questions we find the representative of the union taking one view, and the representative of the mine owners taking the other view, so that the report amounts practically to the opinion and impartial judgment of the chairman, Mr. Wise. It says—

Your commissioners (the chairman and Mr. Commissioner Kerr) are of opinion also that there is work upon the line of lode to occupy four workmen's inspectors, if their duties be enlarged to include all matters affecting the interests of the miners. They are of opinion also that these inspectors should be nominated by the unions and appointed and paid by the Government.

That goes further than our Bill does.

They make this recommendation as to payment because of the interest all classes in the community have in the working of metalliferous mines. The method of appointment we think should be that suggested by Mr. W. D. Barnett, secretary of the Amalgamated Miners' Association, viz., that candidates for the post should be selected by a committee consisting of seven miners and seven surface men, and that no one, who was not so selected, should be eligible to become a candidate. They agree with Mr. Barnett that one of these inspectors shall have a knowledge of engineering and charged specially with inspecting work upon the surface. This officer should be nominated by the unionists, on the surface in the same way as the three others will be nominated by the Amalgamated Miners' Association after a preliminary selection of candidates by the committee appointed for this purpose. The duties of inspectors should include (1) Those referred to in Section 67 of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, (2) The enforcement of the observance of the rules of the mines, and (3) Generally to look after the welfare of the miners.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Have they taken any action on it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They have not had time. We might say that the report represents the latest thought of an authoritative body in New South Wales so that we have this accumulation of opinion in support of what we propose to do. We have first of all the unanimous recommendation of the Commission referred to by the hon. member, which was appointed in our own State in 1904, and which was comprised of practical and commercial men, as very pertinently pointed out by the hon. member, appointed by a Liberal Government. That Commission recommended in favour of the principle now embodied in the Bill. We have had the consistent support of the State Mining Engineer for many years past. Hon. members who know Mr. Montgomery will admit that he is a man who will not allow his judgment to be coloured in any way by the Minister who presides over the Mines Department for the time being. We have the experience of the State Mining Engineer, extending over some 12 or 14 years, of the administration of the Act and that officer to-day makes the same recommendation as he did in 1904. On top of that we have the report of the Royal Commission in New South Wales. Surely all these reports should carry some weight in the community, and moreover, these views are backed up by overwhelming opinion on the goldfields. Are we to say that the men whom the Chamber of Mines in their circular describe as common-sense and level-headed people do not know what they want; Do the goldfields representatives not know what is required? Is everything to be set aside for the mere say-so of the Chamber of Mines? I want to know whether the Chamber of Mines is going to have the last word with regard to this legislation in this State?

Mr. Willmott: The mine owners have no objection to the principle of workmen's inspectors: they say so in this circular.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: All we are asking is that, seeing everyone is agreed with regard to the principle it should be the object of all concerned to see that the method adopted is effective.

Mr. Harrison: Would it not improve conditions and increase the output?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No doubt. Seeing that the principle is admitted, it is our duty to move in the direction of making it effective and not having it as a dead letter as is the case to-day. If the Chamber of Mines are going to arrogate to themselves the right to dogmatise in regard to legislation affecting the mining industry they are likely to encounter trouble in the future. They seem to say "We agreed to the proposals in the Act of 1906, and from thenceforward there shall be no mining legislation, no alteration of the Act until we will that it shall be so." It is an attitude which will not be supported by reasonable men. I hope the Bill will pass, notwithstanding the opposition of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) who, I hope, will forgive me; because after all it is only human to get back now and again one or two points. I have for so long sat listening to debates on other matters, that when a subject of this kind comes along I may be excused for taking exception to the attitude adopted by the hon. member.

Mr. Piesse: I accept that as an apology.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hope the result of our efforts, I may say of our combined efforts, will give us legislation tending to the reduction of the regrettable toll of accidents which take place from day to day on our goldfields.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Classification of Inspectors:

Hon. J. Mitchell: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to paragraph c:—"Immediately preceding the date of his appointment."

Without the amendment the prescribed five years experience may have been

gained years before modern methods of mining were adopted. No doubt the present Minister for Mines will exercise a wise discretion, but it will be still wiser to have the safeguard.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not desirable to place this limitation on the choice of inspectors. There may be districts in which it would be difficult to find a workmen's inspector who could comply with the proposed conditions. Mining is like swimming, in that once learned it is not forgotten.

Mr. Willmott: But we have the new trudgeon stroke now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The methods of mining on our fields have not altered since the beginning of the industry. The amendment imposes a restriction from which our own Government inspectors are free; why, then, should the workmen's inspectors be subject to any such limitation? Moreover, the men most concerned are not likely to recommend one who has been so long away from the work as to be out of date.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Would you approve of a man who had not recent experience?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would depend on the man. It is possible to find men who have been out of mining for five years and who, nevertheless, would make better inspectors and display a wider knowledge than other men still engaged in mining.

Mr. ALLEN: The amendment will limit the sphere of choice of these inspectors. It does not follow that a man recently employed in a mine is better qualified for the post of inspector than another man who may not have been in a mine for a couple of years or more.

Mr. WILMOTT: A few days ago I was in favour of the provision contained in the amendment. I understand the deputy leader of the Opposition has an amendment providing for an examination, which I now think is a better proposal than the one before the Committee.

Mr. TAYLOR: In his speech on the second reading the mover of the amendment declared that these inspectors were not necessary, and he contended that the workers did not constitute a suitable field

of selection for the appointment of inspectors. Now he desires to limit the choice, to narrow the area in which the Minister can operate for the selection of suitable men. If the hon. member desired to render the Bill valueless he could not select a better course than he proposes. The greatest scope possible should be given for the choice of the inspectors.

Mr. PIESSE: It would be in the interests of the miners to have the most careful selection and the appointment of qualified men. No doubt the unions would nominate the most suitable men, but every precaution should be taken to select the best men possible.

Mr. HUDSON: The qualifications of workmen's inspectors are specially described. They must have five years experience in the mines, submit to the election of the men and be subject to the approval of the Minister. This would be sufficient safeguard that the best men would be selected and there is no necessity for any further qualification.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not say that the men would not constitute a suitable selection for the appointments. I questioned the method of appointment. The inspectors would be appointed by members of the union who do not comprise the whole of the workers in the mines.

Mr. Taylor: Now you have another trouble.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the selection were entrusted to the men engaged in active mining work, the representation would be more likely to be satisfactory than by leaving the positions open to men who had had five years experience at any period of their lives.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added at the end of paragraph (c)—“and pass an examination prescribed and approved by the Minister in accordance with the regulations.”

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The amendment would be a contradiction of the principle to which the Committee have agreed and to which Parliament agreed

in 1906. I do not approve of the system of workmen's inspectors, but it would be unreasonable to ask them to sit for an examination. Nothing more difficult could be asked of a workman than to pass a written examination.

Mr. Willmott: It need not be a written examination.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Would any professional man like to sit for the junior examination which is really a schoolboy examination?

Mr. FOLEY: There is no necessity for the amendment. Workmen's inspectors would be elected by the men and only those well versed in mining would be chosen. No other qualification would be necessary to enable them to assist the district inspectors, especially as we have the safeguard that the Minister might disapprove of any appointment. There are men who cannot write a report and yet possess extensive practical knowledge of what is necessary for safety in mines. If the workmen's inspector did not have to report to the district inspector some test might be advisable, but in the circumstances it is unnecessary.

Mr. HUDSON: I agree with the member for Perth that the amendment would be a derogation from the principle of workmen's inspectors. If the mine managers had to undergo an examination under regulations, there might be some justification for the amendment.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: So they have.

Mr. HUDSON: In regard to coal mines, but not in the case of gold mines.

Mr. Willmott: The sooner they have to, the better.

Mr. HUDSON: The manager is the representative of the owner and the workmen's inspector would be the representative of the employee, and the district inspector would fill the role of umpire between the two men who have not had to pass an examination.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If a man had had no education, he could not report to his superior officer, and the amendment is therefore just and reasonable.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Why does not an underground manager have to pass an examination?

Mr. WILLMOTT: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. FOLEY: Are you sure that a workmen's inspector would have to write a report?

Mr. WILLMOTT: If such an inspector could not write a report, there would be great trouble. Reports must be in writing.

Mr. FOLEY: Yes, and in departmental language. It is the worst in the world.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Every reasonable man must agree that these inspectors should pass an examination.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If I thought the amendment would improve the Bill in the direction desired, I would accept it. I do not think it would have any effect. Under the existing Act the workmen can appoint two of their number who have neither to pass any examination or to have any practical experience in underground mining. We go on and say they must have five years' practical underground experience. That in itself goes far to ensure that the men will be competent. In addition, the Bill says "who shall have passed an examination prescribed by the Minister." If I desired to allow men to come in who were not properly qualified I could prescribe any kind of simple examination which anyone could pass, and in that way the object would be defeated.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: The Minister would of course not do that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He would not. It may be argued that some other Minister might take a different view. As the clause stands there is provision that all the terms and conditions of the appointment of such inspectors shall be as prescribed. If a Minister takes office who does believe in an examination he has power, under Section 8, to prescribe it. We are pretty safe in assuming that the men who will be selected for the position will be mostly young men, and there are very few, if any, of these young men who will not possess a fair amount of education. Having regard to the fact that these men have to run the gauntlet of selection by

their fellow men and must have five years practical experience, we will, I think, be safeguarded in the direction of getting men who will be fit for the post.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Some of the arguments which have been used against the amendment rather point to the need of it. If the argument of the member for Perth is to hold good that it is necessary for the district inspector to undergo the examination, it should be necessary in the other case. By giving the Minister power to cause the inspector to undergo the examination it would give greater confidence in the appointment to those engaged in the management of mines. No doubt if the Minister finds that the examination should take place he will require it to be done. I will say that there is no better educated class of workers than the class from which these workmen's inspectors will doubtless be selected. There will surely be no difficulty in any of the younger men passing an examination of the simple nature that will be required.

Mr. THOMAS: The comparison between a district inspector and a workmen's inspector is hardly a fair one. I do not agree with the member for Leonora that many of the men who might be appointed to the position would be so illiterate that it would be a difficult matter for them to write a report. The unions are generally careful in appointing men to responsible positions who have the requisite ability. The object of the clause is to protect the lives of the men engaged in the industry, and one can rest assured that the men themselves will see that the right men are appointed. I am satisfied that men will be selected from their knowledge of the work, their fearlessness and their character, and that these will do their duty to their fellow workmen when the need arises. I hope the clause will remain as printed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Conditions of appointment of special and workmen's inspectors.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This clause is unnecessary. All the powers necessary are already provided for in the principal Act in Section 63. Does the Minister desire to have special authority to make regulations, apart from the authority set up in this section, which applies to all classes of inspectors?

The Minister for Mines: The clause will do no harm.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—Workmen's inspectors under authority of district inspectors:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "inspectors," in line 2, be struck out.

The words I desire to delete are—

and the term of their appointment shall not exceed two years, but they shall be eligible for reappointment.

If the inspectors are suitable I do not see why they should not be continued in office. To send them back to the unions for re-election every two years would be to weaken their authority. The Minister has power to remove the inspectors, and he alone should have that power. Further, the Minister would have much better control over the inspectors if they had the ordinary security of tenure. To vest such a control in the unions by Act of Parliament is unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the appointment of these inspectors were to be made entirely and solely by the Minister, there would be some point in the hon. member's argument, because, the Minister having appointed an inspector and possessing the power to dismiss him, there would be no occasion for the inspector to come up at stated intervals for reappointment. The hon. member, however, has overlooked the fact that one of the principles of these appointments is the choice of the inspector by the men themselves. The choice is not a Ministerial one. Therefore it is only fair and reasonable to allow the miners periodically an opportunity of saying whether their confidence in the inspector continues. A man elected by the vote of his fellows should not be continued in the

position indefinitely. The hon. member might just as well argue that because members of Parliament were once elected they should never go up for re-election.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The powers of workmen's inspectors are very wide indeed, as Clause 11 shows. If those powers are not exercised in a way pleasing to the union, the inspector will have small chance of re-election. It ought to be sufficient if the inspector satisfies the Minister.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—Powers of inspectors:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Hon. members ought to realise what we are doing in appointing these inspectors. The clause gives all the inspectors equal powers. It is true that the workmen's inspectors are to be under the direction of the district inspectors; but, as the Minister himself has pointed out, the district inspector may be hundreds of miles away and may not see the workmen's inspector more than once in three months. The powers of the workmen's inspector include the initiation and conduct of prosecutions, subject, no doubt, to reference to the head office prior to such action being taken. In fact, his powers extend to everything that can possibly occur in a mine. Does not the clause go too far?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is a point on which I touched in my reply. Undoubtedly, the powers conferred by this clause are very extensive, and the workmen's inspector will have the same powers as the present Government or district inspectors have. The workmen's inspectors will operate under regulations prescribed by the Minister. The powers conferred in the Bill are very far-reaching even if exercised by the Government inspectors. It is the practice to-day and it has been so for years in the department that the inspectors shall not take action with regard to a prosecution without first referring it to head office and getting the approval of the State Mining Engineer. Where it is possible for a workmen's inspector to get into touch with the district inspector, it is not in-

tended that he shall take action but that he shall refer it to the district inspector. There may be occasions when it may be necessary for the workmen's inspector, in the absence of the district inspector, to exercise the powers provided. Hon. members may be certain that the power can only be used under exceptional circumstances.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Will the Minister explain why the words "in his discretion" appear in paragraph (f.) These words do not appear in Section 7 of the principal Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The words have been added by the State Mining Engineer. I think the point involved is that it gives the district inspector more general powers according to his discretion.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: One would have thought that the words were superfluous.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have had some extraordinary decisions given by our courts in the past two years and the legal profession appear to place interpretations upon some of the sections of the Act different from those of the department.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (f.) the words "in his discretion" be struck out.

Mr FOLEY: I do not think the Minister will clothe the workmen's inspectors with the same powers as those possessed by the district inspectors. If a district inspector is away an accident might happen causing loss of life. The paragraph will in such a case give the workmen's inspector the right to do what he thinks necessary, in his discretion, until such time as the district inspector arrives. I do not think the workmen's inspectors will be as well versed in regard to the construction likely to be placed upon their actions in a court of law as are the district inspectors. The mining company will have the benefit of the knowledge of the district inspector before any drastic action can be taken by the workmen's inspector. The words proposed to be struck out should be retained.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—Disqualification of district inspectors:

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the words "a district" be struck out and "and" inserted in lieu.

In view of the fact that the powers of the workmen's inspectors are almost equal to those of the district inspectors, and seeing that a penalty is provided against the district inspector, although not against the workmen's inspector, I think the amendment is worthy of support.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There is something to be said for the amendment. The provision should be made to apply to all but special inspectors. However, I think that if we insert after the word "district" the words "or workmen's" the case would be more suitably met.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I had proposed to move a new clause in regard to this. If it is necessary that a district inspector should be subject to certain disqualifications, those disqualifications should also apply to a workmen's inspector. I think, moreover, that the workmen's inspector should not be an official of a registered union of miners. Once he is appointed he should be free from all outside influence and as independent as a district inspector.

Mr. Hudson: How would you provide for small districts?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: There would be, of course, difficulties in the application of the principle, but I do not think they are likely to be insurmountable.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: You have already voted that the union men shall elect one of their number.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I have already voted that the Minister for Mines shall appoint the inspectors and that the workmen shall merely recommend those proposed inspectors for the approval of the Minister. I am sorry the member for Perth should raise these objections; possibly he is displeased with me because I am not supporting him in the various exceptions he has taken to the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The objection seems to arise from the assumption that workmen's inspectors would be on an equality with district inspectors. This is not the intention. If they were to be allowed to exercise all the powers of Government inspectors and to do the same class of work, it would be desirable to restrict them in the same way, but the intention is that they shall be workmen's inspectors making inspections and reporting to the district inspectors. It would then remain for the district inspector to decide what, if any, action should be taken.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: They would have all the powers of inspection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but the provision of extreme power is necessary to meet exceptional cases which might arise. Outside Kalgoorlie and Boulder, it is probable there would not be sufficient work to occupy the whole time of an inspector.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Would those inspectors be likely to be working in the mines at the same time?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is possible, but unlikely. That is the objection to the existing provision.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If there were workmen's inspectors whose time was fully occupied in these duties, they should come under the clause.

Mr. Hudson: The term of their engagement would be limited to two years, and they would probably have to sacrifice something.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the district inspectors are subject to these disadvantages, the same should apply to workmen's inspectors on full time. The Minister might accept an amendment in this direction.

The MINISTER FOR MINES. If the union selected a land agent, mining engineer, or manager, or a viewer, agent, or valuer of mines—

Hon. J. Mitchell: Would you approve of such a man?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I could approve of him, but he would have to cease in his former capacity after his

appointment. The measure would be administered with some degree of common sense. Workmen's inspectors on full time would not be allowed to practise in the directions forbidden to district inspectors.

Mr. MULLANY: The amendment would seriously limit the choice of men who might be selected workmen's inspectors. There is a penalty for an inspector who divulges any information obtained in the exercise of his official duties.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: The object of the amendment is that workmen's inspectors should be subject to the same disqualifications and penalty for breach of duty as district inspectors. A man working in a small show could also carry out the duties of workmen's inspector if they occupied only a portion of his time. Some disqualification and penalty should be provided to apply to workmen's inspectors.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That after the word "inspector" the words "or a workmen's inspector other than a workmen's inspector whose time is not wholly occupied in the work of inspection" be inserted.

Amendment negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Penalty:

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I move an amendment—

That after the word "inspector" in the first line the words "or a workmen's inspector" be inserted.

I move this with a view to adding later on a new clause providing that no person shall be qualified to be a workmen's inspector who, at the same time acts as the official of any duly registered union of miners, or acts as an arbitrator in any differences or disputes arising between owners, agents, managers of mines, or mine workers, or employed in any mine inspected. If the amendment is agreed to I shall then move the new clause. I think that the objections which have been

raised previously in regard to this disqualification could not be raised in the case of this new clause. Workmen's inspectors should be outside all influences.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The arguments I have advanced on other clauses apply to the proposal submitted by the hon. member. Seeing that the principle is one of appointment of workmen's inspectors, and that a further principle is to give the men concerned the choice of their inspectors, I think it is undesirable that the amendment should be made. There would be much in the contention of the hon. member if it was intended to give the inspector, who might be an official of the union and be driven by his union to take extreme action, all the powers laid down in Section 10 without reference to any superior officer. Seeing that it is the intention to strictly limit the functions of inspectors and that they shall operate under the control and jurisdiction of the district inspector, I do not think we should bar officials of unions. If we find we should limit ourselves in this direction we can do so by regulation. I have no doubt the first set of regulations which will be adopted for the control of inspectors will be amended, and that amendments will be continually made to them. We shall be guided by the actual operations of the clause. If the inspectors are attempting to usurp functions they have no right to or exercise powers which it is undesirable they should exercise the Minister of the day will have practically full control over them under the regulations which may be prescribed from time to time. If the Minister prescribes regulations which appear to give the men too much power there will always be the safeguard that these regulations are laid on the Table of the House and that members have an opportunity of debating them.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I did not expect to carry the amendment, but I desired to have an expression of opinion from the Minister with regard to the matters I raised. I am pleased to have heard the hon. gentleman's views, and I have no doubt members generally will feel more satisfied.

Mr. HARRISON: Are workmen's inspectors also included in the operation of this clause, or does it apply to district inspectors only?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The first part of the clause applies to district inspectors only, but the remainder applies to all mining inspectors.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 11.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 21st September, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Jetties Regulation Act, 1878—charges for storage at the Esperance Jetty. 2, Health Act, 1911-12—(a) adoption of Parts II. to VI. and VIII. to X. of the model by-laws: (b) by-laws. 3, S.S. "Lalandia"—cable from the Agent General for Western Australia in connection with the State steamer.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, HORSE-RACING CONTROL.

Extension of time.

On motion by Hon. F. Connor (North) the time for bringing up the report was extended for a fortnight.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE.

Extension of time.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) the time for bringing up the report was extended for a fortnight.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN PRIVATE BUILDINGS.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What annual rent are the Government paying to the A.M.P. Society for office accommodation for (a) the Agricultural Bank, (b) Industries Assistance Board. 2, For what term have the Government leased the said offices? 3, What annual rent were the Government paying to the owners of Emanuel Buildings for the premises formerly occupied by the Agricultural Bank? 4, When does the lease of these premises expire? 5, Are these offices now vacant, if not, what rent are the Government receiving from them? 6, Were the buildings formerly occupied by the A.M.P. Society offered to the Government, or did any negotiations take place in regard to purchase? 7, If yes, what were the terms of the offer, stating particularly the amount of cash required to be paid?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) £581 15s., (b) £665 5s. 2, Two years for whole of No. 2 floor and 12 months for two rooms on No. 3 floor. 3, £1,040. 4, 29th February, 1916. 5, Yes. Nil. 6 and 7, Yes. The managing trustee saw the resident secretary of the A.M.P. Society and ascertained that the building could probably be purchased by the Government for £16,000, and payment could be made by Treasury Bills.