

be in accord with one of the paragraphs but opposed to the others.

The CHAIRMAN: When the debate is resumed in Committee, Mr. Nicholson can ask leave of the Committee to withdraw the amendment, and then move it paragraph by paragraph.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not want anything left to an act of grace on the part of the Commissioner of Taxation. If there are concessions to be granted let us have them in the measure and the public will know where they stand. I am opposed to acts of grace on the part of anyone.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 8.22 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 5th November, 1931.*

	PAGE
Motion, urgency, "West Australian" newspaper report	5067
Question: Miners' Phtalsia Act, amending legislation	5070
Bills: Industries Assistance Act Continuance (No. 2)	
3R. ....	5070
Licensing Act Amendment (No. 3), 3R. ....	5070
Land Tax and Income Tax, (No. 2), returned...	5103
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	5070
Mines Department	5070
Council of Industrial Development, Labour	
Bureau, Police, Forests	5094
Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief	5095

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

### MOTION—URGENCY.

*"West Australian" Newspaper Report.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Fremantle, Mr. Sleeman:—

I desire to move the adjournment of the House to deal with a matter of urgent importance, namely, an article dealing with Parliament in to-day's issue of the "West Australian."

Before the motion can be entertained, it will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen,

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.34]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I move this motion because a matter of urgent importance to the country at large is involved. The article, I consider, contains gross misrepresentation—it misrepresents the doings and the cost of Parliament.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Deliberate lies as well.

Mr. Marshall: That is being done every day. That newspaper is the most unbalanced section of the community.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not prepared to let the paper get away with this article without registering a protest with a view to ascertaining whether the House cannot do something to stop the reckless statements and the tissue of lies issued to the public in a paper which considers itself to be the leading paper of the day. It attacks Parliament every day—

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us stick to the article in question.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The latter portion of the article states—

Members of the Government cannot be acquitted of obstinacy, but the brunt of the blame for an exhibition of futile and costly time-wasting must be borne by an Opposition which deliberately pursued this course.

Regarding that portion, I consider that we were justified in the action we took; otherwise we would not have proceeded with it. But that is not the worst part of the article. It goes on to say—

It has been computed that it costs £80 an hour to keep the House sitting, and upwards of £30 to send members home in taxi cabs after 11 o'clock.

Mr. Marshall: A confounded lie.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The article concludes—

The public finances are not so buoyant that such expenses should be incurred lightly.

The article relates to an occurrence last night over a Bill then before the House, and it would convey the impression that for every hour we sat last night the cost to the taxpayers was £80 per hour extra. That,

I say, is a most deliberate falsehood, because in my opinion the only additional cost, as against when the House is not sitting, is the cost of lighting the building and the printing of the reports of the proceedings. That would not cost £80 per hour and I say emphatically that the "West Australian" has no right to misrepresent the cost or doings of Parliament to citizens in that way. Moreover, the article states that it costs £30 to send members home in taxi cabs after 11 o'clock. I have sat here very many nights after 11 o'clock and have not been sent home in a taxi. Often the House has sat after 11 o'clock without the country being involved in any cost for taxi cabs. After the departure of the last trains and trams, members are sent home, but that is very seldom.

Mr. Marshall: And only some members, then.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Of course, only some are sent home.

Mr. SLEEMAN: When they are sent home in taxi cabs, it does not cost £30, or even one-third of that amount. I do not think it costs £5 on the very rare occasions when they are sent home. The article infers that, owing to the obstinate attitude of the Government and the Opposition last night, it cost the country £30 to send members home in taxi cabs, and £80 an hour extra to keep the House sitting, whereas in fact, not a penny piece was spent last night on taxi cabs to send members home. Members who have their own cars went home in them, and members who are not fortunate enough to have cars of their own went home in trams and trains as usual. It is time the "West Australian" kept to the facts and refrained from misrepresentation.

Mr. Marshall: It is utterly impossible for the paper to do so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: A politician's life at present is not so happy that he can afford to be misrepresented. Not long ago, when Parliament was in recess, some papers were clamouring for it to sit, and practically inferred that members were a lot of loafers for not sitting. Frequently they asked when Parliament would be called together. Now, when Parliament is doing what it considers right, Government and Opposition alike, the "West Australian" comes to light with a tissue of lies.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.39]: I have not had an opportunity to peruse the article referred to by the member for Fremantle.

Mr. Marshall: Do not you read the "West Australian"?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I usually read the "Primary Producer."

Mr. Marshall: That is worse than the "West Australian."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not know that the member for Fremantle intended to move the adjournment of the House. It is very difficult to control the comments of leader writers, or those associated with the staff of the leading newspaper, or of any other newspaper.

Mr. Sleeman: Fair comment we do not mind.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The statement would certainly lead the public to believe that last night taxis were engaged to send members home. That statement is not true. No member was sent home in a taxi last night. Usually, when members sit here till a late hour engaged upon the business of the State, we try to adjourn the House so that they can catch their last trains and trams. If they cannot do that, surely they are not to be expected to walk home! Usually, when it is necessary to engage cars in which to send home those members who require transport, we sit fairly late in order to justify the expense.

Mr. Angelo: That occurs on only a very few occasions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, and members living in the suburbs cannot be expected to walk home. If we did not sit late at times, the State's business would not be conducted as expeditiously as it is at present. I am sorry that misrepresentation has taken place, but I hope the hon. member will withdraw the motion and not ask the House to adjourn.

Mr. Marshall: Why waste time like this? We can go away and save expense, and then the "West Australian" will have no articles and its columns will be blank.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is seeking to justify the motion. I cannot do so.

Mr. Kenneally: Would you comment on the other portion that it costs £80 an hour while the House is sitting?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: So far as I know, that statement is not correct.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Of course it is not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The writer of the article evidently did not investigate the figures of cost to run the House in its entirety. If he had calculated it on the basis of the number of hours over which the sittings extend, he would find it was very much less than that. There is the cost of lighting the House at night, but members give up a great deal of their time to attend to the business of the country, and it cannot be expected that the business can be transacted for nothing. Anyhow, the cost is not anything like that stated in the article. Regarding the other comments, any man in public life expects a fair amount of criticism.

Mr. Marshall: Fair criticism is accepted.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But when the leading newspaper does publish information, the least it can do is to obtain correct information. There are means for obtaining correct information. I regret that the article appeared. The Government had nothing whatever to do with it; the information was not supplied by them.

Mr. Sleeman: I know that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Still, when members attend here to do the State's work, and it is necessary to send them home by taxis, taxis must be hired.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Some of us who have cars take other members home and relieve the Government of that expense.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Some of us take three or four other members home.

Hon. P. Collier: Members with private cars frequently take other members home.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Often members living in distant suburbs catch their last trains and trams, unless there is some specially important business before the House.

Hon. P. Collier: And we grant pairs for that purpose.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The comment is very unfair.

Mr. Marshall: Any night I will walk home provided that the writer of the article will walk with me. It is only seven miles!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Probably the hon. member would not reach home.

Mr. Marshall: I will take the risk.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will not undertake that. Elections are very costly, and I do not desire to see the hon. member go out of the House at present. I regret the article, but I hope the motion will not be forced to a division.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.44]: I happen to be in the very happy position of not having played any part in being obstinate last evening when the Electoral Act Amendment Bill was being considered. For once, when the debate became a little heated, I played no part, so I feel exempt from the strictures in the article.

The Minister for Railways: Do not you see that the writer of the article is trying to run Parliament?

Mr. MARSHALL: I object to that. If the writer of the article had endeavoured to re-enact Guy Fawkes's performance, I would not have complained. My view is that the present form of government is unsuitable, and the object of the article apparently is to convert the public to that opinion. Probably we are on the eve of great changes, and possibly the newspaper is engaged in establishing the necessary basis for making those changes. But the figures adduced are certainly incorrect. Whether or not the writer of the article knew them to be incorrect is a question I cannot answer. However it behoves journalists, or alleged journalists, when submitting articles of this nature for the public's digestion, to get as close as possible to accuracy. There is more cunning than truth in this article. It does not say that there was an extra cost of £80 per hour while Parliament was sitting, but states that this figure is computed. The word "computed" is equivalent to "calculated," I suppose. The article merely assumes that that was the extra cost. Thus the public are misled. Unfortunately a large section of the public believe everything they see in the newspapers. They little appreciate that the writer of an article might be a mere schoolboy, putting forward what he simply believes to be correct, but at the same time putting it forward as authentic information, or as the outcome of the collective intellects of several individuals. For a considerable time the Press has been assisting the alleged Communists to—

The SPEAKER: Communists do not enter into the argument.

Mr. MARSHALL: Here is an article written by a journalist. If it were written by a Communist, it could not be more derogatory to our system of government. As regards assisting the Communists, I am a little bit with the Press; but I do desire the Press to remain truthful. I am aware that at the moment the Press is stuck for news. But for this sort of stuff, its columns would be bare. There are no murders, no cricket matches; the Melbourne Cup is over; the unemployed are segregated. At the moment the only topic of the Press is assistance to wheatgrowers. Apart from that, the Press, without giving due weight to accuracy, fills up its columns with this sort of thing. The article is scandalous, a gross perversion of truth, and unfair to the public, of whom a large section will believe this to be the truth, whereas it is as far from the truth as the North Pole is from the South. I do not say that the Press reporters who labour within the precincts of this building are responsible for the article, but someone else must have been offered a brief. I infer that the basis of the article came from the Press gallery of this Chamber. I wish to warn those individuals that unless they are very careful I shall be compelled to give some facts to the public; that is, if the Press will publish them; I do not suppose they will. Those facts would refer to the behaviour of some Press reporters, and what it costs to convey information to the Press. They have not got it all their own way, although they are the Press for the time being. Only recently an article referring to Wiluna had to be corrected by me, and in doing so I had to refer to certain injustices. The Press cut out those references, and printed merely what suited them. I protest against any Pressman in the gallery of this Chamber being instrumental in furnishing information which leads to the writing of such an article as has given occasion for the present motion. I do not desire that I myself should not be criticised, or that Parliament should not be criticised; but the Press should get near to the truth in its criticisms. To publish articles and figures of this sort, without a semblance of accuracy, is absolutely unfair. I took no part in the debate referred to, but I can assure the Press that the publication of this article will not discourage me. When I feel like speaking, I shall do so; and if I feel like being obstinate, I will be so; quite irrespective of

whether the Press like it or not. I am prepared to walk home from here with the individual who wrote this article as often as he is prepared to walk with me. Unscrupulous individuals do not confine their writings to the truth, but attack people unfairly. The newspapers will not publish any criticism on themselves. I merely rose to support the motion of protest. If the Press think anything of the present form of government, they should eulogise that form. The time will come when the Press will greatly regret having assisted outside people to attack the present form of government. Those outside people are getting their information from the Press.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS ACT.

##### *Amending Legislation.*

Mr. MARSHALL (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce before the close of this session a Bill to amend the Miners' Phthisis Act?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot promise that the Bill will be introduced, but an effort will be made in that direction.

#### BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE (No. 2).

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

#### BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1931-32.

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

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

*Department of Mines (Hon. J. Scaddam, Minister).*

*Vote—Mines, £101,679:*

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [4.58]: I ask the indulgence of the Committee for a short period—because of the fact that I am suffering from a relaxed throat—while I make some remarks on the gold-mining industry generally. Though I know that a large percentage of what I shall say is already known to hon. members, I feel that this is an opportunity which ought not to be neglected to make available to others, not in the same position to obtain such information, facts which it is desirable should be widely known. For many years the mining industry has been suffering from a regular decline in gold production. That decline is due largely to the fact that by reason of a recognised principle in most countries, and by Act of Parliament in some, particularly in Great Britain, the price of gold has been definitely fixed. Notwithstanding anything in the nature of rising prices for other commodities, the price of gold has remained stationary. During the period of the war, and for some time afterwards, we had the spectacle of all other commodities increasing rapidly in price, which meant that those engaged in the production of gold had to pay higher prices for their requirements, and that in turn their employees had to pay higher prices for their personal requirements. Because of this latter fact higher wages had to be paid to those engaged in the industry, while the mining companies received merely the fixed price for their gold production. This had the effect of causing quite a number of investors to leave the industry, especially small producers without capital backing. To some extent, also, mining companies unable to raise additional capital, because better investments were available in other directions, had to cease operations. But, of course, history repeats itself, and when general prices begin to fall, irrespective of increased prices available to the gold producer, it has the effect of reducing the cost of production, and in turn of increasing production. For the last two years there has been a steady increase, but in recent months it has been phenomenal. I do not believe there has ever been a time—certainly not in the history of Australia—when gold has reached the price it has attained during recent months. That is largely due to the fact that the Old Country has departed from the gold standard, or in other words has provided a free market

for the sale of gold, with the result that yesterday gold was purchaseable for sale on the London market at £5 11s. 3d. per fine ounce, as against the previous standard of £4 4s. 11½d. That, of course, helps materially. But over and above that we have the fact that, due to conditions of trade, there was an exchange rate which was in favour of the Australian producer of commodities that had to be sold overseas. That premium which has been paid to the gold producer, amounting to £1 4s. 10d., raised the value at the Mint to £6 14s. 9d. per fine ounce as against the normal price of £4 4s. 11½d. It is not easy for the average man to appreciate that there is any value in maintaining the gold standard, nor can he appreciate any likely difference that will accrue to him because of a country going off the gold standard. For years past we have been getting on without having very much gold in circulation, and the ordinary citizen seldom sees gold. But most people know there has been a feeling in the minds of those who have studied the question that the present chaotic condition of the world's trade is in some way due to the fact that the gold production of the world has materially decreased in recent years. But I venture to say the case is not altogether proved, although there may be something in it. But gold still plays an important part in international trade. If a country has to meet indebtedness outside its own borders, it has to meet it by providing goods, and it is not always possible to wait until goods can be forwarded to the overseas markets and made available to meet the debit balance against such a country. An easier method is to ship gold. A few months ago the Commonwealth, acting for itself and the States, was called upon to meet its obligations overseas but was unable to meet them in goods because of the low prices of the commodities we were sending to such markets. So we were up against the possibility of having to default. But due in no small measure to the large production of gold in Western Australia, and to a smaller extent in other parts of Australia, the Commonwealth Government were able to ship gold to meet their obligations. So, Australia being a debtor country, it is very essential that we should encourage an increased production of gold in order to have by us that which is so necessary for the purpose of meeting our obligations. It is also known that under the gold standard, as fixed by the

British Parliament, it was possible for a man to take 1,700 Bank of England £1 notes into the bank and demand and receive 400 ounces of gold. But of course nobody would be foolish enough to do anything of the kind, because there are simpler methods of carrying on trade. In some instances the simplest method of all is to deposit the £1,700 in the bank and draw a cheque against the bank, so that the bank may forward the gold to meet the obligations. If, however, a country such as Australia finds itself in the position that it has not the credit in the country where it has to meet its indebtedness, the only method is to ship gold, and that is what the Commonwealth did. That being so, it appears to me it is desirable that every effort should be made to increase our gold production. Prior to England's going off the gold standard nobody could have foreseen the phenomenal rise that has taken place in the value of gold. Earlier than that, the Commonwealth offered a bonus on gold, and unquestionably that gave a fillip to the introduction of capital and labour in gold production. So we made steady progress. To-day the progress will be more rapid because of the increased price of gold. In fact no producer of gold—save a few who have had the estimated bonus advance paid to them on a certificate—has as yet received the benefit of the bonus, nor will he do so until March or April next. So for the purpose of what I am saying to-night I am not taking into account the value of the bonus at all. The present market price actually paid to the gold producer to-day is £6 14s. 9d. per ounce, and in view of the fact that the bonus will mean 5s. to 7s. per oz., it can be said that the price of gold to-day is approximately £7 per oz. The fall in the price of general commodities has the effect of stimulating gold production. But the credit position of Australia caused a very heavy exchange rate to fall against us, and this and the increase in price, have increased the value of gold by 55½ per cent.—a most phenomenal situation.

Hon. P. Collier: I am afraid it may not last very long.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The indications are that it will last for a considerable time. It is a pretty long story and I need not tell it here, but the fact remains that two countries—the United States and France—have practically drawn into their treasuries three parts of the world's gold surplus. The reason for Great Britain going

off the gold standard was in order to bring back into her own coffers, or those of the Bank of England, that which had been going out of the country so rapidly.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Not so much there as into the banks.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to enter into a discussion of banking operations, but they have done that for the purpose of trying to restore gold in their vaults, which had been depleted by the operations of the two countries I have mentioned. And from my advice it looks as if the price of gold will remain very much above normal for many months to come. From the point of view of the gold producer I hope it will, but from other aspects it is just as harmful to other sections of the community as it is advantageous to the man producing gold. The only regrettable feature of this phenomenal rise in the price of gold is that it has caused a very heavy impost against the Governments of Australia in meeting their overseas obligations, due to the heavy exchange rate. After all it is perhaps only that justice which sometimes comes after injustice. There is no question the gold producers, particularly of Western Australia, suffered a very serious injustice during the war. Therefore nobody will regret that they are to-day able to obtain the advantage of the high price of gold and of the exchange rate.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Poetic justice.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: To the man who is getting it it is, rather, good sound prose. I am making these statements for the purpose of trying to reach some of those who cannot be reached by any other method. Most members interested in gold-fields constituencies have really a proper appreciation of the magnitude of our mineral resources, but I doubt if many others have. Western Australia embraces almost one-third of the Commonwealth. Of that huge territory something like one half is declared a mineral area. And from recent discoveries to the west of Toodyay, only some 24 miles in a direct line from Perth, it is now evident that we have gold spread over the whole of the territory from within 30 miles of the west coast to the South Australian border, and from near the southern coastline at Norseman, to Kimberley in the North—a tremendous area that has never been properly prospected.

Hon. P. Collier: Next to South Africa we have the biggest mineral area in the world.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One of the most remarkable things is that even to-day, after so many years of what used to be termed close prospecting, we are discovering gold in places where it should not have been possible to miss finding it. The Larkinville nugget—the biggest piece of gold ever found in the State—was found within 18 inches of the surface. Thousands of men had been prospecting in that area, and carts had been to and fro all over it in search of firewood. Yet that extremely large piece of gold was discovered in the State as late as 1931. At Southern Cross, too, almost in the main street a new discovery was made. That is what is happening all over the gold-fields territory. It is an evidence of the fact that we have not anything like prospected our mineral territory. I doubt if we have appreciated the possibilities of our gold production. We have produced approximately £163,000,000 worth of gold. Those companies which have been operating on publicly subscribed capital have paid out in dividends £29,000,000. I venture to say with confidence that this represents a greater sum than the actual capital put into those enterprises. In other words, they have paid more than 100 per cent. in dividends. It has to be remembered that quite a number of people have put into mines capital which they have not been able to get back, but others on the other hand have put in a little and got back a great deal. During recent years there has not been a big return from the capital invested in the industry. The changed circumstances, however, should warrant more people in finding capital to develop the industry. Notwithstanding the yearly decline in the gold mining industry, the production of gold in this State is still more than 70 per cent. of the total production of Australia, including the Northern Territory, New Guinea, and New Zealand. Our population, however, is only  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of that of the whole of Australia. It is wonderful when we take into account the smallness of our population, that we should be able to produce so large a percentage of the total gold yield of Australia. Our gold production has steadily declined from 1903, our peak year. In some cases most strenuous efforts were made by Governments to

help the industry, but it still kept on declining. In 1926 we produced 437,343 ounces of gold valued at £1,857,714. In 1929 we produced 377,176 ounces of gold valued at £1,602,141. In 1930 there was an increase, the production being 416,369 ounces valued at £1,768,623. This meant overtaking the decline of the previous three years and almost reaching the production of 1926. The gold production, up to the end of October last, for the year 1931 was 407,486 fine ounces, which is only 8,883 ounces less than for the full year of 1930. For the month of October the output was 52,742 ounces, being an increase compared with the previous October of 13,054 ounces. This was the highest production for any month of October since 1921. For the first ten months of the year the increased output for the same period of last year was 66,923 ounces. Gold is quoted on the London market to-day at over £5 10s. an ounce, and I am taking the value at £5 10s. This, plus the exchange of £1 4s. 10d., means that the actual value of the October increased production was £88,005. The value of the increased production for the ten months of the year represented £451,171. The average number of men engaged in mining for gold during the last 2½ years was as follows:—In 1929, 4,108 men; in 1930 it was 4,452 men and for the six months ended the 30th June last the number was 5,899 men, showing an increase in that period of 1,791 men. The average number of men employed in gold mining on the East Coolgardie and Coolgardie goldfields during the same period was, in 1929, 2,072 for East Coolgardie and 158 for Coolgardie; in 1930 there were 2,065 for East Coolgardie and 227 for Coolgardie, and for the six months ended the 30th June, 2,243 for East Coolgardie and 572 for Coolgardie, which represents a substantial increase. I look for a still further increase in the number of men employed in the industry in Kalgoorlie and to a lesser extent on some of the other goldfields, particularly in those districts where the greater number of men are employed by such companies as the Wiluna and Gwalia and, to a lesser degree, at Meekatharra. Owing to the recent mining agreement made between the companies and the men, provision has been made for a rotation of holidays instead of their being taken at one period of the year. This should have

the effect of continuing the mining operations and thus lead to increased production. Instead of the mines closing down and the plant remaining idle for a fortnight, operations will be continued throughout the year. The men will take their holidays in rotation so that there should be one twenty-sixth more men employed in order to keep the mines and the plants in operation. There should, therefore, be a further increase in the number of men employed in the industry. I referred to the Coolgardie goldfield. What is the biggest one piece of gold ever discovered in this State was found at Larkinsville in that goldfield. The Government purchased the nugget for exhibition purposes. We showed it in different places in this State and in the other States as well. It was intended to send it to London, but for certain reasons advanced by the Agent General it was decided that this was not desirable. We have had a cast made so that at any time we can have models made of the nugget. We have already sent away one model and other models are available if required. Several applications have been made for models of this nugget. In order to take advantage of the present favourable market, we disposed of the Golden Eagle last week. We purchased it for £5,438 4s. 2d., including the bonus and we sold it for £6,520 10s. 2d.

Hon. P. Collier: Profiteers.

Mr. Marshall: It is the only business transaction you have ever successfully carried out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think it is the only one. The profit made on the deal certainly covered the salary of the Minister for 12 months. We yet have the bonus to get and this will amount to £152 17s. We shall, therefore, make a profit on the purchase and sale of the nugget of £1,245 3s. It is quite a satisfactory deal and the money is very acceptable to the Treasury just now.

Mr. Marshall: I withdraw all I said about your business acumen.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Ere this the nugget will have been put into sovereigns or will be ready for export as bullion. I wish to refer to some recent developments on our goldfields. In the North-East Coolgardie goldfield at the 32-Mile Peg on the Trans-Australian line, there has been an interesting development, and at one mine a

quartz reef has been discovered which is yielding 1 oz. 14 dwts. to the ton. At Larkinsville the discovery of alluvial gold caused a considerable rush to the spot and apart from the Golden Eagle, several very fine slugs were discovered. There are also prospects of reef gold being found. Clough and party have opened up a quartz reef about two miles away which promises to be a good find. For 100 tons of ore treated by J. Crawford the yield from the 2-foot wide reef has averaged  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ozs. to the ton. The Sons of Gwalia mine on the Mt. Margaret goldfield is now in a profitable position. It gained a new lease of life as a result of a loan made by the previous Government. Up to date it has paid off £15,891 of this loan. This will be pleasing news to my predecessor, the member for Hannans, as well as the ex-Treasurer, who so generously found the money.

Mr. Marshall: A more pleasing feature is that the company have now made a new mine of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The effect of this loan is the best evidence of how the Government can assist the mining industry. I have never been very keen on small loans from the mining development vote of £50 or £100. Such small amounts have very seldom got us anywhere, and it is never expected that they will be recovered. Here was a company in which a large sum of money had been invested, and it had got into difficulties. It had practically been decided to close down the mine and scrap the plant, but not only did the loan from the Government keep the mine going, but it enabled the management to make a new mine of the proposition, for at the bottom level the prospects are now brighter than they have been for the past 15 or 20 years.

Mr. Marshall: Absolutely.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The management are so satisfied with the sympathetic consideration they have received that they have now taken an interest in the Lancefield district, and hope to be able to trace gold chutes that were so wonderful in that field many years ago. This affords further evidence of the faith of the Sons of Gwalia company in the future of the industry. In the Meekatharra district important developments are taking place. The Ingliston Consols Extended continues the chief producer. On the Lady Central, in an old shaft the management are now



working on a 3-foot reef at 100 feet. This averages about three ounces of gold to the ton. The Enterprise mine in Kalgoorlie has been taken over on an option by the Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd. The advent of the Broken Hill Proprietary into the industry was quite unexpected. The company goes into things in a big way, and there is every reason to believe that they will deal with any operation they embark upon on a large scale, just as they have dealt with their other undertakings. They have taken a working option over the Enterprise, and I believe propose to put in a drive at the 1,600 feet level from the Great Boulder. They have also taken options over leases in other places. I am satisfied from the efforts they have made that the Broken Hill Pty. are in earnest. We have loaned them the Assistant State Mining Engineer (Mr. Wilson) for twelve months, with the right to his services for another twelve months. I think it was worth while doing that. I hope the company will receive some benefit from his services, and that the State will also do so. Many companies, particularly on the Kalgoorlie field, are to-day endeavouring to improve their treatment methods. That in no small measure is due to the persistency of my predecessor and the ex-Treasurer in urging that there was only one way to maintain the life of a mine, and that was to enable it to treat lower grade ores in a more economical manner. We used to boast that our treatment plants on the Kalgoorlie field were the most up-to-date of any mining field in the world. Unfortunately, in recent years we had to admit that they had not kept pace with the advance made in the treatment of ore.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They were living on their reputation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Probably they were. But now they have arrived at the stage of believing those who urged that the proper thing to do was to improve the method of treatment as well as the mining methods. The Lake View and Star have introduced a plant which has proved most successful in the treatment of the ore that is being handled, and which has materially reduced the cost of production. The new plant, one unit of which is already in working order, will ultimately treat 40,000 tons of ore per month as against the present 15,000 tons. Completed the plant will cost about £300,000, and the saving in power

costs alone will be in the vicinity of £23,000 a year. The Perseverance mine has also in hand the installation of a bromo-cyanide treatment plant estimated to cost £50,000. About this there was some doubt as to its being as successful as the company anticipated, but I believe I am right in saying that from the result of investigations made by officers of the department the plant is likely to prove successful in treating the class of ore at that mine. The great point is that we have to keep in mind that the State is a definitely interested party. Too often it is imagined that because a person has taken up a piece of land as a gold-mining lease, those engaged in working it are the only interested people. The State leases the ground from which wealth is being produced, and the method of producing that wealth is our concern also, and if we allow men to do what was done at the Lake View originally—they followed a rich chute that produced a ton of gold a month and allowed the ore of lower values to remain behind to be recovered at some future time—the mining industry will suffer.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They did it for over six months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is wise that the methods of treatment should be improved so as to increase the life of the mine and also increase its reserves.

Hon. P. Collier: The Lake View people are doing good work now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Excellent work. The reduction in treatment costs must prove a benefit to mining in the State, and it will bring into operation some of our dormant low-grade propositions. Subject to capital being available, it is regarded as worth while to do these things. From the point of view of the British investor in gold mining, there was never a more favourable opportunity than that which exists at the present time, in that for every £1,000 that is put into mining, it is credited in Australia with £1,300. Surely that is an opportunity not to be missed. With regard to our low-grade propositions, too often they have been unfavourably compared with the operations on other mining fields where the costs are high, and it was believed that the values were not sufficient to justify the investment of capital. Now we are beginning to appreciate the fact that investment in gold mining on proper lines is quite as safe as an investment in any other direction, and in

many cases, much more so. Let me illustrate that. At Wiluna, as we know, the ores are of low grade but of great magnitude and of pretty even value, and there the opportunity for investment is as sound almost—and perhaps I ought to say this with bated breath—as any Government stock. By the expenditure such as that undertaken at Wiluna, it can be said that investors will get a fair return on their capital, because it is known what the yields there are likely to be, and it is known also that there will be a surplus available for distribution. There are other propositions of a similar nature which, subject to obtaining capital and producing en masse, will prove profitable. On the Croesus Proprietary 50 men are working on tribute and they send between 1,100 and 1,200 tons a month to the battery. At the Brown Hill four men are working above the 500ft. level and have obtained some highly payable returns. Satisfactory developments have taken place at the North Kalgurli, exposing good lengths of payable ore. Considerable improvements have been made on the South Kalgurli plant, and dust from dry-crushing mills has been reduced to a minimum. Good returns have been obtained by tributers on the Great Boulder. The Yilgarn goldfield has had a most active year, and many good returns were reported. Prospector Pearce disclosed good coarse gold a few chains from the old Fraser's mine. The most remarkable thing about that is that it was thought that the whole of that locality had been thoroughly prospected and worked out. At the North Coolgardie goldfield a fair number of prospectors were busy during the year, and were successful in keeping Sawyer Bros.' mill going almost continuously. A rich pillar was taken out of the old Princess May shaft. At the Broad Arrow goldfield a new find at Fenbark treated a trial parcel that went 2 ozs. 8 dwts. per ton, and a shaft sunk to 30 feet disclosed good values. On the adjoining lease a trial parcel returned 2 ozs. per ton over the plates, and 17 dwts. in the residues. I made some reference to the Broken Hill Proprietary interests in this State. Mr. Darling, chairman of the company, and Mr. Essington Lewis, managing director, visited the State recently, and went over a fair number of our goldfields. They called on me before they left the State and told me they were

enthusiastic about our possibilities, and they believed that, with the adoption of up-to-date mining methods and the introduction of capital, it was possible to produce gold in payable quantities in areas that had been looked upon as having been worked out. On the East Murchison goldfield, at Black Range, there has been a mining revival and abandoned centres like Montague and Birri-grin are again receiving attention from prospectors. At the Sandstone battery some rich returns were obtained, one of 3.15 ozs. from 3.5 tons, and another of 83 ozs. from 12 tons. At the Pilbara goldfield there has also been a revival, and promising returns have been obtained from Hall's Creek and from Grant's Creek. At Brockman five men are working alluvial, while gold was reported in a bore hole at 200 feet on the Ruby Plains station. At Goon-garrie, in May last, an assisted prospector—and, by the way, he was a miner's phthisis case—discovered a rich pocket, 18½ tons yielding 187 ozs. of gold. Later 300 ozs. were dollied, and again 600 ozs. This man and his partner have consistently discovered some rich patches on this field. Just a few figures now regarding the Wiluna mine, to show the quantity treated, the revenue and expenditure and the profit:—

1931.	Tons.	*Revenue.	Expen- diture.	Profit.
		£	£	£
April ...	18,025	24,663	...	...
May ...	22,086	30,200	25,628	4,752
June ...	24,510	33,500	28,018	10,482
July ...	25,952	36,700	31,692	5,008
Aug. ...	23,279	34,000	30,258	3,742

\* Including exchange premium but not allowing for any gold bonus.

The additional expenditure on construction and equipment was as follows:—In May £2,424, June £2,960, July £4,979, and August £2,027. The Sons of Gwalia, Ltd., obtained the following results during the September quarter:—31,276 tons of ore milled, 8,350 tons of sands re-treated, cost of operations £42,480, value of gold recovered £45,520. The exchange premium for June and July amounted to £9,079, making a gross profit of £12,119. And for the first half of this year a net profit of £23,664 was made by this company, which a few years back was on the point of closing down and scrapping its plant. In the Estimates dealing with Public Utilities we provided for an estimated expenditure on State batteries, and

it will be remembered that by arrangement it was decided the other evening, that as the State batteries are part and parcel of the Mines Department, the subject should be discussed on the general Estimates of the Mines Department. Since the State batteries have been in operation we have expended on them £414,899, and the working expenses have exceeded the revenue earned by £184,000. It will thus be seen that the State batteries have been a pretty heavy drain on the Treasury, but in view of the fact that they have produced such a large quantity of wealth, they may be regarded as having been of indirect value to the Treasury. State batteries are a true reflex of the gold-mining industry insofar as prospectors and small leaseholders are concerned. The records kept since 1899, in which year 18,806 tons of ore were treated, show the tonnage increasing rapidly until 1906, when 95,831 tons were crushed. This was followed by a decrease, when in 1928 the lowest level was reached at 16,274 tons treated. The decrease was despite reductions in crushing charges, the introduction of low-grade rebates, and cartage subsidies. Since 1928 there has been a substantial increase, amplified last year, as the following figures will show:—

1928. Tons crushed.	1929. Tons crushed.	1930. Tons crushed.	1931 (nine months). Tons crushed.
16,274	20,236	29,285	40,993

There is a gratifying increase between 1928 and 1929 of 3,961 tons treated. The increase is more pronounced in 1929 and 1930, the comparison showing an increase of 9,049 tons. I am advised that by the end of the financial year we shall probably reach the 1926 record year if prospectors continue to take ore to the batteries, as they are doing to-day. These figures are illuminating in view of the criticism that has been levelled at the Mines Department, and particularly at the State Batteries Branch, by certain people on the goldfields. In justice to them, however, it can be said that as nobody could foresee the phenomenal rise in the price of gold, so no one could foresee the phenomenal increase in the production of ore. It came on us very rapidly. We tried to keep pace with it. We have erected a new battery at Yalgoo and we are renovating a number of others. We have arranged with private battery owners to treat for the public

and have subsidised those batteries. In other directions also we have helped the prospector to get his ore treated within a reasonable time. I admit that it has not been possible to keep pace with the demand, and that in a small measure is due to the fact that when the first premium was paid last year, everybody thought it would be the maximum amount to be received, and everybody wanted his ore treated at once in order that he might take advantage of it. That process has been going on. As the value of the gold increased, so the demand on the part of prospectors to get their ore treated became more insistent, their object being to obtain advantage of the high price. Though prospectors have complained of the delay, I have not had a single line of gratitude from a prospector whose ore was held up for three months and who thereby gained the advantage of the higher price. Thousands of pounds have been put into the pockets of the prospectors by reason of the fact that they were held up for three months, but not one of them has thanked us for having been instrumental in his receiving a higher price for his gold. The faults of which a man may be capable are generally written in large red letters, but very little is said or written of the things that are worth while. During the first nine months of this year, there has been a further marked increase of 11,707 tons treated, as compared with the whole of 1930. The tonnage handled at present suggests that for the financial year ending in June next, the maximum tonnage of 1906 will be approached. Based on the value recovered by amalgamation of £3 12s. per ounce, and comparing the first nine months of this year with the year 1928, we get the following encouraging results:—1928, £54,011; 1931 (first nine months), £89,443. Including the estimated extractable value of tailings at £25,557, the total value of the output for the first nine months of this year, with the premium of £29,490, approximates £148,630. This is a most encouraging result and, in my opinion, is a very complete answer to those who have complained most bitterly of the delay, and have made it appear that we were exerting no effort to meet the situation. Let me say that the officers of the department have worked day and night to try to meet the position. They have said little about it, because nothing is to be gained by continually harping on the subject, but they

have necessarily kept well up to the collar in order to achieve those results.

Hon. P. Collier: A very good record.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. There has been no increase of staff, and the officers have done the work willingly. Not a complaint has been made, and no request has been made for additional staff. They have met the call because they considered it their duty to do so.

Mr. Marshall: The staff at Wiluna are greatly overworked.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That applies to the staff generally. Although we are suffering from the depression, people on goldfields in the main are having as good a time as they have had for many years. Yet the staff of the Mines Department has been treated similarly to other Government employees. Although the Mines Department staff are living amid prosperity, they have to live under conditions of depression and it is exceedingly hard to reconcile those facts. They are suffering seriously and are experiencing great difficulty in carrying on.

Hon. P. Collier: You have a very capable head in the department.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have.

Hon. P. Collier: I think I appointed him.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not yet suggested that the Leader of the Opposition lacked judgment in selecting persons to fill responsible positions. He was successful when he appointed the head of the department.

Hon. P. Collier: It may have been luck.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Batteries have been erected since the beginning of 1930 at Jimble Bar and Yalgoo. Plants closed down and now revived and reconstructed include Yarri, Laverton and St. Ives. At St. Ives we have taken over the Victory water supply, thus securing a sufficiency of water. Assistance has been granted to erect a 10-head mill at Barrambie, and a subsidy has been offered to a 5-head plant at Birrigrin. A 5-head plant at Marda has been placed at the disposal of a working syndicate, and an understanding has been reached with the Lalla Rookh Mine in the Pilbara district to crush for the public at reasonable rates. We have subsidised batteries as follows:—Hunt Bros., Kalgoorlie; Macdonnell's, Bullfinch; Howlett's, Donovan's Find; McHugh's, Mt. Vernon; Harris

and Party, Birrigrin. Free crushing and cartage subsidies have been made available at Tuckanarra leased State battery; Kingswood's, Widgiemooltha; Hunt Bros., Kalgoorlie; Macdonnell's, Bullfinch; Sawyer Bros., Menzies. It is estimated that the subsidised batteries are treating about 1,700 tons per month. Up to the end of July last the State batteries have added to the gold yield of the State, since the date of their inception, £6,364,028. That is evidence of their worth. While on the subject of State batteries, let me say that while they are operating in an atmosphere of prosperity, they are unfortunately controlled by a Government living in an entirely different atmosphere. Like all other Government departments, they have had to suffer from the depression. So far as we were able, we continued to render the assistance that had been granted in good times when money was, comparatively speaking, easy to obtain. Now, however, we have reached a stage when that is impossible. The difficulty began to appear when I took office, but we have had to take steps that were never contemplated at that time. In order that there may be no misunderstanding, let me state definitely what we are doing regarding battery charges and subsidies. In view of the present high price of gold and the financial stringency of the State, it has been decided, in lieu of increasing charges at State batteries, to suspend the regulations applicable to free crushings and rebates on low-grade ore treated. Similarly, cartage subsidies on ore delivered will be amended. The suspension of those regulations will take place on the 16th November. In justification of the alterations, it may be explained that the present price of fine gold, with the premium added, is £6 11s. per ounce, as against the normal value of £4 5s. per ounce. As I have already explained, with the anticipated bonus, it can be said that gold is worth approximately £7 per ounce. This increased price is sufficient to pay the crushing charges on ore containing 4 dwts. of gold to the ton, and the rebate allowances where it contains 2½ dwts. of gold to the ton. Treatment of ore of a lesser value is not justified at the expense of the community under the present financial difficulty. Cartage subsidies will be reduced from 8d. to 6d. per mile, and will apply to a limited tonnage only. This is in

accordance with Clause 5 of the new regulations made on the 15th October, 1930, as follows:—

If, in the opinion of the Minister for Mines, circumstances justify such action, the rate of subsidy may be reduced below 8d. per ton per mile. In exceptional circumstances the Minister for Mines may increase the rate of subsidy above 8d. per ton per mile.

It is proposed to retain that clause of the regulations, but "6d." will be inserted in lieu of "8d." With the conditions now prevailing, there is no warrant for the community paying cartage subsidies on large tonnages. Thus we propose to limit the tonnage upon which cartage will be paid. We have had the spectacle of ore worth only 2 dwts. or 3 dwts. being taken to the batteries from old dumps, and of its being carted in large quantities. Also four, five and six men have been employed taking large tonnages to the batteries, and the cost to us has been the maximum of 16s. per ton for cartage. The cartage subsidy was granted to enable the prospector producing small quantities of ore to get it to the battery for treatment and testing possible values.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Before I left office I had to stop some men who were making a good thing with motor trucks.

Hon. P. Collier: It was only intended for testing purposes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; yet some of them have been carting in 300 and 400-ton parcels. It is realised that 6d. per ton will not pay the total cost, but it will be a fair proportion of the cost, and that is as much as can be expected at the present time. To the end of the calendar year, 1930, the assistance granted through State batteries was as follows:—

Loss on working, including reconstruction .. .. .	£
Free crushings .. .. .	1,396
Cartage subsidies .. .. .	774
	9,947
	<u>£12,117</u>

For the first six months of this year ended 30th June last these were:—

Low-grade rebates .. .. .	£
Free crushings .. .. .	1,615
Cartage subsidies .. .. .	1,151
	5,100
	<u>£7,860</u>

It is estimated for the next 12 months these three items alone would have accounted for an expenditure of £24,000 had the concessions continued. Under existing conditions and especially in view of the high price that gold is bringing, we are not justified in asking the general community to subsidise the industry to that extent. It will surely be admitted that with the value of gold, including premium, at 58½ per cent. above normal price, such concessions as have hitherto been granted are not now warranted. For the six months ended 30th June last, the increased price of gold meant £36,694, or 30s. 6d. per average ton of ore treated at State batteries, or 2s. 6d. per dwt. of gold won, and, on the estimated output for 12 months, more than double that amount. I am not taking into account the possible bonus. The bonus was granted in much the same way as the gratuity was granted to the soldiers, and it should not be taken into account in considering the value of production.

Mr. Marshall: You deduct 2½ dwts. from the tailings.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because it is not recoverable.

Hon. P. Collier: That is an old, old grievance.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, it sounds all right in theory, but it does not work out in practice.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Omitting the bonus, what is the value of the gold obtained?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The value is £6 14s. 9d. per ounce.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is net to the producer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. Corboy: That is for fine gold.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, at the Mint. I repeat that the figures I have quoted do not include the gold bonus which stands entirely apart from any other advantages the producers have had, and which is given on all Australian gold above normal production, and therefore has not been taken into consideration. It must not be forgotten that while this premium of 58½ per cent. is to the advantage of the gold producers, side by side with it is the additional loss to the Government by having to transmit its interest requirements on goods imported to make up the premium the producers are actually getting. I have referred to the suspension of the regulation. My present

intention is, subject to Cabinet approval, that the suspension shall remain in operation so long as gold remains at a value of £6 per ounce or more. When it falls below that figure, taking into account the premium which includes the exchange, I shall reconsider the question of re-introducing the subsidies.

Hon. P. Collier: Will you not have to make a regulation suspending the other regulation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. In actual practice it is not done by regulation.

Hon. P. Collier: I know.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In the circumstances I think it will be admitted that there is an unanswerable case for the State not providing something from its revenue or other sources to pay to those who are doing better than any other section of the community. While we can and do boast of our gold production, we must not lose sight of the fact that in producing gold we are giving up the lives of healthy, strong, virile men. I do not wish to strike anything in the nature of a discordant note, but I do wish to say that under existing conditions in particular it ought to be possible to call upon those who are reaping the advantage of this wonderful wealth to extend some further consideration to the men who give up health or life in producing gold. The matter is not easy to handle, I assure the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) in particular. I do not want to do anything in a hurry. I wish to find a basis acceptable to everybody. I wish the community to accept its share of the responsibility, and the mining companies to accept their share, and, as far as may be warranted, probably the men too. We have to review the whole question. The position to-day is that the Government are to some extent compelling men to remain in the industry and thus reach a stage when it will not be possible for them to live for any length of time. I hope it will be possible to take advantage of the present favourable conditions to amend our legislation so as to provide that something shall be done to save the lives of hundreds or perhaps thousands of men for a number of years. Of course no one lives for ever, but there is no reason to compel men to die prematurely. That unfortunately happens at

the present time. I assure my friends opposite that on this question I have not the slightest party feeling. The question is quite above party, and it should be. It is a question affecting the lives of members of the community. I hope that when eventually legislation is introduced, it will be accepted on the basis that it represents the right thing to do; and I trust that there will be nothing in the nature of party quibbling over it.

Hon. P. Collier: I am very glad that you have altered the first decision to make the emergency legislation apply to the miners' phthisis cases.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is an instance in point. While everybody surrounding these men was living in a condition of prosperity, the poor fellows themselves and their families were not in any better position. However, we were able to persuade the Treasurer, who I should remark to his credit, is standing up under a heavy burden, to accept the responsibility of maintaining the original payments.

Mr. Kenneally: Does not the same thing apply to public servants living on the gold-fields?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member cannot compare any public servants with the men who have been compelled to leave the mining industry for health reasons.

Mr. Kenneally: I thought the Minister was referring to members of the Public Service in the mining industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. Anyhow, I do not wish to enter into that phase. I have here the latest figures of compensation paid to men withdrawn from the mining industry—

Mine Workers' Relief Fund, established February, 1915	£ 223,373
Miners' Phthisis, established June, 1925	227,476
Workers' Compensation, established June, 1926	23,207
	<hr/> £474,056

From the three sources mentioned no less than £474,056 has been paid by way of compensation—a melancholy evidence of the inroads which mining makes upon the health of the men in this State. I have not touched upon the actual expenditure shown in these estimates, because that has not varied. Let me say again that the sincerity and willingness of the staff of the

Mines Department are proved by their successful efforts to meet the sudden demand made upon them because of the rapid increase in mining activities here. In the Mines Department we have a fine body of public servants, who are out to do their best for those engaged in the industry as well as for the State as a whole.

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE** (Hannans) [6.8]: I am indeed pleased to have heard the Minister's statement regarding the buoyancy of the gold-mining industry of Western Australia. There is no gainsaying the fact that in every gold-producing country of the world the industry revives whenever a crisis or a depression occurs, because in those circumstances there is an increased price obtainable for gold. There can be no question as to the improvement of the industry in Australia. As the Minister has said, the improvement is due to many causes. In my opinion, the principal cause has been the granting by the Federal Government of a bonus on increased production of gold. Federal Governments have been freely criticised for the granting of bonuses in various directions; but I undertake to say that if all bonuses were granted under the same conditions as the gold bonus, no reasonable man would take exception to them. Western Australia asked for a bonus of £1 per oz. on all gold. Had the Federal Government acceded to that request at the outset, they would have shown a profit of £500,000, besides paying the bonus of £1 per oz. on all gold produced, and any increase in the price of gold or in the premium on the sale of gold would have become the property of the Federal Government. As I have said, the Federal Government refused that proposal, but eventually agreed to pay a bonus of £1 per ounce on the increased production of gold over the average of the last three years. I hope that the method adopted for the granting of the gold bonus will also be adopted in connection with any new bonuses, if new bonuses are ever granted. The Minister has dealt fully with the figures of gold production in Western Australia, and has also given figures relating to the State batteries. Outside gold-mining circles there has been a good deal of criticism of the expenditure on State batteries. Within the last six months there have appeared in the Press of this State letters criticising not only the present Minister for Mines but all pre-

vious Ministers for Mines, on account of alleged wasteful expenditure on State batteries. That criticism comes from someone who knows nothing about gold mining. I think it only fair to say that on the facts and figures adduced by the Minister to-day, the expenditure on State batteries absolutely justifies itself. Although there may be an apparent loss on a cash balance, the expenditure has been productive of immense benefits to the State as a whole. The Minister also gave particulars of the amount of the gold premium by way of exchange. I shall not discuss the exchange position at any length. It would not be wise to do so, seeing that there is an appeal to the Privy Council from a decision given by the Supreme Court of Western Australia. Though a few ounces of the recent gold output may have been produced without the aid of tributers, at least 90 per cent. of the gold has been won by tributers, and would never have been won by the mining companies. Therefore I firmly believe that this State was wise in amending its legislation so as to give 50 per cent. of the benefit of the premium to the tributer, the actual producer, and not to the leaseholder. A favourable judgment has been obtained by the tributers in the courts here, and the mining companies have appealed to the Privy Council. I cannot think on what ground they are appealing, and I firmly believe that the appeal will fail. It has been asserted that the tributers got all the benefit without sinking shafts or doing developmental work, the whole cost of which is borne by the companies. It is asserted that the tributer simply walks in afterwards, gets a crushing and makes a good profit. Of course that is not so.

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

**HON. S. W. MUNSIE**: I am not going to say much more on these Estimates, but there are one or two questions I should like to put to the Minister. I think everyone who takes an interest in mining in this State will be pleased to know that the Broken Hill Proprietary people are concerning themselves at last about gold mining. If any company deserves encouragement at all it is this company, for they will certainly put a considerable amount of capital into shows in Western Australia. Also, in respect of the Gwalia Mine, I am pleased that I was able to render the company assistance

to give them a chance to pick up their lode again. The Minister has been kind, and in some respects generous, in his references to me in connection with the loan of £68,000 to the Gwalia Company, but if there is any great credit due to anybody it is due rather to the officers of the department than to me. Before I agreed to lend any money to the Gwalia Company I got Mr. Howe, the State Mining Engineer, and Mr. Wilson, the Assistant Mining Engineer, together with Mr. Blatchford, the geologist, to go up to Gwalia and make an inspection. They were of the opinion that if the Gwalia Company were to cross-cut from the 2,400 ft. level in a certain direction they would have a very good chance of picking up the South Gwalia lode. On their recommendation the company undertook the work, and also at the 2,200 and 2,600 levels, and in each instance they picked up the lode. In my opinion the Gwalia Mine is a sounder and better proposition to-day than ever before. There is, of course, a chance that the company will have to sink a new shaft eventually, but even so they have in the development sufficient encouragement to warrant the expenditure.

Mr. H. W. Mann: What distance have they to convey the ore?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: They have to convey it a fair distance, but that is nothing. Without the new shaft at every level they have to drive 1,000 feet to bring the stuff to the existing shaft. I was pleased to have an opportunity to assist a company that had as manager Mr. Edquist. With my experience in mining, and as Minister for Mines, I thought at the time I made that loan to the Gwalia Company that there was no other mine manager in Western Australia equal to Mr. Edquist. He knew more about his work than did any other man in a similar position with whom I had had dealings.

Mr. Marshall: I worked under him for years, and I can confirm what you say.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Why this discrimination?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Because it is necessary. To-day we have two other managers in Western Australia equal perhaps to Mr. Edquist, but at that time we had none. I know the difficulty the Government have had, through lack of money, in assisting prospectors. However, the results given by

those who have had assistance have justified it. The Government are doing all they can. Where they cannot give assistance to prospectors, they are providing tools for any man who desires to go out and give a show a trial. I made half a dozen or more requests to the Mines Department during this financial year for assistance or tools for prospectors, and was not turned down in any assistance. There is one matter I wish to mention to the Minister. For years we have had workmen's inspectors. At one time we had four. With the revival that has taken place in the industry, at present we have only two to cover the enormous area, and to make things worse, one of those is taking his long service leave. So at present we have but one workmen's inspector. I hope the Minister will, if possible, appoint a workmen's inspector in place of the one away on long service leave, even if he cannot appoint another man permanently. Under existing conditions there is ample room for the constant employment of three workmen's inspectors. When first these workmen's inspectors were suggested, it was said they would be only another irritation to the companies. I did not believe that. To-day I believe that the mere fact of having had the workmen's inspectors in the mines has led to a better understanding between the men and the management. Certainly workmen's inspectors have fully justified their existence, yet at present we have only one to cover the whole State. The Minister says he has no money. But in my opinion there is some money the Minister could get which has been paid by the industry in this State. It is not fair to charge the industry what we are charging, nor to charge the general public what they have to pay when such services are being paid for by the companies. The Estimates show a 1.9 reduction from last year. Then at the bottom of the page we have a reference to miners' phthisis. I want the Minister to explain those figures.

The Minister for Mines: They are all right.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I hope they are. But this is the way it strikes me: The Estimates show Mines, Council of Industrial Development, State Labour Bureau—all controlled by the Minister. The total expenditure in 1929-30 was £109,108, and the total estimated expenditure for this year is



£107,154. which is a decrease of £2,551, or 1.9 per cent. Then, not only that, we get "Decrease as compared with 1930, 1.9 per cent." Then we get "Miners' phthisis compensation 1929-30, amount paid £47,213, amount estimated this year £59,000, or an increase of £11,789." Yet at the foot of that there is stated, "Net decrease 22.2 per cent."

The Minister for Mines: That is for the purpose of comparison with 1929.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: It is not a comparison with that year, and the figures do not prove it. To get at those figures let us find out what has been done. The Government say they are doing that for the purpose of showing a comparison between 1930 and the current year. The expenditure in 1929-30 was £47,213. They have deducted that from the total expenditure of the Mines Department. Why have they done that? Because it is miners' phthisis payment, paid for compensation under the Miners' Phthisis Act. If there is a balance left after deducting the £27,000 against the miners' phthisis payment, what does the balance represent? Does it represent a double expenditure in the Mines Department, less the amount of compensation? There is no question about that. The total amount spent in 1929-1930 was £61,895 for the Mines Department Vote, less the £47,000 for miners' compensation. If there is a balance, it is the balance that was expended on the mining industry. Then this year, it is set out that the expenditure on miners' phthisis is to be £59,000, and that is deducted from the total Vote again, which brings the Vote down to £48,154 for mining expenditure, as against £61,213 in 1929-30.

The Minister for Mines: The reason is that the expenditure under the Miners' Phthisis Act is shown on the Estimates but not included for the purposes of the Financial Emergency Act. So it has to be deducted.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That explanation is not correct.

The Minister for Mines: In the £101,679 shown against Mines, is included £59,000 for miners' phthisis payments. The miners' phthisis compensation is taken out for each year, and the difference shows 22.2 per cent.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, as a reduction in the mining expenditure.

The Minister for Mines: It is included there because it is not subject to the Financial Emergency Act.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I have an idea why they are making these deductions, but I say these Estimates are misleading, for they definitely show that, as compared with 1929-30, there is a reduction on the mining Vote equal to 1.9 per cent.

The Minister for Mines: That is not quite right. If you exclude the miners' phthisis payments for both years, you will find these figures at the bottom are actually expenditure on mines alone.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Well, why is it not shown as a reduction in the miners' phthisis payment?

The Minister for Mines: It is not a reduction.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I say it is.

The Minister for Mines: No. It is an increase.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: But we get it here, "miners' phthisis compensation, decrease 22.2 per cent."

The Minister for Mines: These amounts are deducted because of the Financial Emergency Act. This shows the reduction on the mines.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: No. This shows a reduction in the miners' phthisis payments.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Well, why is it put in twice?

The Minister for Mines: It is in accordance with the resolutions of the Premiers' Conference. This is a payment not subject to the 22½ per cent. reduction. The result is, it is deducted in each case.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Then it is a reduction in the mines expenditure, not in the miners' phthisis expenditure.

The Minister for Mines: No, it is an increase.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Well, it is shown here as a decrease.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The Minister's statement in introducing the Estimates proved that it is worth while to assist the mining industry in this State. I am sorry to see the Government have been compelled, through stress of finance, to cut out altogether the amount that used to be on the Estimates for the purpose of supplying cheap water for the mines. The department apparently feels that with the increased

value of gold, the mines are able to bear this cost themselves. That may be so. But what I would point out is that the general taxpayer has paid in compensation to those who have been taken out of the mines, £227,000. On top of that, in five years we have charged the mining industry £167,843 in premiums under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. That is, the total expenditure, not only for claims made, but for medical expenses as well, is £23,198 7s. 11d., leaving a credit balance of £144,644 13s. 1d. It is certainly not fair to ask the general taxpayer to pay on behalf of the mining industry in compensation for those who have been taken out of the industry, an amount of £227,000, and then compel the mining industry to pay £4 10s. per cent. premium on the Third Schedule, and show a profit on that of £144,644.

The Minister for Works: It is remarkable that the insurance companies will not take it on at that price.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: If the insurance companies knew that the Government were not going to amend the Act, but were still going to take on the responsibility, as far as the general taxpayer is concerned, to compensate every man found suffering from tuberculosis, the companies would rush it at £2 per cent. and would show a handsome profit. But at present we are charging the mines £4 10s. per cent., and they have no claims. In my opinion that is not fair. The public has to pay, and on top of that we ask the companies to pile up another surplus of £144,644. The Minister said to-night he could not give a definite answer, but if possible he was going to introduce an amendment to the Miners' Phthisis Act this session. It is a big job and it will be difficult to please everybody. But, I do not care by what method he does it, it is not fair to the general taxpayer to make him find £227,000, and on top of that make the mines find £167,000 for the State Insurance Office to make a profit of £144,644. That is what has happened. There have been bitter complaints of having to pay £4 10s. per cent. when £1 per cent. would more than cover it. Still, we have had to pay £4 10s. per cent. from the commencement, and the companies stated they would lose half a million a year if they took it on. The Auditor General's report, on page 56, gives all these figures, the amount paid each year and the claims, including medical expenses. The administra-

tion cost has amounted to £12,000 odd during the five years, and by the mere fact of their having this surplus and putting it into the State Savings Bank, the interest amounts to over £10,000. In other words they have nearly paid the total administration costs from the interest received on the money deposited in the State Savings Bank.

The Minister for Works: That was only five per cent.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: The position requires looking into. While at present the mines should be able to pay the amount, in my opinion a fair percentage of that money should go to relieve the general taxpayer of portion of the £227,000.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Do you not know that the Treasury utilises that insurance money?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I have been trying to find out. I know there was £10,000 voted to that fund as compensation for the Treasury paying £227,000; there was a recoup of £10,000 from the State Insurance Office to assist in paying those premiums. But even with that £10,000, there is still £134,000 there. There would have been a howl from any other industry in the State if they had been charged premiums which would build up such a fund in six years and show a profit of £144,644, but it being the mining industry, of course they sat down and said little or nothing. The Minister should use some of that money in order to give further assistance to the mining industry. The individual tributer has to pay 9s. a week to insure himself. The Government are all the time talking about assisting the gold mining industry. That profit of £134,000 should still be in the fund, and, according to the Auditor General's report, it is now shown as a credit.

The Minister for Works: Some of it is in the Savings Bank, bearing interest.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: That leaves no money with which to assist the gold-mining industry. The Government should see that some of it is used to assist in reviving the industry. The State office has been carried on, has shown a fair profit and taken all the risks. I know that some negotiations have been going on with the Minister in connection with the Lake View and Star mine, and cutting out the water charges. I hope the Minister has reconsidered his first decision and that he has seen his way to giving them some concession. When it was decided to cut out the cheap water

altogether, other mines on the Eastern Goldfields were still getting the same concession because they were getting it for sluicing purposes. The total quantity of water taken by the Lake View and Star was eventually used for the same purpose. Because of the agreement that was made, they got nothing and had to pay the full price on all they used. I do not know whether the Government have yet done anything. I admit the company is a wealthy one, but if there is any enterprise in Kalgoorlie and Boulder that for the last 15 or 20 years has done much for the district, it is this particular company. They have spent enormous sums of money, employed large numbers of men, and have been the best employers of labour. The Government should give every encouragement to them in the interests of gold production, and all those who are engaged in the mining industry. I understand the Government are cutting out the cost of water for sluicing. The Lake View and Star are changing over their plant from the dry-crushing principle to oil flotation. The quantity of water used is equal to that which should be used in the ordinary sluicing methods. I hope the Government will see that the company receive some slight concession.

**HON. M. F. TROY** (Mt. Magnet) [8.3]: I am happy to say the Minister for Mines paid the House the compliment of making a full statement regarding the gold-mining industry. We are obliged to him for it. This is an industry with which the majority of members have had something to do in one way or another. Not only does that apply to those sitting on this side of the House representing gold-mining constituencies, but it applies to members sitting opposite, most of whom have at some time or other been associated with gold mining activities. During the last twelve months there has been very great activity in the industry. Hundreds, if not thousands, of men have gone into it. I suppose the population of the gold-mining areas and constituencies has increased by at least 20 per cent. It certainly has done so in my electorate. This increase is due to the return to the industry of a number of men who were formerly employed in it, and to the fact that new people have come into it in the hope of making a living. Great encouragement has been given by the fact that gold now brings £6 14s. 9d. per ounce.

The price of gold is better to-day than it has ever been in the history of Australia. I do not remember that it has ever before reached its present value. I hope this will continue, but one can never tell. We are too far removed from the causes of the economic situation to foretell what may happen within the next few months. I have been interested in prospectors ever since I came to Western Australia. Whilst I was Minister for Mines I realised that the prospector was the basis of the industry, and always did my best to assist him. I am sanguine that if any new mines are to be discovered, they will be discovered only by prospectors. They are the foundation of the industry. Before a mine is taken over by a company, it must be discovered, worked and developed. Without the prospector there is no possibility of any progress being made in the industry beyond what occurs now. The Minister gave us facts with regard to State batteries. I am glad to know that these batteries are more active than they have been for many years. For a long time, when the industry was in the doldrums, the prospector was having anything but a happy time. My regret is that the Government have not seized the magnificent opportunity now offering. I wish to express my gratitude to the Minister for erecting a battery at Yalgoo. This gives about 100 prospectors an opportunity they did not enjoy before. When gold is so valuable as it is now, prospectors should be assisted to develop the industry. I am sorry to hear from the Minister that he proposes to suspend the carting subsidy. I understood him to say he was suspending the rebate.

The Minister for Mines: I am reducing the amount from 8d. per mile to 6d. per mile.

**Hon. M. F. TROY:** It used to be 1s. per ton per mile outside a radius of five miles, and now it has been reduced to 6d.

The Minister for Mines: You heard what the member for Hannans said he found.

**Hon. M. F. TROY:** Most of the things I found when Minister were what my officers told me. I am sanguine that whilst advantage may be taken of the facilities offering in every industry, the carting concession was not abused to any great extent in the gold-mining industry. I am closely in contact with the State battery system. I do not know any cases of prospectors who are carting ore merely to get the

subsidy. The unfortunate thing is that officials pick upon such cases in order to bring a charge against the whole industry.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I never found that the privilege was abused.

The Minister for Mines: I did not give that as a ground for readjustment. I gave the value of the product as the ground for the readjustment.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Those are not the real grounds. The grounds are that the Minister has not the money that was provided in earlier years. That is the most natural ground in the circumstances.

The Minister for Mines: Side by side with the value of the product.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister has erred in his judgment. Gold has appreciated in value, and hundreds of prospectors are endeavouring to find it, but many are only making a bare living. With gold at its present value it is possible to make a low-grade show pay. Hundreds of men are working on 2 or 3 dwt. ore which could not be worked but for the present high price of gold. These people would be severely handicapped if the Minister reduced the carting subsidy. It would mean that the properties would not be worked, although they would be worked as long as the men could make a living out of them. The Minister said the prospector was doing as well as any other worker. I admit some of them are doing pretty well, but there are hundreds of others who are not making a satisfactory living.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Many of them are getting nothing at all.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Speaking from personal knowledge, I can say some prospectors have not had a crushing for several years. I know of one man who put £5,000 back into the industry, and he has not had a crushing for five years. He has now spent all his money. He is not growling but is still pegging along. I do not know any body of people in Australia who make less agitation about their position than the prospectors. They are the most independent men I know of. They do not expect a return every month, and often do not get it over a stretch of years, but they hang on to the industry and live on the smell of an oil rag. Many of them get only kangaroo, damper and a little bacon to eat. The country should encourage such people for

it badly needs them. I cannot conceive why any Government should neglect them, and yet give sustenance to the fullest extent to people who would not walk outside the city boundary to look for a job. That has always been a matter of great concern to me. The Government discourage the independent, useful industrious section of the community, and attend to the wants of people who have never given much in the way of service to the country and are not likely to do so in the future. I have no objection to persons being helped as far as circumstances will permit, but no Government can be justified in giving the resources of the country to one section of the community and scant consideration to others. I should be glad to think that the prospectors were doing so well that they did not require assistance, but I am afraid that is not so on the part of many of them. Some of them started in the industry in the early nineties and are still working in it. They have their good times and their bad times. Surely when they are in difficulties they are entitled to as much help as is given to anyone else. The Government are giving sustenance to thousands of people in the closely settled areas, sustenance that runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds. They are housing people and otherwise providing for them. We have spent weeks passing legislation to assist them. The Government are giving sustenance to farmers to keep them on the land, and are supplying sustenance to group settlers. The Minister has placed people on abandoned group holdings and is paying them sustenance. Those people can also grow a little produce for their own needs. Sustenance and help are being given in many directions, but not to this section—a very industrious, deserving and enterprising section. I do not wish to be hostile to the Minister, but I wish to point out facts, and the facts are that the Government are not acting equitably if they grant consideration to one section and not to another section. The Minister will admit that no prospector in this country is receiving one penny of help by way of sustenance. I believe that the Minister has a very sympathetic interest in the industry. In several instances he has given me considerable help, but he does not give sustenance to prospectors presumably because the Government do not get the votes of those people. The Government

should grant assistance all round. I have no objection to their granting assistance to the farmers or to anyone else in need, but there is no equity in denying it to an important section who are equally deserving. I know hundreds of deserving prospectors, and in my opinion they are the salt of the earth. They ask for little, and yet they are doing a great work for this country. When gold is so valuable, it is extraordinary that thousands of men are not assisted to produce gold, which is so vital to the needs of the country at the present time. Here is an opportunity for the Minister. Just imagine the Government spending £12,000 on building a road to the Yanchep Caves, and then making cuts in the assistance granted to the mining industry!

The Minister for Mines: A cave is not unlike a mine.

Mr. Thorn: There are six miners working out there now.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is a wise retort! What has that to do with assisting the mining industry? Is it suggested that we should employ the miners on building palaces in Perth and roads to recreation resorts? That is a splendid way to help the country! Shall we pursue it?

Mr. Sampson: It is time those resorts were opened up. The country has sat back too long.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are getting away from the Mines Estimates.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I do not know whether the hon. member represents that part of the State, but if he does, it will always be backward while he represents it. I cannot conceive of the wisdom of building a road to the Yanchep Caves at a cost of £12,000 and at the same time cutting down the facilities and help to men in an industry who are keeping the back country open and building it up. I do not suppose the Minister for Mines is responsible for the expenditure on that road. Still it should be remembered that the prospectors are the frontier men of this country, and they should not be dropped in the interests of the people of the metropolitan area. Did I understand the Minister to say that he also intended to abolish free crushings? I hope that will not be done, either. It is a facility that ought not to be denied the prospectors. The Minister took pains to tell the Committee the losses on the State battery system.

Has not there been considerable loss on the railway system, on the Wyndham Meat works, on the Fremantle freezing works, on agriculture, on group settlement and on carrying superphosphate over the railways? Yet he comments on the loss on a facility that has done much to help the development of the country. I admit that the State battery system has shown a loss and I believe it will continue to show a loss, but if the system were abolished, the interests of the prospectors would be sacrificed. They have confidence in the management of the State batteries. There are some private batteries that enjoy the fullest confidence of the prospectors, but the men engaged on the State battery system have won the confidence of the prospectors, and deservedly so. The Minister has a fine body of men. They give very good service; they have to be very tactful, honest and straightforward. The Minister is lucky to have the right type of men. They have a very difficult task to perform, and they perform it very well indeed. I hope the Minister will give further consideration to the carting subsidy. He knows what a help it has been to men removed 40 or 50 miles from a battery. The industry has been greatly helped in that respect. Let me now say a few words about mining reservations. The department have given to individuals areas of country as mining reservations for the purpose of enabling those people to raise capital on them. In the conditions of the reservation there is a proviso that the lessee must employ a certain amount of labour. So far as I know there has not been a single case in which such labour has been employed. The reservation has been granted, but the conditions have been entirely ignored. I point out to the Minister and to the Committee that many of the reservations granted are not suitable propositions on which to raise capital. I do not think the lessees will have a chance of raising a penny of capital on many of them. Such reservations should be given with very great caution, particularly at the present time when men are prepared to work them. If a reservation is given for the purpose of enabling capital to be raised, a time limit should be imposed. The gentleman who mostly gets such reservations is Mr. — well, I will not mention his name, but he operates under the names of different companies. It should be quite

a reasonable condition that if, within 12 months of receiving the reservation, he cannot raise the necessary capital, the reservation should lapse. Certainly this State was greatly benefited by the raising of capital to develop Wiluna, but I do not think there is much hope of raising capital now, either here or abroad. There might have been an opportunity to raise capital in England but for the difficulties that have occurred there as well as here. We shall not be able to get much capital until the values of the products of our industries increase. If wool, wheat and other products commanded enhanced values to-morrow and gold remained at the present price, I am sure there would be a fair amount of money available for investment in the mining industry. I join with the member for Hannans (Hon. S. W. Munsie) in drawing the Minister's attention to the need for appointing an additional workmen's inspector. Until recently there were four operating in this State, one on the Murchison, one on the Mt. Margaret goldfield, and two on the Eastern goldfields. One of the workmen's inspectors on the Eastern goldfields is on leave and only one man is available to cope with the work. The workmen's inspectors have done their work well. They have proved valuable men as well as tactful men. They have not embarrassed either the industry or the management. In fact, from what I have heard, mine managers welcome the workmen's inspector as being a link between the manager and the men employed in the industry. I think the Minister would be doing right if he appointed another workmen's inspector. Mr. D'Arcy is the only one on the Eastern goldfields. If those inspectors had not been an aid to the industry, we could not urge the appointment of another one, but they have been a distinct aid. In my opinion they have been just as valuable as any other mining inspector. I suggest that they know as much of what is required and in some respects their knowledge is probably superior. I am very glad that gold is commanding such a high price, and I hope it will continue to do so. There has been considerable activity in the industry during the last 12 months. Owing to the depressed conditions elsewhere I believe the population on the goldfields has increased by 20 per cent. Hundreds of men have gone from Perth and Fremantle and even from the farming districts to engage in prospecting.

I have been struck with the number of farmers who have returned to the goldfields and have taken their wives and families with them. Now that gold is bringing a high price, let us get to work and help those people to obtain it. The Minister has given me some concessions, and the exceptions I have taken to-night have been taken because I consider it proper to ventilate such grievances in the interest of the goldfields. We do not know how long gold will remain at its present value. The Minister said the present price was due to the accumulation of gold in France and America. I know there are countries which have no great quantities of gold. We never know when circumstances will undergo a change. The accumulation of gold in America and France is not so much due to the action of the Governments of those countries, but to the fact that the people in other countries have decided to invest their money there. America and France are both looked upon as a safe place for the investment of money. It is probable that England may soon be regarded as a country in which it is safest to make investments. Whilst gold is at its present value I hope the department will remain very active. I am particularly concerned about the State battery system. I should like to see all the batteries operating full time. It may be embarrassing for the Minister to find the money required, but it ought to be found if possible. I should like to say a word of commendation for the Acting Superintendent of State Batteries. I have been rather surprised and gratified at the work he has done. We appreciate the manner in which the Minister has brought down his Estimates. All I ask is that he shall impress upon the Government the necessity for giving the same help to the gold mining industry as is being given to our other industries.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [8.32]: The position of the gold mining industry as disclosed by the Minister is brighter than it has been since I first became a member of this Chamber. The increase in the production of gold is most gratifying and the outlook for the industry has certainly improved. It is clear from the remarks of the Minister that the depression which has enshrouded the industry is showing signs of lifting. Without reflecting upon any other department, I wish to say that the Mines Department is to be commended for the efficiency of its offi-

cers. They are obliging and always willing to assist. No matter in what sphere their work may lie, they seem to understand how to discharge their duties. It is a very rare thing for an officer to be unable to answer any questions that may be put to him. They have certainly always given every consideration to any proposals I may have put before them. The Minister, too, has been fairly generous, and has given consideration to anything I have put before him. He has always treated the industry liberally. During the last two years, owing to the lack of funds, he has been unable to do what he would like for the industry. I have a few grievances of a parochial character to bring forward. In some cases the Minister has been a little over-generous to certain individuals. In that, he has acted in a way that is detrimental to the welfare of the industry. It does not pay for the Minister continually to lend a generous ear to those who may be termed fairly good tale spinners. That, however, seems to have been the case. Several individuals have been successful, owing to the manner in which they have presented their cases, in securing big concessions. Their assertions, however, have not been borne out by future events. I refer particularly to the continual exemptions that have been granted in the case of the Big Bell lease at Cue. Two years ago I made investigations in the department to find out what was being done. I think the member for Hannans was the Minister at the time when arrangements were made for the protection of the Big Bell leases. The lessee contended that he could bring about half a million of capital into the country and develop the property. From then up to now many exemptions have been granted, on the plea that the lessee is on the verge of getting the money, which, however, has not arrived. I do not know that a prospector could make much of a living out of the lease, although at the present price of gold he might do so. It is not right that the department should give concessions to an individual year after year without his giving some proof of his bona fides. Last March 12 months I inquired when the lease would be worked. I was informed by the department that a diamond drill or two were on the way out from England, and that money would shortly be forthcoming to start boring operations. It was also said that the lessee was to arrive that month.

As it happened, neither the drills, the money nor the lessee arrived, and the ground is still held up. Although there may be some reason for granting concessions to individuals who can furnish large sums of money, it is not right that they should be granted over a long period to persons who cannot justify the extension of such privileges to them. Around this lease is a piece of ground six miles square, which was reserved by the Government whilst they were assisting in boring operations on the lease. Although the lessee of the Big Bell has failed dismally to deliver the goods, the reserve still exists. Gold has been found upon it and certain prospectors desire to work it, but are unable to do so. The Minister should not go on giving protection in this case unless he has evidence that the statements of the lessee are about to mature. The Government should open up the country and give other people an opportunity to work it. Certain conditions are imposed upon these lessees but they never seem to be fulfilled. One concession was granted which absorbed the whole of the island in the Nannine Lake. The island has never been manned. It was to have been worked for six months and a large sum of money invested in it, but it was never worked. I understand that after 12 months steps are now being taken to forfeit the lease. It is not right that country should be held up by individuals who are merely tale spinners. The individual who got the Nannine island is certainly not the type to induce anyone to put money into a mining proposition. He has no reputation in the mining world. No one with any money would invest on his statements, and I cannot think why the department should have granted him this concession. If I had my way, people of that sort would never receive consideration. No one can say what will happen when men are out prospecting. They may be hungry today but to-morrow may be working payable ore. What is looked upon as a dud to-day may turn out to be a fine proposition a week hence. No one can say beyond the pick's point exactly what is to come. Neither companies nor individuals should be allowed to hold up large areas, and the Government themselves should not hold up areas such as I have described. I know of one case in which a man held up an area 18 months longer than he

originally asked for, and even now there is no sign of any money coming out to work the proposition. In introducing the Estimates the Minister gave no information as to the likelihood of sustenance being granted to bona fide prospectors. Until recently, at all events, nothing has been granted to them during the hon. gentleman's term of office. A peculiar anomaly has sprung up, one calling for immediate review. There are on the goldfields, as prospectors, men who have registered in Perth as unemployed, who have never done any prospecting in their lives before, but are in receipt of weekly sustenance, the allowance being paid to them in the portion of the State where they have expressed a desire to go prospecting. Some of these have, in fact, gone out. So we have the spectacle of a man without any knowledge of prospecting receiving that Government assistance, mean though it be, while bona fide prospectors, who have been in the bush all their lives and have been prospecting for the greater part of their lives, cannot get a penny in the way of sustenance. The Minister must admit that the position is unfair. In order to secure sustenance, the bona fide prospector on the goldfields would have to go to Perth, become registered as an unemployed, seek and secure State assistance, and have the payment transferred to that part of the State where he desires to prospect. The principle is absolutely wrong. A destitute prospector is deserving of as much consideration as any other person. He works for very little. When times are hard, he lives on the roughest of diet. And this goes on for years. Yet when he has a proposition of which he may make a success and in the development of which he desires some assistance, the Government tell him they have no money. Two hundred yards from him there may be some man without any knowledge of prospecting who is in receipt of Government assistance, small though it be in amount. I protest against this discrimination. The Minister for Mines should have prevailed upon the Treasurer to earmark some money for bona fide prospectors. One would have thought that the Minister for Mines would be alive to the need for such assistance. In this regard I think the hon. gentleman has been somewhat dilatory. A matter which I have brought under the notice of previous Ministers is the forfeiture of mining tene-

ments. For years I have held that the system which the law permits is wrong. There is a good deal of dignity about the prospector, notwithstanding his lowly circumstances. That a prospector should apply for the forfeiture of ground held by another is considered highly objectionable, even if the holder is not complying with the requirements of the mining law. A man may take up a mining tenement with every intention of working it, but may be prevented, by illness or lack of funds, from doing so. The man who applied for forfeiture in such a case would be regarded and described as a professional jumper, even though he was quite within his rights legally and perhaps morally as well. I suggest that the Minister adopt the policy which I have previously enunciated. There is a workman's inspector, and also an inspector of mines appointed by the Government. One of these inspectors might be empowered to call upon the lessee of any mining tenement to show cause why his block should not be forfeited. Then anyone desirous of obtaining a block which is not being worked would draw the inspector's attention to it. Thereupon the inspector would do his job. He would call the lessee before the warden, state the circumstances, and suggest forfeiture. The warden would then hear the holder, and give his decision. Jumping blocks causes animosity, and the community take sides and are at loggerheads. The best way of overcoming the difficulty is to confer upon an inspector the power I suggest. The Minister should bring in a Bill to amend the Act accordingly. Like the previous speaker, I am not quite clear as to what the Minister said regarding free crushing and carting and rebates at State batteries. I understand he intends to abolish the whole of the rebates on low-grade ores.

The Minister for Mines: I am suspending them. It takes only 4 dwts. to pay the charges.

Mr. MARSHALL: An all-round suspension is scarcely fair. If a proposition has been worked and its value proved by crushing, and the owner is notified that, the proposition having been proved, the rebate can no longer be allowed, no injury may be done to either the individual or the industry. But prospectors frequently cannot value a proposition until they have put through at least one crushing. In estimating what a crushing will go, prospectors will differ to



the extent of several weights. Thus a prospector might be caught, the gold produced being retained by the battery manager to meet crushing charges. At an outlying centre such as Jimblebah, the increase in the price of gold is more than eaten up by the increase in the cost of commodities. Yet such a place as Jimblebah is treated on the same basis as places more favourably situated. If exorbitant rates are charged to men at a remote centre like Jimblebah, there is not much inducement for them to continue work. I think the charge there is 14s. 6d. for crushing, with a deduction of 3½ dwts. per ton, while no rebate is allowed. The grounds on which the Minister argues that he is entitled to make the extra charge are grounds which I cannot understand.

The Minister for Mines: What grounds?

Mr. MARSHALL: The increased cost of running the battery.

The Minister for Mines: No. The ground is that the charge was fixed by the men themselves.

Mr. MARSHALL: That was not the Minister's contention the last time I spoke to him on the subject. He then said the Jimblebah battery was most expensive to work. I may mention that with the exception of one man, those now working on that lease are newcomers. I know that the original holders of the lease agreed to take the battery over, but finally failed to do so. I suggest that the Minister should make the best of a bad job. It might be argued that the Peak Hill battery, being 70 miles from the railway, should charge higher rates than the Meekatharra battery, which is on the railway. Now that the battery is there, I hope the Minister will see if he cannot fix the same charges as apply to other batteries. The question of workmen's inspectors also agitates my mind. There have been three or four recent instances, particularly in the bigger mines, where the services of the workmen's inspector were found to be very necessary. I am sorry to hear that the workmen's inspector who was at Meekatharra but is now on long service leave will not be replaced by another. At a centre like Wiluna, where the mines are being worked on a very large scale, great care and supervision are necessary to the welfare of the men in the mines. The Minister is scarcely fair in neglecting to provide for that supervision. I know nothing against

the Government inspector, except that his visits are not so frequent as those of the workmen's inspector, and his inspections are not made on the same lines. The men have much more confidence in the workmen's inspector. I can speak for the two men who have been on the Murchison. Probably they have no superiors in their office, and I do not think the Minister is doing right in neglecting to replace the workmen's inspector who has gone on holidays. The total number of workmen's inspectors has been reduced to two, and extensive economies have been made, and so I think the Minister might well replace the absent inspector by a temporary officer until the official himself returns to his duties. The men have a great deal of confidence in the inspector, and also he is well liked by the employers.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot have him if he is away on leave.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, but he ought to be replaced.

The Minister for Mines: I offered to appoint in an honorary capacity the secretary of the union or anyone else who might be nominated to take the inspector's place while he is on leave.

Mr. Corboy: And I think you offered to pay his travelling expenses as well.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, I did.

Mr. MARSHALL: I did not know of that. I should like to see something done, because we do not want any break in the supervision that has obtained there for many years. Although the inspector is on leave, I think he is still resident at Meekatharra, and consequently his advice would be always available to anyone who might be temporarily occupying his position. The State battery service is overtaxed. It is a pity that in the past when money was available for the purpose, the policy of reconditioning these batteries was not more vigorously pursued. I want again to enter a protest such as I did when first I became a member of this House, a protest against the policy of removing or shifting or selling State batteries. It is a stupid policy, foolish in the extreme. Only recently I found that the Mt. Keith battery had been removed piecemeal. To-day there are 20 or 30 prospectors there, some of them on fairly good ore, and I am expecting correspondence at any moment asking for a State battery. Then at Quinn's there are 30 or 40 men. At one

time there was a beautiful 10-head mill there, but it has been taken away piecemeal, and to replace it would cost £5,000 or £6,000. To shift or sell State batteries just because there is a bit of a lull in a district, is foolish in the extreme.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: One State battery was shifted altogether, and the Government themselves knew nothing about it.

Mr. MARSHALL: Due to lack of supervision.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They could not keep caretakers there.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, but they could get one of their travelling officers to keep an eye on these properties. The time is coming when it will cost thousands of pounds to replace State batteries that have been taken away.

The Minister for Mines: I hope you are right.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am sure I am. It is wrong to interfere with any State batteries. It is much more economical to look after them than to sell for a nominal amount and subsequently have to replace them. In regard to the carting subsidy, I understand from the Minister he is reducing it to 6d. with the right to increase it in deserving cases. It is unfortunate that the Minister cannot be supplied with sufficient money to maintain the subsidy at its present amount. I agree that it has been abused more or less, but certainly it has been very beneficial to many honest prospectors. Assistance will have to be given in some of the places where there is no State battery at hand. In conclusion I hope the Minister will do his best to get some money provided for the granting of sustenance to bona fide prospectors. Even if he cannot manage to secure the amount that has been allowed in the past, I hope he will make some arrangements whereby bona fide prospectors who require sustenance will be able to get at least as much as is given to those who find themselves unemployed in the city. I desire to thank the officers of the department for their generous treatment of all matters I have had to submit to them, and to thank the Minister for his kindly consideration of proposals that I have submitted to him.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [9.12]: I should like through the Minister to thank all the officers of the department,

both at the head office and in my electorate, for their kindness and courtesy throughout the past year. It is a pleasure to have dealings with officers of the Mines Department. I recognise that the Minister is up against a tough proposition in trying to get money from the Treasurer for the mining industry. But there never was a more suitable moment for spending a few pounds in making it possible for men to get gold out of the ground.

The Minister for Mines: There is never a more suitable time to spend money than when you have bills to pay, but if you have not the money, you cannot spend it.

Mr. CORBOY: But while gold is at its present price, everything should be done to enable men to get gold. There is one action which I think is for the Minister's own decision, and which I will appeal to him to handle carefully before finally deciding what he is going to do. I refer to rebates. I agree with the Minister that perhaps there has been some abuse in regard to the crushings at public batteries, both as to carting and rebates. The State batteries have frequently been victimised by over-optimistic men in the industry. But I think the Minister should not put into force in their entirety his ideas in regard to rebates on crushings that come in for treatment at State or subsidised batteries. I agree that perhaps it is time action was taken in regard to ore from leases that have had a number of crushings. They have surely discovered after a number of crushings whether the dirt is worth pulling to the battery or not. In regard to new finds, however, or the first two or three crushings, which are really test crushings to ascertain whether the show is worth while, the Minister might give further consideration. I appeal to him to consider the matter with a view to framing the regulations in such a way that a man who is just opening up a new show might receive assistance with his first few crushings at any rate at what has been the standard of rebates. When men have had a lot of crushings, it is only reasonable that they should pay a fair charge for the facilities available to them. Another matter is the great congestion that exists—the Minister is even better acquainted with it than I am—regarding crushing facilities available to men who have no plant of their own. I refer to prospectors and small leaseholders. Those men have to wait up-

wards of six or seven months before they can get their dirt crushed.

The Minister for Mines: Some of them have been lucky that they had to wait.

Mr. CORBOY: I know what the Minister has in mind. Some who might have had their stone crushed four or five months ago are lucky that it is being crushed only now because the price of gold is higher. But there are men who cannot get their ore crushed to-day, and in four or five months' time the price might be down.

The Minister for Mines: It might be higher.

Mr. CORBOY: I hope it will. In fairness to the department I wish to say that in one instance where there was sound reason for doing the utmost possible to get the dirt treated without delay, arrangements were made for it to be crushed at other than a public battery or subsidised battery. It was crushed at a private battery. I have no grievance against the department, but if the Minister could convince the Treasurer that he ought to find a few pounds for the purpose, it would be a good opportunity to increase the crushing facilities.

The Minister for Mines: How, by establishing new batteries?

Mr. CORBOY: I do not think that is necessary. When the Minister recently returned from the Eastern States a statement by him was published in the Press about a one-stamp mill. At present the Coolgardie battery is hung up practically every twenty-four hours for periods of days at a time in order to clean up small parcels. A mill like that should concentrate on dealing with big crushings, and the provision of small crushing plants to handle only the small parcels of prospectors—10 to 15 tons—would ease the pressure considerably. It is not economical to hold up a mill for small crushings.

The Minister for Mines: It would be better to have them where the ore was produced and save cartage.

Mr. CORBOY: I agree with that. I hope the Minister will find that it is more economical to employ a man on the spot rather than pay the cartage subsidy. If we had one-stamp mills at key positions in the outer goldfields, it would be an improvement. I understand a one-stamp mill can be run by one man. Is not that so?

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. CORBOY: That would be more economical than paying carting subsidies to have the ore carted to Coolgardie. The small mills would not cost much. I think it would be possible to erect three or four of them in key positions in the outer goldfields for less than £1,000. If that is so, the congestion could be eased considerably and greater satisfaction would be given to the men who have crushings and who at present have to wait six or seven months to get their stone treated. I hope the Minister will act promptly, because now is the time. Many parcels of ore are waiting to be crushed, but it is impossible for the Coolgardie and other State batteries to deal with them. While the price of gold is high, we should do all in our power to enable the men who are waiting for crushings to get a decent return for their labour.

Mr. Marshall: You get no tailings from the State batteries.

Mr. CORBOY: I am only suggesting that they should be used for prospectors' parcels and so on. If a man puts through 10 or 15 tons of ore and finds it is of good grade, he will take the bulk of the ore to a battery where he will not lose the tailings.

The Minister for Mines: In that way he can prove whether the dirt will pay him.

Mr. CORBOY: I should like him to have an opportunity to prove, on the spot, as it were, whether it will pay to take the ore out of the mine. The loss of tailings on a 10 or 15 tons trial parcel would not be a serious matter. It would be a serious matter if he carted the ore to a battery 100 or 150 miles distant, even if he got the tailings, and discovered that he was showing a loss on the job. I appeal to the Minister not merely to continue to show the sympathy he has manifested to prospectors, but to make some effort to give them a better deal in the matter of sustenance. I appreciate the difficulties under which the Minister is labouring, but the rate of sustenance at present paid is so low that it does not amount to what one might term a mere existence. If the Minister could arrange for an increase in the sustenance rate, not raising it to anything extravagant, but somewhere near to what the Commonwealth pay by way of invalid and old-age pensions, namely, 15s. or 17s. 6d., it is the least we should offer to men who go into the bush where they have long distances

to cart and heavy freights to pay on their goods. At present single men are being paid 10s. and married men 7s. a week. I realise that the wives of married men get the other 7s., but to ask a man to go into the bush and pay the prices he has to pay in those areas on 7s. or 10s. a week is asking him to accomplish what is almost impossible.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: A prospector in the bush now cannot get that amount. He has to be here on unemployed sustenance first.

Mr. CORBOY: That is another matter, which I understand the Minister has in hand. I hope he is giving it attention.

The Minister for Mines: Many of those men are already being assisted in a private way that you or I know nothing of.

Mr. CORBOY: I am aware of that.

The Minister for Mines: In any case the prospector would get no direct benefit from increased State help, because the other fellow would withdraw his assistance.

Mr. CORBOY: Almost all the prospectors have some backing, because they could not possibly manage on 10s. or 7s. a week. There are many syndicates of two or three men backing prospectors, but quite a lot of them are almost as hard up as are the men in the bush. Consequently any help that could be granted would assist them.

The Minister for Mines: Many tickets in Tattersalls are bought by people who are hard up.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so, but they seldom win. Generally people who do not need the money win the prizes. I again appeal to the Minister to give further consideration to the question of rebates. I fear that he will inflict considerable hardship on deserving prospectors if he makes a cast-iron rule. I hope he will so frame the regulations that he will be able to take the rebate from those who do not deserve it, but will be able still to give it to those who are getting out trial crushings and testing new country. I ask him to convey my best thanks to the officers of his department for their kindness to me during the past year.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.27]: I desire the Committee to consider a phase of mining production. I acknowledge it is a subject about which I do not know very much, but I ask for greater co-operation between the Goldfields Water Supply and the Mines Department. I learn that around Coolgardie

and between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie there are dozens of alluvial flats that could be operated.

Hon. A. McCallum: Are those flats situated in the Swan electorate?

Mr. SAMPSON: They could be treated by sluicing. I urge that water should be provided in those areas at the same rate as that at which it is supplied in Kalgoorlie for sluicing the residues. That is a reasonable request, and if conceded it would result in great opportunities for employment. I am informed that a return of two to three dwts. would pay, but I shall not discuss that aspect because it is bordering on the technical. If water were supplied from the goldfields main, good results would follow. I think the charge for water for sluicing at Kalgoorlie is 1s. 6d.

The Minister for Works: For what kind of sluicing?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have already acknowledged my limited knowledge of gold mining.

Mr. Corboy: Then what are you talking about?

Mr. SAMPSON: The working of alluvial around Coolgardie. I hope the two departments will co-operate and make it possible for those alluvial flats to be profitably worked.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Council of Industrial Development, £950; State Labour Bureau, £4,525; Police, £209,207—agreed to.*

*Vote—Forests, £15,189:*

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [9.30]: I had hoped that the Minister would make a statement concerning the sandalwood industry. In the southern portion of the State this is under a control different from what exists in the North. The few residents in the North who gain a livelihood from sandalwood-getting have some cause for complaint. A little while ago two firms were engaged in handling sandalwood from the North, and they were using it for the distillation of oil. One of these companies, however, went out of business.

Mr. Marshall: The other swallowed it.

Mr. COVERLEY: That particular section of the sandalwood industry is now within the control of one company, which therefore has an open go. The cutters have

had no end of trouble with that enterprise from every point of view. About two years ago the company sent an officer to the North-West to interview most of the cutters, and make contracts for the supply of a certain tonnage of wood each year on the basis, I believe, of £27 a ton. Everything went well until 40 or 50 tons had been delivered. This took only a little while. The agents in the local ports of Broome and Derby then intimated to the cutters that no more wood was required. The men thought they were entitled to dispose of the tonnage they had agreed to supply, and went on until they had fulfilled their contracts. The agents then told them to ship a few more tons, and kept them going with small quantities. On each occasion when the shipment arrived in Perth the price was reduced. The cutters kept on writing to the company, but although they began to do so two years ago, the company have not had the courtesy to reply to them. On every occasion the reply has come through an agent. The price has been cut down from £27 to £22, and no explanation has been given except by the agent. He has said, "This is all that the wood is worth and all that I can pay." I gather from the department that the Government have no control over the company, and that the undertaking was not to guarantee to take any particular tonnage in a year. The agreement appears to be of a slipshod nature. The company seem to be able to buy sandalwood at their discretion. If they want 1,000 tons they can take it, or a lesser quantity if they so desire. That is an astonishing way to control the industry in the North. If the Government want to give a monopoly in any particular industry, they should take into consideration those who are engaged in supplying the raw material. The men are not able to protect themselves and the Government should consider their interests. Some stipulated price should be insisted upon if the company desire to control the business. If the Minister is unable to make a more reasonable agreement, he should give the cutters a free hand to market their wood where they choose. I admit that owing to the troubles in China, the industry is in a parlous condition. The cutter in the South, however, is afforded protection. He is allowed so many tons of wood per annum and the firms have to keep up to their agree-

ment. The men I speak of are 2,000 miles away and receive no consideration. I have in my possession several letters I can show to the Minister, dealing with the discourtesy of the company in not sending replies. The Minister may see them if he desires. He may see fit to alter the arrangement, or make a statement with reference to the local sale of sandalwood derived from north of the 20th parallel. We are told that sandalwood in the North contains more oil than that which is grown in the South, and for that reason is kept for local distillation purposes. Many hundreds of tons of really good mature sandalwood go to waste in the North every year as a result of bush fires and white ants. Several residents up there depend on this business for a livelihood. They are far away from civilisation and have no organisation to help them. The Minister should, therefore, extend to them every possible consideration.

**THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [9.35]: This is the first time I have heard of the difficulty referred to by the member for Kimberley. If he will supply me with the information in his possession, I will look into the matter.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £607,902:*

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [9.38]: Before we pass this vote I hope the Minister will give members some information concerning the operations of the department.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [9.39]: There is little I can say in connection with the Child Welfare Vote.

Hon. M. F. Troy: There is a lot to be said; it is the most active department of State.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Apart from the unemployment question, there is very little alteration in the Child Welfare Vote compared with previous years. Unfortunately, this is not the only expenditure that constitutes a very heavy drain on the resources of the State under existing conditions. The Child Welfare Department which, in the past, controlled unemployment, is not restricted to such things as monetary

assistance to women, subsidies to orphanages and so on, amounting in round figures to over £100,000 a year. These payments are largely on a fixed scale and made under fixed conditions, and are to an extent beyond our control, unless we alter the amounts allowed to the institutions and to people who have been and still are receiving assistance from the Government. On the question of unemployment I will give a few figures so that there may be no misunderstanding. Unemployment is due to what is called a depression. As evidence of this I would say that in January, 1930, there were 380 families receiving sustenance at a weekly cost of £560. When the Government took office there were 1,400 married men and 300 single men receiving sustenance, and to-day all told there are 13,505 receiving sustenance at a total weekly cost of approximately £14,000. We had 2,572 subsidised farm hands. In view of the approaching harvest, when the normal requirements of farmers ought to be met by the usual available farm labour, it has been decided to withdraw these subsidies, because we consider that the purpose for which they were first applied has been served. The scheme has proved extremely helpful. By the time it expires, on the 14th of the month, the cost will have run into £20,000. One would imagine from some of the criticism that has been offered that this did not cost anything, and that nothing was done. It is only that which is nearest at hand that is ever looked upon as having been done, and only that which can be seen that is taken notice of. Most of the farmers viewed the matter from the standpoint that this was costing the Government only 10s. a week, but during the period covered by the scheme the cost was altogether £20,000. This shows that we have not disregarded the agricultural industry. With the object of lifting some of the burden of unemployment, we have endeavoured to provide relief undertakings and put men on to real work. That might have been done at the outset, but no one anticipated that the conditions would prevail for so long. We were hopeful that instead of things getting worse each week they would improve. The position, however, has not improved either here or anywhere else. As I am charged only with the responsibility of controlling this department, I have not set myself the task of solving the problem as it affects the rest of Australia or the rest of the world. We are facing this difficulty,

and I think the Government have done their best under the conditions prevailing to relieve those who were unfortunately thrown out of employment during the last two years. The relief that has been granted in this State is the most liberal granted in Australia. I know of only one higher scale in any part of this continent, and that is the amount allowed in Queensland for a man and his wife only—14s. 6d. per week, as against our 14s. Every other part of our scale of relief is higher than the corresponding allowance anywhere else in Australia. We have also assisted in the direction of providing special contracts for the supply of milk and bread. People in receipt of relief have been supplied with milk at 2½d. per pint, as against a much higher price through the ordinary channels. Bread has been supplied to people on relief at 3½d. per 2lb. loaf, as against the 5d. and 5½d. paid by the ordinary householder. We have also helped with firewood supplies, at a cost of about £1,350 in the metropolitan area alone. The question of the conditions applying to relief work is one on which I have conferred with the Public Works Department, but the matter of the actual application is one for that department. I am not charged with the responsibility of controlling works, and I do not think that would be practicable. However, the Minister for Works and I have been in close conference, and have tried to arrive at conditions which, while not such as one would expect to apply in normal periods, are at least, in connection with relief work, better than those obtaining in any other part of Australia, and even better than those obtaining in New Zealand, which is boasted to be a prosperous country whilst we are suffering from depression. Our task is difficult, owing not only to the fact that we have not money readily available, but because private enterprise and business concerns are not able to provide employment now as in the past. Credit has been restricted, for reasons known to most people. The banking institutions might be able to explain exactly why but the fact remains that credit is not available to the same extent for ordinary purposes as it has been in the past. This, of course, means unemployment; and the responsibility is then thrown on the Government. Our task, I repeat, has been most difficult; and we have been reluctantly compelled to restrict the relief we would like to give, simply because of the fact that we

have not the necessary funds. I ask hon. members to accept my assurance that the restriction is not due to any lack of desire on the part of the Government to render more help. It is due simply to our inability to do more. That is all I can say on the subject at this stage. I hope that before the end of the financial year arrives, our relief works will not be operating to the same extent as to-day.

**HON. A. McCALLUM** (South Fremantle) [9.50]: It is a shocking state of affairs when a small community such as ours, a mere handful of some 400,000 people, has to expend at the rate of three-quarters of a million per annum in unemployment relief. The expenditure is enormous for so small a community. According to the figures just quoted by the Minister, when the present Government came into office there were 2,000 on sustenance, and now there are 13,500. This is the Ministry that was going to find work for all! Ministers owe their positions on the Treasury bench to the promise made by their leader of work for everybody. And now we find this state of affairs.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They smile!

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes. The position in thousands of homes must be known to all hon. members. It is pitiful to listen to the stories which people are compelled to tell you when they are seeking relief. The poverty and destitution now existing here must, from all appearances, increase. People have been living on their scanty reserves. Many of them have disposed of all the assets they had, have gradually sold their furniture, and are now right down to bedrock. They have nothing but the sustenance to live on. Their credit is exhausted with all their friends. They have worn out what clothes they did have. One meets around the city of Perth and at the port of Fremantle men formerly thought to be comfortably off, respectably and neatly dressed in the past, now right down on their uppers. It is a pitiful sight. And when one looks for some hope to hold out to these people, the future shows nothing to give them heart to carry on. The Minister has not suggested that the position is likely to improve. The latest scheme of the Government for paying men on work in the country the amount of sustenance and a little more, practically reduces to the sus-

tenance level that large section which looks to the Government for employment.

The Minister for Railways: It will be all right next month, according to the Prime Minister.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister may hold it out as a hope that he is looking for someone else to do things. However, it is the responsibility of the State Government to attend to the job themselves, instead of relying upon others. The Government secured their position on the Treasury bench by means of the undertaking, broadcast by their leader and quoted in all their campaign literature, that if returned to power he would provide work for all. There was to be work for the workless, land for the landless, and homes for the homeless. The only thing he stopped short of was a promise that he would provide children for the childless.

Mr. Sleeman: He will promise that next time.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: These promises were broadcast everywhere, and they have landed the country in the condition in which it now finds itself. Thousands of homes have become destitute through reliance on empty election promises. Undoubtedly thousands of our citizens are now compelled to exist on a level hardly removed from that of the Chinese coolie.

The Minister for Railways: They are better off here than under the Labour Government in South Australia.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I doubt that very much. There is no other State in which so large a section of the people are on broken time, on the short working week, as in Western Australia.

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is more want and poverty and destitution per head of the population in this State than in any other State of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Railways: That is only an assertion.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have been through the Eastern States twice since Christmas, and have examined the situation at first hand. I have mixed with the people out of work there. I have seen for myself.

The Minister for Railways: You must have had a pretty good audience in South Australia.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: South Australia is probably in a worse position than any

other part of this continent, because it has had five years of drought, and is a State practically dependent upon primary production. Moreover, it was the policy of the previous South Australian Government to spend millions of money on the conversion of the railway system, and now there is nothing for the railways to haul. South Australia's position is utterly exceptional. In New South Wales and Victoria there is nothing approaching the poverty that one sees here. Broken time operates in Western Australia, but the unions will not tolerate it in New South Wales. Before any industry can be put on short time there, a special board of inquiry has to be set up for the purpose. And there have been very few of such boards. I speak from personal examination of the situation in Western Australia. A visitor to a town is not likely to see as much poverty as a resident sees. Living here, and being well-known at the port, I may see more than most people see. However, my position in that respect is not singular. I do not think there is a member of this Chamber, whether representing a metropolitan or a country constituency, but must be deeply impressed with the want and poverty existing among our people. I see it in the country as well as in the towns. Numbers of men, I am told by my representative, call at my farm offering to work for tucker only. There are very hard cases of poverty in the country. I endorse the recent suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition that instead of extending the sustenance level, it would be better to let some of our people live on a decent level and meet some of their ordinary requirements. The Minister for Works told a deputation that he intended to extend the system as much as he could throughout the Government service. That policy has, I believe, been somewhat modified; but there are men who have been in the Government service for many years and now find themselves down to the level of getting just a little over the sustenance rate. It is a pitiful state of affairs altogether. I do not know what the Government propose to do to remedy it. The policy of the Government is to meet criticism by saying, "If you condemn what we put up, just tell us your alternative." It is easy for the Government to ask the Opposition to propound a policy for them, but that is not the function of an Opposition. The present Government undertook to do things. They

said there was plenty of money available, and only good management was required. When proposals were submitted by the Commonwealth to provide money, the Premier denounced them, spragged the wheel, and prejudiced the public mind against them. He has no policy of his own, no idea of how to meet the situation. He simply condemns what others put up. He is not only unable to carry out his own promises, but he has done his utmost to prevent other people giving effect to their ideas. There is no doubt he has to carry a big share of the responsibility for the condition in which the people find themselves at the moment. And his wild promises made during the election were echoed by his supporters from one end of the country to the other. I wish to refer to this new provision that is made in the conditions under which sustenance is rendered available. The Minister insists upon signatures being given before anyone is paid sustenance. This provides that in the event of their coming into money or property accruing to them from any source other than ordinary wages, they are to refund the sustenance they have drawn. I do not know where the Minister gets that idea, what bright intellect has devised such a proposal. But if the individual who signs this undertaking happens at any time to come into money other than ordinary wages, the Government can claim a refund of the amount he has received in sustenance. I would not cavil at the winner of a Tattersall's sweep being asked to refund the sustenance he had had, but there is quite a number of men and women who have been paying into insurance to draw at a certain age, and have put their savings into the policy. I know of a number of parents who have paid premiums in order that their children might draw a sum at a given age, in some instances so that they might be equipped with the tools necessary for an apprenticeship. But this agreement means that if a young fellow were to come into a sum of money as the result of past thrift on the part of his parents, the Government could claim a refund of any sustenance he might have had. That is a penalty on the thrifty, while the indolent and careless are allowed to go free. It would be sounder if the Government allowed such people to get off their sustenance, and let them keep any money they might come into later by means such as I have suggested. Are the Government not going to take into



account all the debts these people may have incurred? The sustenance does not meet all domestic requirements. Boots and clothes have to be paid for, and the sustenance will not cover all that. Are not these people to have their money for clothes or to replenish their homes with necessary linen and so forth after they have been out of work for a year or two? The whole proposal will inflict a great hardship. A person might be compelled to sell his home, being unable to keep up his payments. The money he has got for the home would be something other than wages, and so the department could claim it. It is wrong that the department should look for the repayment of sustenance under such circumstances.

The Minister for Railways: It applies only to sustenance which is not worked for.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I should not imagine that you would take it from anyone who has worked for his sustenance.

The Minister for Railways: It does not apply to many.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, it does, for there are thousands of people receiving sustenance who are not working for it. The Minister said there were 13,500 on sustenance.

The Minister for Railways: Do not deliberately mis-state the position. Those 13,500 are on sustenance or working for sustenance.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Where is the misrepresentation? The Minister said that there were 13,500 on sustenance. He will not argue that there are 13,500 working for the Government.

The Minister for Railways: No, but they are not all working for their sustenance.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Thousands of people are getting sustenance without working for it. The Minister knows that. No one would imagine that after a man had worked for money he would be made to repay it.

The Minister for Railways: But it would not apply to the 13,500 I mentioned.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Not to the lot perhaps, but it would apply to thousands.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: To enforce such conditions on people who may be coming into a few pounds after months and years of poverty, and in face of the many claims that will be made upon them, to penalise them in such a manner is altogether unreasonable. I do not know the position at

Blackboy and Hovea, how many men have gone out there to these works, but there have been 1,200 or 1,500 men in camp there idle. This State is pouring out just on three quarters of a million per annum under this heading. It is an enormous expenditure.

The Minister for Railways: Did you say those men were idle?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: For the best part of their time they are idle. It has been useless work.

The Minister for Railways: That is not the point.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The work they are doing is useless. It is absolute extravagance to construct roads through National Park.

The Minister for Railways: Is it extravagance to provide wood for the unemployed?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: In Fremantle work has been found for the unemployed without establishing camps, and a wood supply has been provided by local committees. The State is not getting value for the expenditure, which is an enormous drain on its resources. I know that it is impossible to get 20s. in the pound value for expenditure under such schemes, but a much better return could have been obtained. Roads in the National Park! A road to Yanchep Caves! Sending men into the bush to work for 1½ or two days a week and then loaf around the camp for the rest of the time, and expect to get a fair return for the money! It is not in human nature to give a fair return under such conditions. To say that the work at National Park and Yanchep Caves was undertaken because it was handy to the city will not bear examination, because there are plenty of essential works handy to the city that must be done sooner or later if Perth is to grow. Those works have been allowed to stand over because there is no money available, and yet money can be found for the development of pleasure resorts. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) stated a few nights ago that the Yanchep road had been built, not merely to develop a pleasure resort, but to serve some good land. The pronouncement of the Chairman of the State Gardens Board flatly contradicts that. In his mind there is no doubt that the main objective of the work is to attract tourists and develop the caves.

The Minister for Lands: To prevent people from going out of the State to spend their money.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There are not many people with so much money to spend that they have to go out of the State to get rid of it. That statement will not bear examination.

The Minister for Lands: You will admit it has happened in the past.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I admit that nothing of the sort is happening at present.

The Minister for Lands: But it will happen again in future.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Works are required in the metropolis which should be put in hand, but they are held up owing to lack of funds, and yet the luxuries and frills I have mentioned can be undertaken. I get heartily sick of the whole business. The Government have nothing to suggest for this great section of 13,500 people. The total has risen from 2,000 since the present Government took office, and they have no idea how the problem is to be solved. Yet they saddle the community with an expenditure of nearly £750,000 annually. It is a helpless and pitiful position for the Cabinet to be in, and it is more pitiful for those who are condemned to live under the Government's scheme. The tragedy is the young men of 18 to 25 who should be gaining a footing in some avenue of employment. What are their prospects? What hope is there for them? The outlook is disheartening indeed. We look for some policy or some idea from the Government, and we find none. There is nothing to maintain the morale of the people. There is the same wet blanket that the Government are throwing over everything, thus further depressing the spirits of the people. The Government gave an assurance to the Premiers' Conference that the whole of the money would be spent on works that would give a quick return. Can the Government name one work that will give a quick return? I can easily understand why the work of drainage and the schemes initiated in the South-West were undertaken, and why the men on sustenance here were transferred there and told that, unless they accepted the work, they would be denied sustenance. It means the transfer of this expenditure from revenue to loan. Later the Premier will say, "Look how I have reduced expenditure. In October I was spending at the rate of three-quarters of a million a year on sustenance, and now sustenance is down to £50,000 or £100,000. I have saved that much." Instead of that he is merely passing

the expenditure on to posterity. Many years must elapse before much of the work is reproductive, if ever it becomes reproductive, and not nearly 20s. in the pound value will be obtained for it. Fancy single men going into the bush and working for two days in the week and remaining idle for the rest of it, coming back then for another two days' work and remaining idle for the rest of the week! How is it possible to get a fair return for the expenditure, or to make the job a payable one? How can it be made a fair charge against loan money, upon which the people of the State will have to pay interest?

Mr. Griffiths: Is it not better than to get the dole and do nothing for it?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not advocating the payment of the dole for no return. I am arguing against that. I want the State to get value for the money paid.

Mr. Griffiths: That is what we want.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is not possible under this scheme.

Mr. Brown: You ought to suggest something.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is not the function of the Opposition to supply the policy. The Government have no policy, but plenty of promises. Where are the promises now?

Mr. Brown: Where is the money?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: They said they had plenty of money.

Mr. Griffiths: It is all spent.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: In their leaflets members opposite said there was plenty of money. It was said that everyone else could manage things but the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Premier. Now that we have got the management that members opposite sought to bring about, what has been done with the power that has been gained?

Mr. Griffiths: You left a nice mess when you got out.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: A nice mess they have made of things. It is a pretty state of affairs. One can hardly imagine that things could have reached so bad a state in so short a time. Two years ago conditions were fairly prosperous; now we have reached a stage of despondency. I should like to hear from the Government what their policy is. Their only policy, if it can be called one, is that they have to wait until they can get on the London money market. They can hold out no hope for the unemployed until then. It will be many a long year before that

market is open to Australia. If the unemployed are to wait until then, many men and women will die of starvation and many families will be rendered destitute for the rest of their days. The Premier says he must borrow some money before he can alter the position. That is the cry of despair, an admission of helplessness, a clear declaration that there is nothing ahead. We were told that once the Mitchell Government got into office all would be well, that there would be work and prosperity for all. The Premier himself said, "What I have done before I can do again; this is no idle boast." The people have had their eyes opened and understand how they were deceived. It is not very satisfactory to remind them of the past. Even now the Government should show some way out of the difficulty, should say what they will do to relieve the situation. Instead of doing that they are ever bringing a larger section of the community down to this level. If in another two years there is no improvement, the best part of the community will be down to the sustenance level. There has been an increase of over 11,000 persons who have been brought to that level in two years. In the last six months the increase has been enormous. I do not know what will happen if we go on at this rate for another two years. If the present policy, if it can be called one, is followed, it must magnify the trouble. I cannot help expressing my disgust and disappointment that the Government have no policy to announce. All they intend to do is to continue administering the situation as they find it. If we could go amongst the people and tell them that Governments are now formulating a policy to relieve the situation, there would be something for the people to look forward to. I make another appeal to the Minister to reconsider the objectionable clause he has put into the sustenance scheme. Those who have coming to them a little insurance money and may thus be getting a little income, should not find this money seized by the Government. That much should be left to them to re-establish themselves and regain a little self-respect and self-reliance, instead of being forced to continue on the sustenance level.

**MR. ANGELO** (Gascoyne) [10.28]: I am sure members have listened with interest to the remarks of the member for South Fremantle. I am pleased to note the great

amount of sympathy he has shown for the unemployed. We have also listened to his condemnation of the methods of the Government in trying to get these people back to work. We agree with his remarks to a certain extent, but why does he stop short there? He has shown his sympathy for the unemployed, but why does he not give us the benefit of his experience and knowledge. He has not suggested anything. Why cannot he drop party politics at such a time as this? Why cannot he tell us how these men can best be employed and how the money can best be used? Why cannot he do what leaders of his party have done in Great Britain and other places, sink party politics for the time being?

**Mr. Marshall**: You have no policy to sink. We did have a policy.

**Mr. Raphael**: You have sunk the workers' conditions into the mud.

**The CHAIRMAN**: Order! I must ask members to cease interjecting. I do not mind an interjection now and then, but if they are going to be continuous I shall have to take drastic action.

**Mr. ANGELO**: I appeal to the able leaders on the other side to help us in this crisis, to show their sympathy and love for the State by dropping party politics for the time being. Why cannot they give us the benefit of their advice?

**Hon. P. Collier**: Has there ever been a Parliament in Western Australia which has been characterised by less Opposition criticism than this one?

**Mr. ANGELO**: No. I quite agree with the Leader of the Opposition there. We are all grateful to him. But why should not the Government have the benefit of the experience and brains on the Opposition side of the Chamber?

**Hon. P. Collier**: You cannot call it criticism when a member expresses his opinion. You have had more than a fair deal as regards criticism.

**Mr. ANGELO**: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has criticised the Government. He has said that everything they have done is wrong. Surely he knows what is the right thing to do? Then why not, at an abnormal time like this, give us some constructive criticism, and suggest to us what should be done?

**Hon. A. McCallum**: But you told the people we did not know anything.

**Mr. ANGELO**: Nothing of the kind.

**HON. J. CUNNINGHAM** (Kalgoorlie) [10.32]: Realising that we are asked to review an expenditure of approximately £750,000 on child welfare and outdoor relief, we are entitled to ask the Minister what he is doing with regard to unemployment on the goldfields. A few months ago I had occasion to approach his department not with reference to the goldfields unemployed but with reference to the number of people coming in there from the coastal areas and from the Eastern States. At that time goldfields residents were called upon to meet the full cost of unemployment relief. We got nothing whatsoever from the Minister, and I do not know that the hon. gentleman has been too liberal since. I am inclined to think that the Minister should treat the unemployed people who go to the goldfields areas, on a similar basis to that adopted in the case of metropolitan residents out of work. On the goldfields we do not mind doing our best for our people who are out of work, but we object to having to carry the whole responsibility of strangers coming into the district. It was mentioned quite recently that the Minister's department had been making available railway passes to permit men out of work in the metropolitan area to reach the goldfields and seek employment there. The granting of railway passes is quite all right; but unless the Minister is also prepared to make sustenance available on the goldfields at the same rate as in the metropolitan area, he should cut out those railway passes.

The Minister for Railways: Your statement has been proved to be incorrect. We asked for a single instance, and not one could be found.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM:** There are instances.

The Minister for Railways: Not instances of men getting free passes to go to the goldfields to look for work. You have been asked to provide instances.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM:** How did the Minister ask for instances? He asked for a man who was on the track. If a man goes to the department for a free pass, will he be asked to substantiate the remarks which have been made? The man might require a pass the next week, and what would happen then? The Minister has got him out of the metropolitan area, and without any money; and the responsibility of susten-

ance is thrown on people who are doing their best for the goldfields unemployed. Until recently there was another gentleman in the Ministry—I refer to Mr. Keenan. In accordance with their policy of cutting down, the Government are now carrying on, or attempting to carry on, with one Minister less than the number provided in the Constitution. We can realise that with the amount of work Ministers have to handle, the job of attending to the unemployed problem is being rather neglected; though I do not wish this reference to apply to the Minister himself. Why should the Government try to carry on with one Minister short?

**Hon. P. Collier:** But one does not get efficiency by multiplying futility.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM:** I realise that. However, I want to know the reason. Cannot the Government find on their side of the Chamber a member who is prepared to face his electors?

The **CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member is getting rather away from the vote, which is Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM:** That is what I am concerned about, Sir. I want to know why the Government are attempting to carry on without the assistance of another full-time Minister, thereby in my opinion neglecting the Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief Department. I am prepared to admit that the present Minister is doing his best, provided he will allow the goldfields people the necessary sustenance payments. But what is the idea of the Government in neglecting opportunities, withholding expenditure, and not reviewing sufficiently the finances of the country, but cutting out one Minister? The present Government seemingly are afraid to face the electors. They have not a leader on their side. This matter is not confined to Country Party members. The vacancy which has arisen is one that should be filled from the National Party.

The Minister for Railways: I do not know how you connect these remarks with the vote.

The **CHAIRMAN:** I ask the hon. member to restrict his remarks to the Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief.

**Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM:** I want to help the children whose parents have been thrown out of work. The present Govern-

ment are neglecting the country's affairs by attempting to carry on under-staffed. I am most concerned about the Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief Department, and that is the vote under consideration. Only a little while ago, when introducing the Estimates of the Mines Department, the Minister made a very fine speech. But I want from the Minister some announcement or assurance that the unemployed arriving from the Eastern States are not going to be permitted to be a burden on the people of the eastern gold-fields.

Progress reported.

### **BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX (No. 2).**

Returned from the Council with requested amendments.

*House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.*

## **Legislative Council,**

*Tuesday, 10th November, 1931.*

	PAGE
House staff designation ... ..	5103
Questions: Pastoral leases, Kimberley forfeitures ...	5103
State Implement Works ... ..	5103
Leave of absence ... ..	5103
Bills: Stamp Act Amendment (No. 4), 2A., Com. ...	5103
Vernin Act Amendment (No. 2), 2A., etc. ...	5113
Dividend Duties Act Amendment, Com. ...	5116
Salvation Army (W.A.), Property Trust, 2A., Com. Report ... ..	5118

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

### **HOUSE STAFF DESIGNATION.**

The PRESIDENT: I wish to announce that I have decided to make an alteration in the designation of an officer of the House. For many years past we have had a Chief Messenger. Henceforth the designation of that officer will be Clerk of Records and Accounts, as he will be required to perform clerical duties as well as those of Chief Messenger.

### **QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASES, KIMBERLEY FORFEITURES.**

Hon. J. J. HOLMES asked the Chief Secretary: What was the total area of pastoral leases forfeited respectively (a) in the East Kimberley, and (b) the West Kimberley Divisions since the 30th June, 1917?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (a) Total cancellations, 6,209,938 acres; re-selection of cancelled areas, 1,981,178 acres; net cancellations, 4,228,760 acres; less new selections, 1,580,741 acres; excess of cancellations over selections from 1-7-17 to 1-11-31, 2,648,019 acres. (b) Total cancellations, 7,142,914 acres; re-selection of cancelled areas, 1,567,492 acres; net cancellations, 5,575,422 acres; less new selections, 4,084,141 acres; excess of cancellations over selections from 1-7-17 to 1-11-31, 1,491,281 acres.

### **QUESTION—STATE IMPLEMENT WORKS.**

Hon. J. J. HOLMES asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the Government obtained a valuation of the plant and machinery at the State Implement Works? 2, If so, what was the amount of such valuation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, £47,771, inclusive of buildings.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. E. H. Harris (North-East) on the ground of ill-health.

### **BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply [4.39]: Until the last few days, the officers of the Treasury and I had been under the impression that Mr. Nicholson was a well-wisher of the provisions in the Stamp Bill for the suppression of fraud and the evasion of stamp duty. His speech has since informed us that he is quite unfriendly to the Govern-