

find the money, let them have the trams. But let us do it on a proper and orderly basis, so that we may know which tramways are most necessary, and build those first, instead of proceeding in a haphazard fashion. Then there are such questions as water supply and sewerage for the metropolitan area, and the algae in the river. I believe the Government have promised to get an expert from the Eastern States to deal with the algae, but he has not yet materialised. In spite of remarks made by a newcomer here, I believe the metropolitan area is looking forward to increased representation in Parliament. I shall protest with all my might against certain views expressed in this Chamber by members representing country districts. Mr. Hamersley was one instance, and Mr. Burvill seemed to think that the representation of the city should be decreased instead of increased—this while metropolitan members represent nearly half the population of the State. It is my opinion that the people of the metropolitan area will insist on increased representation. I protest against the view that the denizen of the city is not as good a citizen of the State as the man who happens to be a primary producer. We are always having it hurled at our heads that the city dweller is, in effect, a parasite on the primary producer. But the man in the city, the artisan, the clerk, the merchant, the professional man, has his place in the community just as much as the man on the land, and requires to be thought of too. We are just as important to the man on the land as he is to us. We supply him with his vehicles, his machinery and most of the things he uses on the farm. Let that fact sink into his mind. I advocate that the huge areas of land that we have here be brought under cultivation, but I protest against the continual disparagement of the man in the city. If it were not for us in the cities, the primary producer in a few generations would be back to the condition of the savage in Central Africa. He would be cultivating his own little plot of meales and going about with a few beads round his neck. Anyhow, we city people are equally necessary with the man on the land; and so long as I am here I shall protest against our not receiving due consideration. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. F. E. S. Willmott, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 24th August, 1922.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY, NARROGIN-DWARDA EXTENSION.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Premier: Is it his intention to place the file in connection with the Narrogin-Dwarda railway on the Table of the House, seeing that the member for Pingelly has given notice to move for a select committee to inquire into the advisability of the construction of that railway?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Twelfth day, conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [4.34]: It was not my intention to speak on the Address-in-reply, but some of the statements made during the last few weeks call for a reply from those who know something about the employment of immigrants. With other members of the House, I agree that there is no question as to the advisability of getting more people to come to Western Australia. We are all agreed on that point. I do not know that I can go as far as many of the previous speakers in congratulating the Premier on his immigration scheme. Certainly, so far as the scheme applies to the securing of immigrants, it is good, and there is no doubt that the financial arrangements appear to be liberal. The handling of the immigrants after they arrive here is, however, a bit beyond the capacity of the existing organisation. It does not seem that there will be any difficulty in getting people to come to Western Australia; the greater difficulty will be to keep them once they come here. During the last eight or nine years we have received between 40,000 and 50,000 immigrants, but we have only retained about 9,000 of that number. It is questionable whether we can absorb the flow of immigrants arriving now from week to week. I am afraid they are coming much more quickly than we can absorb them. I hope, however, that I am wrong. I think the Premier has too much to do and I consider a better division of his work will have to be arranged. The Premier should have more help. He has many offices to administer and duties to perform. His time is fully occupied, without having to deal with this question of absorbing the immigrants as they come here. I think an advisory board might be appointed to manage

the absorption and placing of the immigrants as they arrive. I do not know whether any such action is contemplated, but something of the sort will have to be done. Much has been said regarding the treatment the immigrants receive once they reach here. I know a little about some of the immigrants. I have had several working on my farm and I have one now. I have had five of them working at different times. I consider that the fixing of a regular wage for these people is impossible. As to two out of the five immigrants I have had, I think I should have been paid for looking after them instead of being expected to pay for the work they did. It took me all my time to teach them to do anything. I will not go so far as a neighbour of mine in my comments. My neighbour had one for some little time but he found it very hard to teach him anything. On one occasion, so he told me, he instructed the immigrant to yoke up a horse and put him in the cart. A few minutes afterwards he went out and found that the immigrant had fixed up the collar on two sticks and was trying to back the horse into the collar. I have not had an immigrant who was as bad as that. No doubt some of them take a good deal of teaching. I came across one immigrant at Brookton. He had had five different positions. He had no money and did not know where to go. He was offering himself for employment at 10s. a week. People were very reluctant to give him work, but one farmer decided to take him and to endeavour to teach him something. These are some of the difficulties we have to contend with. I have had two immigrants who have been accustomed to farm work and one of them in particular was as good as any Australian I have had in my employ.

Mr. Teesdale: Thank God!

Mr. HICKMOTT: I have employed a good many men in my time. In England they generally use two horses in a team and thus the men who come out, even if they have had experience on farms there, have no knowledge regarding big team work. When they are asked to yoke up six or eight horses in a team, it is something new to them. One immigrant I had in my employ, had had no previous experience but he got on remarkably well. After two or three days he was able to handle a team well.

Mr. Teesdale: Two thank Gods!

Hon. T. Walker: That man did not need 12 months' apprenticeship.

Mr. HICKMOTT: The majority of the immigrants require fully 12 months' experience before they can become accustomed to conditions in Australia which are so different here from the conditions existing in the Old Country. Thus it is that if a wage of from 25s. to 30s. were fixed for every one of these immigrants, not many would be employed. That is because so many of them take up the whole of a farmer's time in trying to educate them. In one case I kept a man for 12 months. I gave him every chance to learn farming; it did not matter what I did, or how I tried to

teach him, I could not get him to take a team across the paddock straight.

Mr. Chesson: He must have been cross-eyed.

Mr. HICKMOTT: After I had him for six or eight months, I took him down to a fresh paddock. I had previously marked out the land. It was 40 chains across the paddock and I told him I would put up two or three sticks so that he would be able to strike straight across the land. I started him off for about three chains.

The Minister for Agriculture: Did you lock the gates?

Mr. HICKMOTT: He went across to the fence after going five chains. I started him off again. I told him that he could not make a mistake if he kept a big dried tree at the other side of the paddock, between the heads of two of the horses. The immigrant came out four chains to the right when he reached the bottom end of the paddock. That will show the trouble we have in teaching some of these immigrants.

Mr. Teesdale: Had that man worked in a factory?

Mr. HICKMOTT: I do not know what man had been employed at in the Old Country. I did not put the man off straight away. One man in particular was very willing to work and, when I took him out with me to engage in bush work, I found he was a willing worker. I do not know what the fifth man is like because I only sent him out when I came down to Perth.

Mr. Wilson: You give the men a chance anyhow.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I want to impress upon members these difficulties, especially when they say we are using immigrants for work on our farms and paying them a smaller wage than they are worth. I do not wish to pay any man less than he is worth. The immigrant who is able to take charge of a team in two or three days was a good man and I gave him £2. After he had been with me for some considerable time, he had a cheque for £92 to take away with him. It is impossible to set a wage of 25s. or 30s. for all. Some of the immigrants are worth more, but some we should be paid to train. We have to provide a decent place for them to live in, and the whole of a man's time is occupied in instructing them what to do. I hope that in five or six years time I shall be able to congratulate the Premier on the success of his scheme. That will be a better time for congratulations than the present. An article appeared in the Press recently that various departments were being persuaded by members of Parliament desirous of getting something for their constituents, to have visited some of the departments for information for my constituents. In my early days of farming, when I made a station on the land, I never thought of going to a member of Parliament for assistance. In those days we had to battle for ourselves. We had no I.A.B. or anything of that kind. Every man had to work out his own salvation or fail. To-day a member of Parlia-

ment is more like a commission agent, because he is asked to do everything imaginable for the people he represents.

Mr. Wilson: A commission agent except for the fees.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I am always pleased to assist the man on the land to lighten his burden and make his job more cheerful. A farmer who is not one of my constituents applied for an advance of £450 to clear 300 odd acres of land. He lodged his application in Perth and was told that the inspector would visit him at his farm and that it would be all right. After waiting for two months, the inspector not having put in an appearance, he wrote again. He wrote several times without receiving any reply. He travelled to Northam and saw the local inspector and could obtain no news regarding his application. He came to Perth again and there he was told that nothing was known about his application, though he had lodged it seven months before. However, he was informed that an inspector would be sent out to investigate his application. It took over 12 months to get the money to pay the man for that clearing contract. There is something wrong when such delays can occur. If the service is run on those lines, an alteration is badly needed. This man is a justice of the peace, a member of a road board, and occupies other prominent positions, and I have from him a written statement testifying that it took over 12 months to finalise this matter owing to the negligence of the department. Usually I receive a fair amount of courtesy and despatch. The civil servants should be like other servants. The Public Service Act should be amended so that if civil servants do not do what is necessary and right, Ministers should be able to send them about their business just as any other employee would be treated if he did not obey orders. Civil servants are trained in our own departments. They rise from the lowest position as messengers at a few shillings a week to positions carrying £700 or £800 a year. They enjoy any number of holidays and practically everything they ask for. What would be the position of a man like myself who has had to fight his way without Government assistance or special training, if he neglected his work? He would go out without any long leave or without any notice of discharge or anything else. What applies to the man who is making the State should apply to those men who are receiving payment from the people. The Royal Commissioner on Railways has furnished some valuable information. The counter report of the Commissioner of Railways makes many of the suggestions appear insignificant and practically worthless, but there is much in the report which should commend itself to members. The railways are one of our greatest losing propositions, and the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner should be heeded. Too often select committees and Royal Commissions are appointed to investigate various matters, and some of them prove fairly costly,

and when they have reported, the reports are consigned to the wastepaper basket and nothing is heard of the recommendations. Mr. Stead's recommendations should receive earnest consideration, because they should help us to make the railways a paying concern and give better service to the people for whose convenience they exist. The railways must always present a big problem in a State where the land is so patchy. We have miles of sand plain producing absolutely nothing, and we have to build railways through poor country to tap good land further on. Thus it comes about that we have a mile of railway for every 80 or 90 of the population. As has been suggested to the Premier on more than one occasion, it would be better to cut up the poor country and let the men holding forest land have portion of it, even if this poor land were given to them on condition that they improved it and made use of it. Such a policy would help to make work for the railways and assist them to pay better than they are doing at present. We shall soon be asked to sanction the construction of more railways. Settlers are going out many miles from the railways. At the eastern end of my electorate a good many men are out 26 to 30 miles from the existing line. There is some very fine land in that locality, but to serve them will add to the cost of the railways. If we cannot get the people on the land, I do not know where we shall end. The financial position of the State is causing anxiety not only to members but to the public. Men of capital are leaving the State. I have been told by men who have money invested in this State that they are calling it in and taking it elsewhere. The financial position of the State is so unsound that they consider it unsafe to leave their money invested here. It is high time members generally assisted the Government to solve the financial problem. The deficit goes on increasing year by year, notwithstanding that our revenue is increasing and in spite of the assurance that all possible economies have been effected by the departments. We are told that 700 or 800 men have been discharged from the railways. The wages thus saved must surely be equivalent to the increased wages paid to the others; so the extra cost of wages cannot be responsible for the increasing deficit. I have been informed that moneyed people coming from the Old Country are not staying in Western Australia, but going to the Eastern States. Western Australia is one of the finest places in the Commonwealth for cheap land. We have the land. It is the easiest State in which to obtain land and the easiest place for people to settle on the land. We should do something to encourage both men and capital to come here. While the finances are allowed to drift, people will take their capital where safer investments are offering. Education and railways comprise two of the great problems of this State, and require large sums of money to maintain.

Hon. T. Walker: Do not forget the administration of justice and police.

Mr. HICKMOTT: Yes, they too are expensive organisations. The education of the young must be attended to. I have always been a stickler for primary education, but education in many of the secondary and high schools should be paid for by the students. All these bounties seem to be abused. For instance, there is the maternity bonus. We know that it is terribly abused and that many people who are well able to afford the expenses involved never fail to collect the amount of the bonus.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We did not have such a chance in our time.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I never received one penny for anything of that kind.

Mrs. Cowan: But your people are receiving it now.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I was one of a family of four, the three others being sisters, and we four reared 45 children and not one received the maternity bonus. We managed to do without it in those days and it should be done without now. On the subject of education, the expenditure which we are forced to vote will have to continue so long as we are opening up the country and spreading out as we are doing at the present time. It naturally costs a good deal more for education in the country than in the city on account of the immense distances and the manner in which the schools are scattered. I would not like to see anything done to curtail primary education because that is absolutely necessary. Something however should be done in the direction of compelling payment by those who are well able to pay for the education of their children. I am not one of those who is one-eyed or parochial, and I consider that the people of the metropolitan area are entitled to have their conveniences just as much as the people of the country. At different times I have been very glad to have a city man to appeal to. I have been the recipient of many good turns at their hands in my time and I have always held the opinion that the city and the country should work together, as one is essential to the other. At the same time, whilst I do not wish to say anything against the spending of money on city conveniences, it does seem strange that it is not possible to secure the expenditure of money on necessary utilities in the country. The Minister told us that he could spend a quarter of a million on the requests that had been put before him in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: And a bit more too.

Mr. HICKMOTT: But when we approach the Minister and ask him to construct a road to carry produce to the railway, or when we ask him for a water supply we are told that no funds are available. Yet we find that when a tramway is required in the city it is possible to find the money with which to construct it. Both are conveniences and both should be assisted equally. The men in the country are just as deserving, if not more so, as the men in the city, and whilst the Minister may not be able to advance the money

if he has not got it, when the pinch comes, as it does sometimes, and it is necessary to go on with the construction of some work in order to employ labour, it would be just as easy to send that labour into the country. It has been said that the men who were given work in the city recently could not go into the country, but any man who can wield a pick and shovel in constructing a tramline is quite capable of earning a living in the country. I have one request to make of the Minister, and it is a matter that has been brought under his notice for the last 12 months. It is that a feeder road should be constructed leading to Berring siding. Last year 17,000 bags of wheat were carted over that road and the request was made then that something should be done. Nothing, however, came of the request. At the present time the road is not fit to travel on, and in some places culverts are required to avert danger. Of course there are no funds for works of this description. Hon. members will see the difficulties under which the people in the country are labouring. If road boards are prepared to find a certain sum of money for road construction the Government should go to their assistance. In conclusion I may express the hope that in five or six years time, if I am alive, I may be able to congratulate the Premier on the success of his immigration scheme. I trust that the people who are coming here now will soon become self-reliant and self-supporting, that they will remain with us and become part of our community. We all know that Australians made a great name for themselves during the war and that the Commonwealth received one of the finest advertisements it could possibly have got for the stamina of its people. We trust that those ex-service men and others who are coming to throw in their lot with us will join their Australian comrades and do their share towards maintaining the good name we hold and assist to make Australia great.

Mr. HERON (Leonora) [5.8]: Before I speak on the Address-in-reply I wish to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that within the last few days I have moved my position from the back Opposition cross bench to the seat I now occupy, and that in future I shall address the House from this place. I am in a somewhat similar position to that of the member for Roebourne who spoke yesterday; I would sooner do a lot of other things than speak in this Chamber. Like him, too, I had no intention of addressing myself to the motion before the House, but it seems to me that everyone is expected to say something on it. Again, like the member for Roebourne, I take it that if I do not offer some remarks here my constituents may think that I am merely a seat-warmer. I desire to congratulate the Premier to a certain extent on the success of his mission to the Old Country—I was going to say Home, but like other hon. members I regard Western Australia as my home. However, I will be more pleased to congratulate him some years hence if the

venture on which the Government have entered proves a success. We know that it is much easier to bring people here than to settle them successfully on the land. On the subject of immigration, the party to which I belong generally believes in it, but we realise that Australia cannot go on with the few people it contains to-day. At the same time we do not wish to see people brought here for the purpose of lowering that standard for which we have fought so long. The member for East Perth said last night that if the new arrivals can take the place of our own people, good luck to them. I say the same thing, provided of course that the new arrivals do so fairly, that is to say, if the footing is fair and equal. I will not say good luck to them, however, if the new arrivals take the place of those who are already in the country, at a lower rate of wage. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity with other members of going to Carnarvon. Two members of the New Settlers' League also proceeded to Carnarvon and addressed a meeting and asked the people of Carnarvon to form a branch of the league, and to see how many immigrants they could absorb in their district. Whilst there it was learnt that there were a good many of our own people out of work, and I could not see how new settlers could be absorbed while our own people remained out of employment. Nothing whatever was said about the rate of pay to be given to the new arrivals, or the conditions under which they were to be employed. The people there were merely asked to form a branch of the league, and to send down for as many new arrivals as they thought they could employ. My opinion is that some, I will not say all, are getting a very fair deal. Whilst on the subject of immigration, it may be well to mention that some of our own returned soldiers are even to-day walking about the streets looking for work, and whilst that condition of affairs exists, it is not the function of the Government to bring others here to take work which might well be given to the returned soldiers. I have a case in mind of a returned man who is physically fit, so far as outward appearances go. He is a moulder by trade, and was thrown out of employment by a slackening due to an Arbitration Court award. He has done only three months work in the past couple of years, and having married a war widow with one or two children of her own, he is now a father of four. This man is prepared to take any kind of work that is offering, in order to support those who are depending on him. Lately he was offered a position for about 30s. or £2 a week to work in the country. I ask those hon. members who know anything about the conditions of living, whether a man can do any good by taking a job at 30s. or £2 per week in the country and keeping up a home in Perth? Again, as regards immigration, are we doing a fair thing by those immigrants who pay their own passages? I have in mind the case of a married couple who paid their own passages, and who have not been able to

get anything to do. The case was brought under my notice by a business man who introduced these immigrants to me. The husband is looking for a place to which he and his wife can go together; failing that, they are prepared to separate in order to obtain work. They have been unable to obtain any work whatever. On approaching the New Settlers' League they were told that their case did not come within the league's jurisdiction, as they had paid their own passages. While that sort of thing is going on we are not justified in bringing other people here. The Premier has told us over and over again that he has any amount of land for the people here, and for all the people coming from overseas. The facts do not appear to bear out that contention. On behalf of the people from my own district, I have been to the Lands Department, but have been unable to secure land for them. Again, two experienced farmers from the Eastern States, who sold their farms there and came here to settle in our wheat belt, and were not in search of Government assistance, were introduced to the Premier by a member of another Chamber; and the Premier's reply was that he had no land available for them, that the only wheat lands the Government had available without going miles and miles from a railway, were required for returned soldiers. If we are so short of land, can we settle all these people whom the Premier proposes to bring from England? Again, in connection with group settlement, one of my constituents came to Perth to make application to join. This involved a journey of 500 miles each way, and the expenses of such a journey, and the loss of about nine days' work. On top of that there is the risk of disappointment in consequence of being rejected. Surely the question as to the fitness of an applicant for joining a group settlement could be determined by the warden, without putting the applicant to such expense and trouble. I know that the applicant must produce a medical certificate of fitness, but, subject to that, I consider that a decision should be given on the spot regarding his application. The Premier should take steps to obviate the trouble and expense now entailed on people applying for permission to join group settlements. From immigration one naturally turns to unemployment. We all know that there is a good deal of unemployment even yet in our cities; and the responsibility for a good deal of that unemployment lies at the door of the Government. I do not, of course, assert that the Government should find employment for all and sundry. The slackening of hands in the timber mills was our first big trouble in the way of unemployment. The men discharged were all big strong men. They were thrown on the labour market, and with what result? The employer wanting men took the best he could get, and the consequence was that men not quite physically fit for heavy work were discharged in favour of men from the timber mills. I shall be asked, how are the Government to blame? My reply is that at the time of the discharge

of men from the sawmills the Government should have got hold of them and put them on clearing land for new settlers. It has been stated around this House that a large proportion of the immigrants are physically unable to take on clearing. Now, the most suitable men you could possibly get for that work are the men from the timber mills. Had they been given that work, many of the other unemployed would not now be on the labour market. I know as much about heavy work as most men, and I say unhesitatingly that not every man out of work is fit to take on clearing. The statement has been made that the clearing on one of the new settlements has cost about £14 per acre for the tractor, and then about £37 for clearing the timber, or a total of £51 per acre. That is going to be a burden round the necks of the settlers. Had experienced timber workers been employed to do the clearing, the cost would have been far less. Some of these men might have been willing to get ready blocks for themselves, though I know others are not prepared to settle on the land. The cry to men unemployed is always, "Why don't you go to the country, where there is plenty of work?" During my travels through the country districts I happened to be at Bruce Rock, and there I saw a goldfields man who had left the mines, taking the advice of others to "go into the country where there is plenty of work." This man had been working underground with the ghost of miner's complaint overhanging him. He had been at Bruce Rock for some time. Bruce Rock is a place that is going ahead, but still he could not get permanent work. He had gone so far as to sell his home on the fields, and at Bruce Rock he was unable to obtain a shelter. After finishing a job he had to stay at the State hotel with his wife and one or two children; and hon. members will understand what it runs into to board at a State hotel in between jobs. The man was afterwards living in a little place in which the average owner of a motor car would not stable his vehicle. The member for York (Mr. Latham) knows what I am talking about. I went over at 11 o'clock at night to see the place for which this man was paying 10s. per week. It is a disgrace that a man should have to take his family into such a shack.

Mr. Latham: But that is changed now. There are new houses being built everywhere.

Mr. HERON: I am pleased to hear it, but that does not give the man permanent work, although he is right in the heart of a thriving country town. I was indeed glad to see how Bruce Rock is going ahead. This brings me to the unemployment in my own district. About a month ago I attended a road board meeting in my electorate, and among the correspondence read by the secretary there was a letter from the New Settlers' League, or a similar body, asking the road board if possible to absorb some of the Perth unemployed. I believe it was a circular letter sent round amongst local governing bodies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: From the Returned Soldiers' League.

Mr. HERON: I believe the hon. member is right. However, in our own district we have unemployed returned soldiers. There was a discussion on the subject by the road board, and the question was raised how they were to absorb their own unemployed, including returned soldiers. As a result, they decided to apply to the Minister for Works for a grant to enable them to repair some of their roads. We are asked to absorb unemployed soldiers from Perth in outback centres, although we have our own unemployed to deal with. Unable to raise the money themselves, the road board appealed to the Government, but were told there was no money available. That was the reply of the Minister for Works, who said also he knew there were no people in the district now, that he gathered that from the State hotel returns. But the blame for the falling off in the State hotel returns lies at the door of the Government, who, although they have adopted the policy of attempting to reduce wages, yet at the same time have increased the cost of commodities sold at the State hotel. It is not that they have raised the price per drink, but that they have reduced the quantity furnished, reduced "pots" from 14 ozs. to 12 ozs. Nor were they contented with that, for they increased the tariff by about 7s. 6d. per week, with the result that although the State hotel is the only hotel in Gwalia, there is not a soul boarding there to-day. To revert to the unemployed: I went along to the Premier to see what he would do by way of amelioration. He declared that nobody ever used those roads. In that the Premier was wrong. The prospectors, the pioneers, the mainstay of the country, are there and are using the roads. Although there are not so many there to-day as when the Sons of Gwalia mine was in full swing, still those people are deserving of as much consideration as others in thickly populated centres. If the Government desire decentralisation they must give a better deal to the people outback. As showing the use which is being made of the roads in the district, let me quote figures from the State battery, a most reliable index of the traffic on the roads. In 1919 the Leonora battery crushed 94 tons for an average yield of 83 dwts. over the plates and 13.12 dwts. in the sands. In 1920 the quantity crushed rose to 369 tons, for an average yield of 27.19 dwts. over the plates and 9.5 dwts. in the sands. In 1921 there occurred the phenomenal crushing of 1,378 tons. To be fair, I should explain that that was just after the closing down of the Gwalia mine, when the Government instituted a prospecting scheme, paying a certain sustenance allowance, with the result that vastly increased crushings went through the battery. The average yield was only 13.16 dwts over the plates and 7.7 dwts. in the sands. For the first six months of 1922, when we had no assisted prospectors in the district, 623 tons were crushed for an average yield of 30 dwts. over the plates and 8.21 dwts. in the

sands. I quote those figures to show we still have some battlers in those areas, men who should receive the utmost consideration. To come closer to the city, the Government were asked the other day whether they intended this session to bring in a Bill for the establishment of a fair rents court. The Premier's reply was, no. The overcrowding of the city lies largely with the Government. Railway fares and freights have been increased, and the department has even gone so far as to demand a deposit on season tickets. That sort of thing does not encourage people to go out a little way from the city and build their homes. I have in the city friends who for weeks have hunted for places in which to live, while only eight miles out, at Cannington, there are empty houses awaiting occupants. Why is that? Because of the excessive railway freights and fares. Fares from Cannington to the city have increased from 7d. return to 1s. 4d. return and, in addition, a deposit is required on a season ticket. If the holder of a monthly ticket loses it at the end of a fortnight, he loses the deposit paid on it, has to pay another deposit on the new ticket, another stamp duty of 1s., and a 10 per cent. fine on the lost ticket—for which he had already paid in full! In face of those imposts, how can we expect people to live a few miles out of the city? I know three lads who are trying to maintain their mother and younger brothers and sisters. Their railway tickets are quarterly, entailing a deposit of half-a-crown each. In other words, the Government hold 7s. 6d. from that family. For the renewal of a ticket, three or four days' notice is required. There came a time when one of those lads missed giving due notice, was a day late with his notice. He was fined for being late, his ticket was taken away from him and retained for four days, during which he had to pay his ordinary fare backwards and forwards, notwithstanding that the Government had in their keeping all the 'time 7s. 6d., the property of those boys! I have friends at Swanbourne. When first they went there to live, a return ticket cost 7d. To-day the cost is 1s. 3d. In consequence of these excessive charges, people are shifting into the city proper and even paying up to £20 for the key, as it is known, when there are plenty of empty houses further out. Instead of imposing all sorts of charges to hinder people from travelling, the Government ought to seriously consider a marked reduction in railway fares. If the Premier wants to stop the drift to the city, he must improve the conditions outside. In my own district we have the Leonora hospital, of which anybody might well be proud. It is run by a local committee, who raise two-thirds of the maintenance money, they are subsidised by the Government, but the subsidy is not nearly sufficient to keep the hospital going. Recently the hospital was £239 in debt. I made an application for an increase in the annual subsidy, but the application was turned down. We

waited on the Colonial Secretary and explained that we were prepared to raise half the debt by special effort if the Government would subsidise us £ for £. The Minister gave us a sympathetic hearing and deferred his decision. His reply, when it came, was that they would give us a special grant of £35 if we would pay to the Government £37 10s. owing for water rates! Is that fair treatment to mete out to people who are battling to keep their hospital going, and to assist in building up the outback centres of the State? We have to travel 500 miles from Leonora to Perth, but the fares have been increased as have also the freights on our foodstuffs. In the city, if there is any fall in the cost of living, the people get the benefit immediately, but not so outback. When there was a fall in the price of commodities in the city last year, the Government immediately increased the freights, which absorbed all the benefit that accrued. People living in the country should have some exemption in the matter of taxation. Taxes should be imposed on the zone system. They should be so much for people who live within 100 miles of the city, and be gradually increased according to the distance they live beyond that. The Government pay their own employees more when they live in the country, but they fail to recognise the justice of reducing the taxation for people who live outback. The further out the people live the less taxation should they have to pay, and the less freight should they have to pay on their necessary commodities. If it costs 2s. per ton to send a certain class of goods 100 miles, the proportion should be less for the next 100 miles, and so on. Everything should be done to induce people to go out into the country. The mining industry is declining. I give the Minister credit for what he has done in the way of assisting prospectors and encouraging a revival in the industry. The Government, however, are not doing enough. It is difficult to know how to deal with the problem. Some inquiries should be made into the question of freights on mining requisites. I do not advocate that big companies should get low freights, but it would be in the interests of the State if they were given better freights so that our mines might be re-opened. Some companies are not worthy of assistance. I have here a cutting from the "West Australian" of a report of the Great Boulder Proprietary Company's meeting in London. The Chairman of Directors contended that a strong movement was on foot to shut down the whole of the mines, but to this they would not consent, as it was felt that the Great Boulder would be held responsible for inspiring the action. This shows that some companies are worthy of assistance, if others are not. If it is possible for the Minister to see that freights are reduced on mining requisites, much good should come of it. The Lancefield mine was closed down when the 1920 award came out. The management prac-

tically took direct action, and refused to work under the award, on the ground that it would not pay to do so. Mr. Moss in giving evidence admitted that the company had made a profit that year of £35,000. That award has now been replaced by another. Wages have been reduced 9s. a week for those who work six days, and reduced still further for those who work seven shifts a week. No overtime is given for continuous work on Sunday. The wages have been reduced, but still the mine has not been started. The Gwalia mine was closed down because of the fire. It was said to be a fire of convenience. I am sure that was not so, but it has been made a fire of convenience since no attempt has been made to start work again. One of the head men connected with the mine has admitted that no loss has been suffered, because the insurance companies are paying for the erection of a new plant. There is no necessity to do any development work for five years, but still the management is not prepared to start the mine. I said last session that the Jews of London had control of it. The local directors are anxious enough to start, but the people in London are not prepared to do so. It is time the Government took a hand.

Mr. Lutey: They are a part of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. HERON: Yes, and if that is one way of assisting the country, I have a lot to learn. The Lancefield mine is in the same position. The management is supposed to have made an offer to the men to work it, but the offer was not made until the plant had been run to a standstill. Later on some returned soldiers, I understand, made an attempt to work the mine. They asked for Government assistance to enable them to do so, but the offer was not then open to them. It was supposed to have been turned over to the workers on the co-operative system, but the conditions imposed were unfair and the mine is still closed down. Who could be greater direct actionists than those who close down a mine because an award does not suit them? If the workers had taken such action, they would have been howled down, and yet these mine owners are held up as people who have assisted the State. If there is any chance of low grade mines paying their way, the conditions appertaining to battery charges should be waived for them. I know some men who were engaged on a low grade show, but the round of crushing did not come to quite 500 tons. It was only about 50 tons below the required quantity. They applied for a rebate on the battery charges, but were turned down. The Minister referred me to the inspector, who is the back-stop for the Minister, and the inspector said it could not be done. This question was brought before the Minister when he was in Leonora.

The Minister for Mines: You might state that until recently it used to be 1,000 tons, and I have halved that.

Mr. HERON: I give the Minister credit for that. Where men cannot raise quite the requisite amount of 500 tons, they should not be deprived of the rebate when they are working low grade ore. Whilst the Minister was in Leonora he said that if the men were prepared to back their opinion by working the mine, the Government would be ready to assist them. When, however, the matter was brought under the notice of the inspector, he would not sanction the assistance. He said the mine was not payable. He cannot see through the ground and does not know whether a mine is worth working or not! The first crushing that these men took out when they got assistance went 7 dwts. over the plates and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. in the sands. The second crushing—they were not receiving assistance—went 9 dwts. over the plates and 4 dwts. in the sands. The last crushing went 10 dwts. over the plates and 4 dwts. in the sands. The stone is too good to leave in the mine. If the Government can see their way to assist shows of this description, they should do so. The men made nothing out of their crushings, and being unable to get a rebate they had to abandon the show. The Minister certainly made the promise but the inspector turned us down. Some 12 months ago I was at Mt. Ida. A company had an option over a show there, but turned it down on the ground that it was not payable. The owner of the show still had confidence in it and went on working it. The first crushing he took out from the mine after it was turned down by the company went 16 dwts. over the plates and 16 dwts. in the sands. The next crushing went 8 dwts. over the plates and $13\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. in the sands, while the third crushing went 16 dwts. over the plates and 36 dwts. in the sands. Still that mine was turned down because, so it was said, it was not payable. In the Samuel district we have a show called the Unexpected South. That mine is well known to the department, for money was lent to those controlling the show to enable them to sink a shaft. The unfortunate owners at that time were unsuccessful in picking up the lode. Recently the Government called for tenders and three local people took over the show. I do not know what their arrangements with the Government were, regarding payment for the shaft and the plant. They were more successful than the previous owners. I have been given to understand that the people who had the show before them had the holes already bored in the mine but they had not been fired. The new owners were fortunate enough to fire the holes, with the result that they struck the lode and it has turned out a payable proposition. They state that it is worth 35 dwts. to the ton, which is very good ore. Another show that is being worked is the Diorite. It is part of the old Diorite King, and the returns show that they are in payable dirt. The prospectors have been able to pick up new shoots, with the result that their first crushing went $4\frac{1}{2}$ ounces over the plates and 24 dwts. in the sands,

while the next crushing went $2\frac{1}{2}$ ounces over the plates and gave a very fair return in the sands. There is another show at Doyle's Well. It was working many years before I went to the district, and I went there 16 years ago. A party of men from Gwalla put up a battery. They were, however, unsuccessful in picking up the shoot. Eighteen months ago another party were fortunate enough to pick up a payable ore but they have to cart it 40 miles by road. That is the road on which I asked the Government to expend a few pounds to repair it. Their first crushing went 4 ounces over the plates and their second crushing went 2 ounces 16 dwts. over the plates and 17 dwts. in the sands. For their latest crushing they took picked stone, and it went 12 ounces over the plates and a fair amount in the sands. These instances show that the goldfields are by no means settled, if only we can get the right sort of assistance and sympathetic treatment from the Government.

Mr. Mann: Are you satisfied with what the Government are doing?

Mr. HERON: Yes, to a certain extent. I give the Minister credit for what he is doing, but I am satisfied that he is not doing enough. Lawlers is another district which has been dormant for a number of years. Now there are three batteries working there, which is a larger number than they have had for many years past. That shows that the hardy prospectors still have confidence in the district. Two of those batteries have been erected by the two Branson brothers, who had the Queen Mine. They sold out to a company, who put up a 10-head battery. The Great Eastern Mine, which was turned down by Bewick, Moreing and Co., and which is partly held by Bernales, put up a 5-head battery, and satisfactory results have been obtained. The Waroonga Mine, which was also closed down by Bewick, Moreing and Co., has been taken over by Finch and party. They are down to the 600-foot level with the baling and the battery will be crushing in a few weeks' time. This shows that with assistance these mines are by no means done yet.

Mr. Mann: Is not a Perth syndicate investing money there?

Mr. HERON: That is in connection with the Queen Mine, to which I have already referred. They have been handicapped for want of capital. The mine is looking very well, but they have been working from hand to mouth, not having sufficient money to develop it properly. While I wish to give the Minister credit for the assistance he has given the mining industry, I think it was unnecessary for him to call for applications to fill the position of superintendent of prospecting parties.

Mr. Chesson: That was a joke.

Mr. HERON: I do not say that, for perhaps the Minister is serious in the matter. I think the inspectors of mines could do all that is necessary, without the Government appointing a man to travel round the coun-

try at great expense. There is no necessity for the superintendent to be appointed to look after prospectors. The Government could save their money in that direction. That brings me to another point in connection with the Lawlers district. I received a complaint regarding one departmental officer—he was connected with the Works Department—who travelled with another man from Cue to Lawlers to clean out a well. He had to travel 200 miles each way. He could not have travelled more than 20 miles per day, which meant that the journey necessitated 20 days' travelling to do two days' work and then return. If the Government desired to effect economies, that work could have been given to the local governing body to perform, instead of sending men all the way from Cue. The worst of it was that when the well was cleaned out, it was not the one the people wanted attention given to!

Hon. P. Collier: That capped the lot.

Mr. HERON: The men cleaned out the well at the Vivian mine, whereas the people wanted a well on the Sandstone-road cleaned out! These are the things that the people in the outback areas disagree with. Those people say that if the Government are prepared to waste money that way, they should be prepared to give a few pounds so that necessary work can be attended to. As to the Governor's Speech, I was disappointed to find that, although the House carried a motion in favour of national insurance, no indication was contained in that document of the Government's intentions to deal with the question. Perhaps the member for Perth (Mr. Mann), who seems to be amused, did not take the matter seriously; he may have friends connected with insurance companies. Seeing that the House expressed its opinion regarding national insurance, it should have been deemed worthy by the Government of mention in the Governor's Speech. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) is also one of those who is opposed to national insurance. The people, however, are clamouring for the institution of such a scheme, and it will not be long before they will bring such pressure to bear on the Government as will induce them to introduce legislation. I travelled through the State recently and, time after time, leading citizens asked why such a scheme was not advanced.

Mr. Pickering: Did you have that in evidence before your commission?

Mr. HERON: It is in the evidence.

Hon. P. Collier: The Hospitals Commission must have been proceeding on the track of irrelevancy followed by the Forestry Commission.

Mr. HERON: We have established funds on the goldfields for the assistance of those who are stricken down in the mines. I refer particularly to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. That fund is near the end of its tether, because there are not the number of workers in the industry to-day to maintain it, and the seed sown during years past is

only being reaped to-day. We have more liabilities to face than the fund can carry. That is all the more reason why the Government should establish a scheme for national insurance so as to take over this burden. At present, the Government contribute 9d. a week, which is a subsidy on the 9d. per week paid by the miner and the 9d. paid by the companies. If a national insurance scheme were instituted, it would take the place of the relief fund. The fund was started in 1915, when the payment was 3d. per week per man subsidised by 3d. per week by the Government and by the employers, respectively.

Mr. Wilson: You started 15 years too late!

Mr. HERON: We admit that. To-day the men, who are receiving some benefit from the fund, are being cut down every day. Soon the position will be reached when the Government will have to carry the burden if they do not start a national insurance scheme. It should be a broad scheme, wide enough to carry these burdens. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Mines give notice of his intention to introduce a Bill to deal with miners' phthisis. Anyone who has worked in the mining industry knows what an awful thing it is to be stricken down with miners' complaint. It is one of the cruellest ailments one can contract. A man suffering from it wastes away. When speaking to the organiser of the A.W.U. at Boulder, he told me it would break one's heart to go through the homes at Boulder and see the wife and children assisting to keep things going, while the man lies waiting for the end. A national insurance scheme would greatly assist to relieve the position.

Mr. Teesdale: It has been a great success in Queensland.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. HERON: It is a credit to those who introduced the measure there. I referred to some of the old shows which have been re-worked with profitable results. Recently the following paragraph appeared in the Press:—

Much interest has been created by a new find made by Donnelly and Thomson, 10 miles south-east of Bulong. The prospectors have just crushed 19 tons, which yielded 193 ounces over the plates, and the sands are expected to yield another 2 ounces per ton. The ore was obtained from an open cut 8 feet deep. There is a quartz reef 3ft. wide, and lode material on both sides carries values. The line of lode has been pegged for two and a half miles. A score or more motor-cars dashed out to the find this morning.

This announcement shows that, with some assistance, mining will boom again. In conclusion, may I repeat that I am in favour of immigration on right lines, and I trust that in five or six years time we shall be able to congratulate the Premier on the success of his scheme.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [7.30]: I join with others in welcoming the Premier back home. We were all rather concerned as to the state of his health while he was in the Old Country, but I am pleased to note that since his return he seems to have recovered his normal health. I, with the rest of my party, am in favour of immigration of the right sort, provided the newcomers can be placed without injury to our own people. It has been my privilege to meet some of the incoming passenger boats, and whereas I have seen numbers of fine strapping young fellows amongst the immigrants, I must admit I saw others not so well favoured. I feel that the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) was stating the case quite fairly when he remarked upon the very few satisfactory immigrants he had met. However, I hope organisation will be speeded up and land made available for all, including those of our own people who desire to settle on the land. When I was in the South-West I was struck with the wonderful potentialities of that part of the State. It came home to me that many of us who for years have been in Western Australia travel but very little about the State. Out at the group settlements I was pleased to notice that the men seemed to be well satisfied with their prospects. I think, however, the Government, when organising group settlements, ought not to forget the social side of the problem. I am afraid the drift to the city of which we hear so much is ascribable largely to the fact that in the past we have not made necessary provision for the social side of life in outback districts. Two years ago, when visiting the wheat belt, we called in at the Yorkkrake settlement. Having listened to what the pioneers had to say—they were all delighted with their success—it occurred to me to have a word with some of the young fellows standing apart. I asked them what they thought of the country, and how they liked farming. I found that without exception those lads were breaking their necks to get away from it. We require to use a little foresight and see if we cannot make the farming settlements more attractive to the young people, and so solve the difficulty of keeping them there. Generally speaking, the pioneers of the agricultural districts have had such a tremendous struggle that they have forgotten the feelings of youth. It may be said that this has been the history of all rural Australia. I sincerely hope the Government, in planning new settlements, will not forget the social side. The Governor's Speech foreshadows the introduction of a Closer Settlement Bill. Last session I opposed the measure, believing, as I still do, that it can do but very little good, that it is the wrong way of tackling the question. An unimproved land values tax would do far more for those in want of land than can any Closer Settlement Bill. Small communities create values in their particular centres, and the surrounding properties derive the unearned increment of increased value following on the expenditure of public money in those centres. Unimproved land values taxation

would fall most heavily in the metropolitan area. If we had such a tax, the difficulty of getting houses in the city would quickly disappear, for we should quickly have a building boom as the result of vacant blocks being put on the market. Such a tax, too, would be distinctly in the interests of the farmers. It is the one measure of reform which the Premier seems to shy at, and thus far I have not been able to discover the hidden hand responsible for his attitude. Some time ago he had this House pledged to an unimproved land values tax, and even the Farmers' and Settlers' Association formally expressed themselves in favour of it, notwithstanding which the Premier let the opportunity slip. It would be better for the whole of the community if we had that form of taxation. If the land adjacent to our railways were available at reasonable prices, we should find so many buyers that it would be no longer necessary to send to England for immigrants. I am aware that I have harped on this question ever since I have been in the House. I do not believe that unimproved land values taxation is a panacea, but I am firmly convinced that it is the most satisfactory land reform which could be introduced. In every State and country where gold has been found, the discovery has given a great impetus to population. In Victoria 50,000 people poured into the State within a very short period. But when, in the fulness of time, the mining population in Victoria wished to take up land, it was found that the very best of the country had been alienated by squatters. In consequence the miners were forced out into what were then regarded as the dry areas, where the population actually increased, while decreasing in the more favoured western districts. If, instead of land monopolists being allowed to hold up the country, unimproved land values taxation had been introduced in Victoria at that time, we should have had millions more of population in Australia to-day. The Governor's Speech shows that since July, 1921, a sum of £38,101 has been advanced for the development of mining. When we realise what mining means to the State, it is seen that that sum is but a small one. Nevertheless, I readily admit that the Minister for Mines is moving in the right direction in respect of prospecting. Recently we have had some very encouraging discoveries, which probably will lead to greater things. In the St. Ives district the Government are giving deserved assistance. The Ives Reward proposition is one of the best I have seen. They will require to instal machinery for drilling before they can make much headway. I am pleased that the Government are rendering assistance, and I hope results will prove that they are on the right track. At Mt. Monger and Gibraltar also the prospects are heartening. At Gibraltar an old school-mate of mine is on a show which is opening out very well. At Ora Banda, Broad Arrow, and even Bulong, discoveries are being made and large numbers of applications for leases are coming

in. I am reminded that the railway from Kanowna to Kalgoorlie is recommended for removal. I warn the Government that the pulling up of that line would prove very embarrassing if any important discoveries were made in the Kanowna district. Only recently the water pipe line to Bulong was taken up and removed. To-day there is an excellent chance of that line having to be relaid. In such centres there is always a good prospect of rich finds that will bring trade to the railways and necessitate the provision of water.

Mr. Heron: There is also a prospect of wheat-growing there now.

Mr. LUTEY: So I understand. If only we could get the cotton king interested in Bulong, the district might prove to be eminently suited to the production of cotton. I believe the day will come when the fine land in that district will be devoted to the cultivation of olives, cotton and similar products. That can only be expected when we get people with a sufficiently wide outlook to try, such for instance as the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale).

Mr. Angelo: What is the rainfall?

Mr. LUTEY: It varies; the wheat to which I referred was grown at Bulong on six inches of rainfall. The Government in pursuance of their policy to assist mining, offered the companies of the Golden Mile aid to develop their mines, but the companies refused this assistance. What little development is going on there has given gratifying results. In the Ivanhoe at a depth of 3,000 feet a good development has been made, showing that the lodes are still going strong even at that great depth. Apropos of the companies' refusal of this assistance and the remark of the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany), regarding the go-slow policy, there are, as he admitted, other people than actual workers who are guilty of going slow. Such gibes should be fairly distributed. A number of companies on the Golden Mile are deliberately going slow and have been doing so for a considerable time.

Mr. Mann: Did not the Great Boulder put on 50 men last week?

Mr. LUTEY: I do not know. During the last couple of years the companies have not taken advantage of the gold premium as they might have done, and the majority of people on the fields believe they deliberately went slow in order to put up a case to the Arbitration Court. They neglected to gain something like £6 per ounce for their product in order to work this miserable point. As one who has worked in the mines, I maintain that the companies have had the advantage of the finest labour in the world. The Kalgoorlie companies, however, are practically legalised burglars in regard to their tactics when dealing with the workers. Under their contract system men, instead of getting at the end of the fortnight £12 which they had well earned, found the amount cut down to £10. It is surprising that the companies have been able to retain such loyal bodies of workers.

Mr. Mann: How do you mean they were cut down?

Mr. LUTEY: The contract might be for 25s. a foot, and on pay day a man would find himself cut down by 5s. a foot without having been told about it.

Mr. Wilson: They simply steal it.

Mr. LUTEY: Yes. The worst robbers in the street take a chance, but the companies take no chance.

Mr. Mann: Was that in keeping with a clause of the contract?

Mr. LUTEY: They always have some saving clause such as "more or less." A man might have a contract for 50 feet and find himself cut down to 20 feet.

Mr. Richardson: It is never increased?

Mr. LUTEY: Yes, if it was under-priced, the man could go on. It is largely due to the contract system that so many miners have finished their days in the Wooroloo Sanatorium. The member for Leonora (Mr. Heron) read a statement by the chairman of the directors of the Great Boulder Company that the question of closing down the whole of the mines had been seriously considered. It shows what kind of men they are when they would seriously contemplate such action in the present financial position of the State. These mines are the property of the State, and the gold is the property of the State until such time as it has been won.

Mr. Mann: Do you suggest that anyone could go on a lease and take the gold?

Mr. LUTEY: The gold does not belong to the companies until they get it. They may refuse to mine it.

Mr. Heron: Some of them are refusing to mine it.

Mr. LUTEY: Yes, portions of leases are not being worked and have not been worked for years. The Great Boulder lode is right on the boundary of the Horseshoe; in fact it has gone into the Horseshoe at depth, but the other portion of the lease from the Boulder block right in the heart of the Golden Mile, where there might be as much gold as has already been won, has hardly been worked for 20 years. The open cut was worked 20 years ago and, with the exception of diamond drilling, which is unsatisfactory and the 1,700ft. in the Perseverance, nothing has been done. After reference was made to this matter three years ago, a little prospecting was done, and I am informed that the result was very satisfactory. Subsequently a little more was done and lately a pipe track has been put through. Companies like that are holding up areas which might create a boom if they were worked legitimately, and yet there is no power to deal with them. When the Tributing Bill was going through the House the Minister for Mines stressed the fact that the mines belonged to the State. The fervent manner in which he dealt with this question led me to hope that the Government might take some steps to get a bigger hold over the lessees. However, nothing has been done. With the exception of the man-

ning provisions, with which the companies must comply, they are at liberty to close down the mines and the State would have no redress. The Mining Act should be amended in order that the companies might be more effectively controlled. Some people would deprecate any action in this direction as savouring of confiscation. Tasmania with a conservative Government, on finding that the companies in Zeehan were not working the leases, passed the Aid to Mining Act empowering the Minister where a lease was not being properly worked, to enter and prospect for gold and tin. If the Tasmanian Government could take such action, the Government of this State might well follow their example. Even if the measures were only placed on the statute-book, it would have the effect of making the companies more careful and less arrogant than they are at present. Sections 4 and 5 of the Tasmanian Act read:—

(1) The Minister is hereby empowered to exercise all or any of the following powers, and the same may be exercised upon, under or in respect of any Crown land or leased land namely: (i.) He may enter and remain upon any Crown land or leased land and search, prospect and mine for gold and minerals thereon and thereunder, with full and free right of ingress and regress to and from any such land; (ii.) He may, after entering upon any Crown land or leased land, mark thereout such area as he thinks sufficient for his purposes and thereupon and until abandonment the right of prospecting and mining upon or under any such area and occupying the same, shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, belong exclusively to the Minister as if he were lessee, without any interference or obstruction by any person whomsoever; (iii.) He may execute and carry out the various purposes mentioned in Sections 44 and 48 of the Mining Act, 1905, as if a lease for such purposes had been granted to him and may exercise all powers required in relation thereto.

If any prospecting or mining operations carried on by or on behalf of the Crown or the Minister result in a valuable discovery or development, it shall be deemed to belong to the Crown and the following provisions shall apply:—(i.) The Minister shall first offer in writing such discovery or development to the lessee at such price and upon such terms and conditions as the Minister deems reasonable; or the lessee may submit an offer in writing to the Minister for the same. In the event of the lessee desiring to acquire the discovery or development and not coming to an agreement with the Minister as to the price or terms or conditions within a period, not less than 30 days, to be fixed by the Minister, any such question in dispute shall be referred to the warden of mines for the nearest warden's court sitting with two assessors, one to be appointed by each party, for determination in the mode prescribed by the Mining

Act 1905, and the regulations thereunder, the provisions whereof shall accordingly apply. (ii.) In the event of the lessee— (a) Not desiring to acquire the discovery or development; or (b) failing for one calendar month to carry out any agreement come to with the Minister; or (c) Failing for one calendar month to comply with any determination of the warden and assessors; or (d) Failing to appoint any assessor required to be appointed by him, or otherwise impeding the determination of the question in dispute, the Minister may—(a) Let such discovery or development and any land in connection therewith or any part thereof upon tribute at such royalty, to be paid to the Minister and the lessee in equal shares, and upon such terms and conditions generally as the Minister may think fit; or (b) Deal with such discovery or development whether by way of mining operations or otherwise for the mutual benefit of the Crown and lessee as the Minister thinks fit.

If the Tasmanian Government can see the necessity for passing such an Act, it is only right we should do something of the same kind here, instead of being left to the mercy of these mining companies. An Act similar to that would do a great deal of good in this State, and help us along a great deal faster than we have been going in the past.

Mr. Mann: You have not seen any necessity for it in this State, have you?

Mr. LUTEY: It has been going on for years. One company on the Golden Mile has kept the major portion of its lease in idleness, although it is situated in the centre of the Golden Mile.

Mr. Richardson: Do you refer to the Perseverance?

Mr. LUTEY: To the Great Boulder. Between the Perseverance and the Boulder there is a block on which practically nothing has been done for 20 years.

Mr. Mann: The mine is manned, and you cannot interfere with the management.

Mr. LUTEY: It is manned to a certain extent. Other companies have held up about 100 acres in the same way. I want to see the Government possessed of power which can be exercised in the direction I have suggested.

Mr. Latham: You do not suggest the State should work the mine at a loss when the owners cannot make a profit?

Mr. LUTEY: The Perseverance Company decided that the mine was at an end, and it went into liquidation. Tributaries, however, went into it, and for the last three years it has returned hundreds of thousands of pounds to the shareholders and kept 300 men in employment. If the Minister had the power I want him to have, he would put men of this stamp on areas that are being kept idle, and most likely results similar to those obtained in the Perseverance mine would follow. Instead of giving fervent assurances across the floor of this House, I hope the Minister will

safeguard the rights of this State, and galvanise the companies into activity, so that they may put to the fullest possible use the leases they have obtained from the Crown. It is most necessary that this should be done, in order to give employment to people in a time of stress like this. I would remind members that the Chamber of Mines now belongs to the Primary Producers party.

Mr. Latham: Both are primary producers.

Mr. LUTEY: The whole aim of the management of our big mines has been to get the best possible deal for the absentee owners. Their organisation has been superb, and they have been able to do much as they liked. When those primary producers of this State, who have an intimate knowledge of the members of the Chamber of Mines, understand that they have been linked up with that organisation, they will have rather a bad taste in their mouths. They will begin to wonder what kind of company it is they find themselves in. I compliment the Minister for Works upon his speech regarding the operations of the State trading concerns, and his reference to the ghouls who are endeavouring to discredit them.

Mr. Latham: You do not think it is right that the State should enter into competition with private individuals, do you?

Mr. Corboy: You believe the State should run a wheat pool?

Mr. LUTEY: Members of the Country Party are ready enough to support the construction of railways into the farming districts, the running of wheat pools, and the erection of abattoirs in Fremantle. They are glad enough to get assistance for the erection of freezing works. When, however, it comes to a question of State trading concerns, which, I believe, will prove prosperous if they get a fair deal, they want them done away with. They want the cream for themselves, leaving the rest for other people. If I had my way they would have a little of their own medicine back. I would say, let us go the whole hog, and do away with the Agricultural Bank, the State railways, and other activities of the kind. Let them have a full taste of what private enterprise would mean. No one would be so anxious as the farmers to revert to the old State utilities and trading concerns. They would only be too glad to see the State go back to the old lines. They want everything their own way if things are of any use to them, but everything that seems to be unpayable they want to be thrown back upon the State. They keep on harping on the State trading concerns to such an extent that they may serve as a boomerang that will some day strike them very hard.

The Minister for Works: Perhaps they will take up my challenge and move the motion I suggested.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [8.8]: I should be failing in my duty as a member of this Chamber if I permitted this occasion to pass without making reference to one or two of

the vitally important subjects contained in the Speech. The first one mentioned is that which shows the number of immigrants who came to Western Australia between the years 1909 and 1921, and those who still remain. I am also struck by the reference to the huge deficiency in our finances. I cannot contemplate the position with any degree of comfort. In a subsequent paragraph of the Speech it is stated that the sinking fund of Western Australia exceeds the amount of the deficit. We can hardly console ourselves with that fact. At the time we obtained our loans it was contemplated that a sinking fund would be established and set apart for the specific purpose of repaying them. It was necessary to have the sinking fund to cover those projects which were non-productive. A huge amount of money must have been spent in projects of that nature. Furthermore, many of them will require to be renewed from time to time. We can hardly say, therefore, that the sinking fund covers our deficiency, and we are unable to contemplate that position with a great degree of equanimity. The government of this State is supposed to be carried out by Parliament. If that is so it is the duty of every member, and his responsibility, to make every effort to ascertain why so many people have left our shores, and why we are in our present financial position. In what way do our circumstances differ from those countries to which immigrants are flocking in great numbers, and where they have to legislate not for newcomers, but against them? In view of the position in which we find ourselves, I cannot help thinking it would have been a good move if greater responsibility had been thrown upon members of Parliament than has been the case in the past. To my mind, it is only by going into the existing conditions that we can ascertain the reason of these two unfortunate facts. With regard to encouraging population, I ask myself the question, in what way are we deficient in facilities for carrying on secondary industries as compared with other States? And then I ask, have other countries cheaper power for manufactures? Has private enterprise, or have Governments, elsewhere investigated this important subject while we have left it alone? I find from the investigations of the select committee now in progress that the cost of electric power generally throughout Western Australia is too great for the establishment of a secondary industry to compete successfully against the rest of the world.

Mr. Richardson: Power is said to be cheaper in our metropolitan area than in any of the Eastern States.

Mr. MONEY: If one halfpenny per unit is exceeded for power, one is handicapped against other parts of the world.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Which parts of the world?

Mr. MONEY: America, for one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No.

Mr. MONEY: We compete with America. Australia is as big as America. Why should

not we have the same facilities here as the people have in America?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because America has water power and we have not.

Mr. MONEY: Apart from water power, I am not convinced that we can create cheap power while we haul our fuel for the purpose of creating power a matter of 120 miles from the coal fields. The freight cost is about 11s. per ton. It seems too obvious that if we cut off that extra expense of 11s. per ton for haulage, we can have power at half the present cost by generating it at Collie. Why are we content with present conditions in that respect?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The engineers say that the plan you advocate would cost more; and they ought to know.

Mr. MONEY: I know that to-day in Great Britain, in order to compete in the world's markets—which we also have to do—they are exercising every ingenuity to get the cheapest possible power. In this particular instance I need not go further than to say that, obviously, if we can create power in Perth at, for the sake of argument, 2d. per unit—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We are selling it in Fremantle at 9d.

Mr. MONEY: Many funny things are done at Fremantle.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not funny; that is actual fact.

Mr. MONEY: If power is being created in Perth to-day at 1d. per unit, then by saving the hauling cost of 11s. per ton we should be able to create power for a halfpenny per unit.

Mr. Richardson: What about the cost of transmitting the power?

Mr. MONEY: The Perth power house is already transmitting current 60 miles—20 miles in one direction, 20 miles in another, and also 20 miles in a direction towards the Collie coalfields. I learn that it is possible to-day to transmit power a distance of 200 miles for a loss in transit of about 13½ per cent.

Mr. Corboy: But what about the capital cost of the line to do it?

Mr. MONEY: If we are transmitting power 60 miles, we ought to know what the cost of doing that is; and by doubling that cost we shall arrive at the cost of transmitting power 120 miles. That factor has not been thoroughly gone into yet, but I hope that as the outcome of the select committee's investigations, we shall give ourselves the same facilities as other countries enjoy. This is the only method of obtaining cheap production, and the only method of cheapening our cost of living. It is the modern method. Thinking of this matter makes me realise how isolated Western Australia has been for many years. I am satisfied that in many respects we are working 20 years behind the times. In America this question of electrical power has been very much to the front, and so it has been in all the progressive countries of the world. To some ex-

tent we are suffering for not being abreast of the times. I mention the matter because of its bearing on finance. So long as the private finances of the people, contrasted with Government finances, increase in the same ratio as our deficit increases, we are in a position to cope with the extra cost involved. But if our private finances are not increasing in the same ratio, or if they are decreasing, then our position is serious. Up to the present, we have had no statement showing what may be called the position of the people's assets, the fitness of the people to pay the increased taxation which is necessary to lift the State out of its financial difficulties. I do not think it can be said that to-day the cattle kings of Western Australia are any better off than they were a few years ago; I doubt whether they are as well off. I doubt whether the owners of sheep stations are now any better off than they were some years ago. I do not think the people's wealth has increased in a ratio sufficient to allow of Government finance being dealt with. Can we look to any other matter in which our position differs from that of other States? Our railways do in a large measure account for our deficit, or for a very large proportion of it. Have we a proper system in our railways? Have we the grades necessary for economical transport? We have not. I can say that straightaway of my own knowledge. I know there are grades of one in forty where the heaviest traffic in Western Australia has to be handled.

The Minister for Works: There is not much of that grade.

Mr. MONEY: No; there is not much of it. But it is like the chain, the strength of which is measured by the strength of its weakest link. A grade of one in forty limits the load one can haul.

The Minister for Mines: The ruling grade is one in sixty.

Mr. MONEY: I am satisfied that with a modern grade of one in eighty, our existing locomotives, which are not of the latest design, would be able to haul approximately double their present load. However, on many of our lines to-day we have this grade of one in forty.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where?

Mr. MONEY: The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) should know. I am surprised at his not knowing. The heaviest traffic our railway system has is from Collie to Brunswick. That is probably the heaviest single line traffic in Western Australia. It is not only that railway which has the one in forty grade, but the same grade obtains on the line from the Narrogin district, which carries so large a proportion of our wheat harvest.

The Minister for Mines: Well, what are you going to do about it?

Mr. MONEY: I realise that it is not sufficient to draw attention to these facts, but that one must also have a constructive alternative to show how the present state of affairs can

be remedied. It is only a few weeks since I was over a surveyed line from Collie to Dardanup, the grade of which, according to the engineer's report, is one in eighty. There is the alternative. If I have drawn attention to these facts and suggested a remedy, then I shall have done some service to my constituents and to the State. I do not think this question has been sufficiently ventilated in Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I see a lot of things that it would be advantageous to do if only we had the money to do them.

Mr. MONEY: I am glad of that interjection. We cannot afford not to do this thing. It is only by spending the money to remedy a defect of this kind that we shall ever get out of our difficulties. We have waited too long in these matters. As the Premier said earlier in this debate with regard to immigration, we cannot afford to wait any longer. The difference between a one in eighty grade and a one in forty grade means approximately double haulage power.

Mr. Harrison: The difference is more.

Mr. MONEY: It saves the cost of one train out of two. It means that one engine will do as much as two engines are doing now with the grade unaltered.

Mr. Harrison: The difference is four times as much.

Mr. MONEY: I am satisfied that if I can save, approximately, half the expense of haulage on that important line, it will be sufficient for the purpose of this discussion. I am not in a position to state the saving altogether accurately; but I am informed—and I have seen the details—that the alteration in grade would mean, approximately, doubling our haulage power. I myself thought that the power would be a little more than doubled.

Mr. Pickering: New South Wales spent £2,000,000 on regrading.

Mr. MONEY: And it paid them well. If New South Wales had not expended that money and attended to these things, they would have been in the position in which we find ourselves to-day.

Mr. Wilson: They did not have a Country Party in that State?

Mr. Pickering: It was the Country Party that helped to do that.

Mr. MONEY: I am glad to have the intervention on the part of the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering), for it proves what I set out to deal with, namely, that we are faced with obstacles which do not present themselves to people elsewhere. If we have to pay £1 for freight owing to the grade, it means that our freights are heavy, and we cannot reduce those freights until we reduce the cost of running our railways. The present state of affairs will not only militate against the success of our railways, but against the success of our producers, which cannot be improved unless freights are cheapened. In what other respects are we handicapped? In

the country where I came from to Western Australia, it was unknown for any producer to be unable to haul his produce to his siding at any period of the year. On the other hand, I have no doubt whatever that 20 per cent. of the products of the South-West, the portion of Western Australia which we are out to develop, and which is to play so great a part in the closer settlement scheme, cannot be carried to the different sidings along the railways at all. This is a disadvantage from which Western Australia is suffering more than any other place I know of in the world. The conditions have existed for many years.

Mr. Pickering: For as long as we can remember.

Mr. MONEY: And they still go on in the same old way, on the same old track! We cannot afford to permit them to continue. If we are to increase our population and our productivity, good roads are required at once. While we produce nothing, the roads are all right; immediately we want to use the roads, they fail us. There is something very wrong. I do not want to go into other matters regarding transit at this juncture, but I want to draw attention to this fact as one of the obstacles preventing that advancement which is so necessary if we are to succeed.

Mr. Davies: Roads are more essential there than railways.

Mr. MONEY: I have said that before.

Mr. Pickering: And it will stand repetition.

Mr. MONEY: I repeat roads are more essential there than railways.

Mr. Wilson: We have plenty of railways.

Mr. MONEY: And it only requires administration, co-operation and co-ordination. The Minister for Works is taking a keen interest in this matter at the present time and I do not think he will mind me saying that, with the assistance of the Minister for Railways that position of co-ordination is being achieved which I hope will make a considerable difference in the South-West.

The Minister for Works: You have done your part well.

Mr. MONEY: I have not done it alone. Without the help I received from the Minister for Works, well—one knows how little a private member can do in these efforts!

Mr. Wilson: You have got some fine roads in Bunbury.

Hon. P. Collier: With yourself and the Minister for Works combined, great things are possible.

Mr. MONEY: I cannot pass over this important subject without mentioning that ray of hope to show that the result I seek may be possible in the achievement. I am satisfied that it is a very simple matter. With the expenditure of a little money, we could have improved our roads 50 per cent. in the past. I find, however, that the drainage of the roads in many districts has been absolutely neglected. That must be attended to.

Mr. Pickering: You are opening up a big subject.

Mr. MONEY: The hon. member is quite right. Reference has been made to centralisation. I am satisfied that although we can produce apples and fruit in Western Australia which can compete with fruit produced in any other part of the world, unless we secure less expensive facilities for placing our products on the markets of the world, the fruitgrowing industry in Western Australia will not be the success we desire. I am not a pessimist, but it is my duty to look plain facts in the face. Let me take an average account in connection with the export of apples to the London market. I have one dealing with 109 cases which were shipped by the s.s. "Bakara." That fruit realised £56 13s. 3d., which worked out at between 10s. and 11s. per case. That was a pre-war price, and low at that. After those apples had been placed on the market from the grower's siding—no expense is included in that amount for growing and packing the fruit—the cost of putting that fruit on the market worked out at £52 3s. 1d., leaving the grower, at his own siding, a balance of £4 10s. 2d.

The Minister for Works: It would not pay for the cases!

Mr. MONEY: I bring this matter forward for a purpose in no way derogatory to our fruitgrowing industry, but we would be fools to close our eyes to the naked facts before us. I take it that it is the duty of the Minister for Agriculture, or Cabinet as a whole and of every member of Parliament to investigate this important matter. We should ask ourselves: What can we do to remedy it?

Mr. Harrison: Were not those apples in poor condition?

Mr. MONEY: The apples were in good condition. Out of the 109 cases, only two were marked "slack." If a grower does not pack his case full, the apples roll about, and then they say the case is not completely packed. Those particular cases brought 10s. each and that demonstrates that they were not too bad, seeing that the average ran between 10s. and 11s. per case. I inquired to find out if there was something wrong with the apples. I was told that they were all right. I was told they were fair average samples of the cases sent by the "Bakara" which, in turn, was an average shipment. It is true that the market was not good but that is our trouble. I mention this particular case to illustrate the necessity for decentralisation. It is necessary that the Government should render every possible assistance to the fruitgrowers of Western Australia. What is happening to-day in this matter? These fruitgrowers are sending their products to Bunbury, which is their natural port, but they cannot be dealt with there, because the facilities for shipment are not provided. It is necessary that certain facilities shall be available to load direct from the shed to the ship. It is not possible to load a ship at an ordinary timber jetty. This affects growers in two ways. They have to

pay the extra freight on the journey to Fremantle which is an extra 100 miles. More important than the cost involved by that extra journey, however, is the damage done to the fruit during that trip of 100 miles in summer. It is essential to keep the fruit sound and as cool as possible. If a grower can send the fruit direct from the shed to the ship, it is quite all right, but if it has to be sent to a port, such as Fremantle, involving another half day's journey, the fruit, by being bruised, deteriorates to the extent of about 2s. a case.

The Minister for Works: The fruit becomes sweated.

Mr. MONEY: Fruitgrowers in other parts of the world endeavour to use their natural port. We cannot afford to neglect this matter any longer in the interests of the fruit-growers themselves. It must be attended to, if we desire to make a success of this industry. A return of £4 10s. 1d. for 109 cases of fruit will not pay even for the cases in which the fruit is packed. It means that the growers lose the interest on their capital outlay and all the wages for the 12 months. Perhaps it is unnecessary to remind hon. members that only one crop of apples can be picked in a year. The capital outlay may run to as high as £100 per acre, and the loss of the interest on that money, plus the wages for the year, means that it does not pay the grower to continue on those lines. These matters are extremely important, and should be investigated thoroughly with a view to securing a remedy. Mr. Speaker, this position must be remedied! No producer can continue even in a country that produces the finest fruit marketed, if seven-eighths of his return has to go in the cost of marketing it. No other producer of any other product in the world pays so much for placing his product on the market as do the fruitgrowers of Western Australia.

Mr. Pickering: And his fruit is nearest to the market.

Mr. MONEY: That is so. We cannot anticipate a much higher price in the world's market. It is 3d. per lb. wholesale and that is not a bad price by any means.

Mr. Richardson: The price is more likely to come down.

Mr. MONEY: Again, we have to compete with South Africa and America, the latter country having a system of cool storage that enables her to keep apples for much longer than we can. Although her apples were five or six months old, they were in perfect condition when marketed. If we are to succeed, it is necessary that everything possible shall be done to assist the fruitgrowers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are pessimistic.

Mr. MONEY: Does the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) say I am pessimistic?

The Minister for Works: He is a perfect optimist.

Mr. MONEY: With a country like Western Australia, with the possibilities ahead of us and with such soil as we have—

Mr. Carter: And with such people.

Mr. MONEY: And the people too, it is impossible to be pessimistic. On the other hand, we will be damn fools—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MONEY: We will be damn fools if we do not face the position and deal with it so that we shall ultimately succeed. Are we pessimistic because we grow the finest fruit in the world?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not use unparliamentary language.

Mr. MONEY: If I said it I am sorry. I must have been carried away. What I am entitled to say is that any fool can produce at a loss, but it is our duty to produce at a profit. If we cannot do that, then God help the immigration scheme! I am mentioning these matters with a fixed purpose, partly on the score of immigration, and largely because of those thousands that have left our shores. If they were fruit growing in this country on accounts like these, it is no wonder they left and went elsewhere where proper facilities were provided.

Mr. Carter: But you have been quoting extreme cases

Mr. MONEY: Nothing of the sort! It is the average for this boat, and I am informed that some of these accounts show a debit to the individual grower. It occurred to me that those apples had not kept as they ought to have done. I am now in a position to affirm their keeping qualities. Unable to obtain space for London, some of the apples remained in the shed for weeks. It was not expected that after they had been knocking about the shed for so long they would keep any length of time, and so the instructions were to place them on the local market as soon as possible. I inspected those apples last week, and I was utterly astonished to find that they were just as sound as on the day they left the orchard.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You said they were knocked about in the shed.

Mr. MONEY: What I meant was that they remained in the shed for weeks awaiting space for shipment. However, it is now clear that our fruit is not only the finest in the world, but will keep for export. In view of our position, it is essential that there should be the greatest possible co-ordination. I was amused at hearing Dr. Campbell, when in Perth, speak with what I call the limitless mind of the astronomer. He said they were not satisfied with considering problems two miles below the surface and probably four miles in height; their mental capacity, he said, penetrated millions of miles beyond. I feel that if we could only probe the depth of two miles below the surface and knew everything within two or three miles above the surface, that limit would be sufficient for us. But I am afraid that at times we do not probe sufficiently. We do not know the ways of the world, and so are not in a position to compete against the world. We are in the

transient stage. Twenty or thirty years ago we were living on the natural assets of Western Australia, some of the richest mines in the world, and on our timber. We have been cutting that natural asset and converting it into wealth, and now we have arrived at the period at which we have to produce an asset and compete with it in the world's market. For that we require greater facilities, and more up-to-date methods than we have. Within a few miles of us is some of the richest land to be found in the world, land which has been lying idle ever since the State has been a State.

Hon. P. Collier: We are draining it now.

Mr. MONEY: For years past have we been paying big freights to bring cattle from the North-West, not attempting to produce our own fresh food products at our own door. We might as well expect the Old Country, rich in minerals and manufactures, to import all its cattle from America, the distance between America and England being much the same as that between Perth and the North. I do not know of any other place in the world where an attempt has been made to develop a country under those conditions. Consider what the hundreds of thousands of pounds paid to the cattle ships would have done for the development of our State! For the cattle of the North-West there are markets nearer to the North-West than is Perth. If we had proceeded on those lines we should have had our North-West asset and our South-West asset, thus reserving to ourselves the markets of Western Australia, and Western Australia would have been much further ahead to-day. Cattle freight from the North-West is £7 per head. In the development of any country, markets are the most important factor and asset of all, markets and cheap transport. Can we hope to lessen the cost of living while we pay £7 per head freight on cattle from the North-West?

The Minister for Mines: You are well above the mark. It is not £7.

Mr. MONEY: It was £8 a little while ago.

Mr. Underwood: It costs £8 to-day from the station down to Perth.

Mr. MONEY: We have not considered these questions as we should have done. Within a stone's throw we have thousands of acres of the richest swamp lands in Australia. We have done nothing with them. Why? It cannot be because of the cost of drainage, for the taking of water off a swamp represents only one-tenth the cost of clearing timbered country. I am not speaking of Herdsman's Lake. I am speaking of the chain of swamps between the railway and the coast, and extending from Fremantle to Bunbury. I am informed that there are procurable giant shovels moving at each stroke eight cubic yards of earth.

The Minister for Works: There is such a shovel on the Peel estate now.

Mr. MONEY: Yet up to the present our methods, generally speaking, have been with the hand spade and hand shovel, moving possibly less than half a spadeful at a stroke.

Under these antiquated methods our costs must be at least ten times as great as under modern methods. If we are to utilise those thousands of acres of rich swamp lands, we shall have to use more modern methods. It would be one of the best investments Western Australia could make. Again, we have not been looking far enough into the question of transport. We have been satisfied with railways. The time is come to carry our minds back to the cheapest transport in the world, and follow in the steps of America and of Europe. I do not wish to abolish railways; but in treating a new subject, it is for us to look at it from every possible point of view. It is worth our while to see if we cannot get a dredge that will deal with excavation by a cheap method. If we are to utilise the lands between Fremantle and Bunbury to the fullest extent, we require a drainage scheme on a large scale, something that will go through that level country swamp after swamp and effectively deal with the whole area. It is a matter of calculation to determine how deep the drain must be, but I think it will have to be so large as to serve a double purpose, as to be not merely a drain, but also a canal for the transport of the produce of those rich lands.

The Minister for Works: A lot of that land is sand.

Mr. MONEY: If we had a floating dredge, the sand could be pumped out to the side. The sand was no obstacle to the construction of the Suez Canal and it need be no obstacle here. Our financial position is serious, but there is material amongst the 50 members of this House to deal with the problem. It would be of considerable advantage if we had a little more government by Parliament than we have had in the past. Looking back to the resolutions passed on their merits and those on the party ticket. I am safe in saying that the former are the more correct. If it is possible to convince the House on these matters, surely the House should have the right to initiate them. If we could only have proper road transit and improve our railways and drain the lands of the South-West, we would be able to produce green fodder for continuous dairying throughout the year. Drainage schemes would lead to doubling the butter production in those districts with the same number of cattle that we have at present. Our dairying period is far too short. We cannot utilise our land as we should. It is a peculiar fact that the wetter the land is in winter, the drier it is in summer. If it is kept reasonably drained, it can be worked at the end of the winter and the moisture can be retained months longer than if the land has been in a water-logged condition. When it is water-logged it is useless in winter through being too soft and useless in summer through being too hard. Only by following out these essentials of agriculture shall we achieve the end we desire. The more we work our land, the more we improve it and the more we increase the asset. Thus eventually Western Australia will become a rich country. In converting

a national asset as in mining, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are really diminishing our capital. I commend the Premier for being one of the first to take advantage of the immigration policy which undoubtedly was considered to some extent in 1913.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was that the reason for the public meetings objecting to it.

Mr. MONEY: But for the war it would have come sooner. If we are to attract immigrants, we shall be on safe ground if we are able to proclaim to the world that our present settlers are producing at a profit. If we cannot do this, we cannot expect to attract immigrants to the State. It is just as important to pay attention to the matters I have brought before the House as to encourage immigrants to come to Western Australia. It is like wooing a woman. It is one thing to woo her and another thing to keep her. To keep her one must treat her well. It is so with our immigrants. Seeing that we have lost so many we have wooed, there must be something wrong.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They might be people returning to their homes in the Eastern States.

Mr. MONEY: I do not think that any statement by the member for North-East Fremantle can explain the figures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the explanation.

Mr. Mann: Six thousand of our men were killed at the war.

Mr. MONEY: Even that leaves 30,000 who have gone from our shores of those who came here. I have been trying to speak on big things, and if I have been able to throw any light on subjects which will assist to arrive at the why and wherefore of our present circumstances, I shall have done something which every member should strive to do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [9.8]: I listened most attentively to the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money). There is always a mystery surrounding most people, and I am satisfied there is a mystery surrounding him. He was most pronounced in proclaiming himself an optimist, but if enlarging upon and magnifying our difficulties is optimism, I have yet something to learn. It is true he suggested many ways to better our position, but I do not know that it was very helpful to find him magnifying his portion of the State into being the essential method of solving our great problems. Some day he may have an opportunity to attempt to administer departments of State, and he will then realise that Western Australia is greater than any one member's constituency. He will also realise that it is even greater than some of our known districts, because there are few members who know much of the State except that portion served by the railway system. The hon. member naturally insists that he is an optimist, but I do not know to what extent he is influenced by surrounding conditions.

Hon. P. Collier: All pessimists suffer from that delusion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. It reminds me of the question "When is a man drunk?" The answer given was "When he asserts that he is not." I am beginning to think that the hon. member is so intoxicated with pessimism that he proclaims himself an optimist. Surrounding conditions may influence him somewhat, and thus we have a new problem which I have heard of from others but have never personally realised. He says that the wetter the winter is, the drier is the land in the summer. I have heard a man say that after a wet night. Maybe the hon. member has been influenced by the fact that "Pussyfoot" Johnson is lecturing this evening.

Mr. Money: The Minister for Agriculture would not say that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Minister would not say that which he knows. I am saying what I do not know. I have not tried it out in company with the member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan). I have not had a wet night, so I do not know what it is like to have a dry morning. I mention this by way of introduction to explain that the debate has again produced evidence that we are living in an age when naturally enough we are suffering many difficulties which would not have occurred but for the great war. Having suffered severely because of the war and its aftermath, we seem to magnify our difficulties and lose sight of the things which are of some value. I have always urged my pessimistic friends and those who complain that I smile too frequently, that when they are suffering most severely, they will always be able to find someone who is suffering much worse. This is sufficient to give one fresh heart. I have not yet found myself in such difficulties that I could not find someone who was worse off. Why, I have been threatened within an inch of my life in this Chamber during recent weeks, but I am still alive. That is more than poor Collins or Griffiths can say. Although our troubles are great, they are not so great as the troubles confronting most countries in the world at the present time. They are not even so great as the troubles prevailing in most parts of Australia. It would help our State if those who are expected to lead public opinion magnified the things which are good rather than decrying the State because we have little difficulties, which for the moment seem to be everything, while the other things do not seem to count at all. I am controlling certain departments, and my experience enables me to say that notwithstanding the criticism of civil servants, we are well served in our Government Departments.

Mrs. Cowan: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There are times when members of Parliament disagree with the attitude adopted by civil servants; there are times when Ministers do likewise, but to magnify into something savouring of disloyalty a statement made by a public

servant when introducing a new Minister to his department is quite wrong. I know that Dr. Atkinson is a good officer and that he had less intention of threatening the new Minister than members here have had of threatening Ministers during the last week or two. To say that this episode was evidence of the fact that the service is disloyal is quite wrong.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No one suggested that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then let me take the other viewpoint.

Mr. Mann: It was bad taste.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It might have been bad taste, but if we can look at our efforts from time to time and feel satisfied that we have not said anything in bad taste, we might call ourselves super men. Most of us make mistakes. If the charge is shifted to one of lack on the part of the new Minister to assert his authority, may I point out that that gentleman might easily have made what would appear to some to be a very fine effort in replying to the statements made by the Principal Medical Officer by stating as some have said, "If you do not like to accept my dictation on matters affecting the department, you had better get out." Dr. Atkinson possesses a knowledge upon technical matters which could not be possessed by the Minister, and upon such technical matters the Minister must of necessity accept his advice.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He was referring to finance and economy.

Mr. Davies: What was his object?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The whole thing has been magnified for the purpose of belittling the new Minister. It was not worthy of members to adopt this attitude in his absence. Let us judge the Minister by his actions, and see whether, when he is in full possession of his departments, he will accept without question every recommendation and every action of members of the service under his control. If he does so, the time then will have arrived for accusing him. Do not charge him now and find him guilty until he has been heard.

Mr. Richardson: No one suggested doing so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Members are now beginning to apologise for what they have said.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is no necessity for an apology. The Minister was told to stand up to the Premier and keep a stiff upper lip.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That may be necessary too. We are living in times when it may be necessary for us all to keep a stiff upper lip. I am doing so myself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But not in the case of the Treasurer who has complete charge of the finances.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Treasurer is strong enough to stand up against any heads of departments in matters connected with finance.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a good thing he is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Treasurer is right in doing so. On the question of funds the Treasurer has the last word. If a departmental head makes a recommendation which he believes is in the best interests of the public, and which necessitates the expenditure of public funds, he is within his rights, but would not be entitled to question the action of the Treasurer if he declined to make those funds available.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know of a case where you turned down an expenditure, and where the money was spent afterwards in spite of you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That evidently happened in the hon. member's department when he was Minister for Works, for I know nothing about it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Your attention was drawn to it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no knowledge of it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was not in my department.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We ought not to judge the new Minister before he has been tried.

Hon. P. Collier: If there has been any misunderstanding, the fault lies with Dr. Atkinson in the unfortunate way he expressed himself.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That may be so. The incident should not have been magnified to the extent it has been. In the absence of my colleague, I must take the view that he must be given a trial before he is condemned. I now desire to refer to some criticism that has been levelled at the departments under my control, and will deal first of all with the Mines Department. I have listened with a great deal of pleasure, generally speaking, to the utterances of members directly representative of mining constituencies. The most surprising thing about the debate is the attitude adopted by the member for Kalgoolie (Mr. Boyland). At no time previously has the department been so difficult to administer, nor has it needed so much sympathetic administration.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you going to take the £10,000 a year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I may consider the offer if it is made to me. I realise that the hon. member is suffering from a disease that unfortunately has been brought about by his employment in the mining industry. He would naturally feel that unless something were done of a definite nature by the Government to lessen the ravages of that disease, we were neglecting our duty. He is entitled to adopt that attitude. I am prepared to give him credit for being serious in his criticism on that point. Notwithstanding the position as it affects himself, he ought not to adopt the attitude of being personally offensive in his remarks concerning me. I realise that the mining industry is suffering seriously from causes over which the Government have no control. When money became

scarce, or was required for other purposes consequent upon the war, and when it also became costly, easier methods of investment were available to people who had money. Instead of putting it into such hazardous investments as mining they preferred to take up Government securities carrying high rates of interest. The industry that has suffered more seriously from that state of affairs than any other is the mining industry. It has also suffered through the high cost of production, but more from a lack of capital which has prevented the necessary development work from going on. Last year the value of our mineral output was £2,880,169, which was £379,242 less than for the previous year. Our gold was valued at £2,352,000, or 81.87 per cent. of our total mineral production. Coal was valued at £407,117, copper at £24,601, and silver, tin and other minerals made up a comparatively small amount. The dividends paid by mining companies amounted to £306,958, which was £77,125 less than for the previous year. The ore treated amounted to 857,510 tons. We show a decrease in all our mining fields, except Broad Arrow, North-East Coolgardie, and the Phillips River. The largest decrease was in Mt. Margaret. This fell off to the extent of 193,000 tons, and on the Yilgarn goldfield there was a reduction of 70,956 tons over the previous year. This was due to lack of development work.

Mr. Munsie: It was due to the Lancefield mine and to the Bullfinch mine closing down.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those were contributing causes. There has been an increase in the working costs. Last year, when we thought we had reached bedrock in this direction, the average cost per ton of ore raised was 38s. 7d. This was a slight increase on the previous year. It was 18.1d. per ton higher than it was in 1914. It is evident, therefore, that the mines that would have been working under 1914 conditions could not work to-day. There must, therefore, be a decline in our mining operations. This not only meant a reduction in tonnage, but meant that many mines, in order to keep working, had to discard ore the value of which would, under the 1914 conditions, have enabled them to make a profit on it, but which it is now impossible to take out. Ore of reasonably good value is now being left in the ground, and in many cases, I fear, will be left there permanently. The average value of the ore raised and treated was 51.56s. per ton, which is an increase of 9.34s. over the previous year. Notwithstanding the increase in the average value of the ore raised, there must, under the conditions I have mentioned, be a decrease in the operations and a reduction in the number of men employed. Last year there were 7,084 men employed in the industry, a reduction of 1,412 men. We are passing through difficulties that are not easily appreciated by those who know nothing about our mining operations. Those who dwell in the coastal or agricultural areas may imagine that, because of the general conditions prevailing in their districts,

everything is all right. It is hard for them to understand why the Treasurer should be short of funds and find it difficult to carry on. When it is realised what the mining industry has meant to this State in the matter of wealth production, the part it has played in assisting us to meet our interest payments, and the ease with which trade and commerce have flowed at one time in this State, and the further fact is realised that there are 1,400 fewer men employed in the industry than there were for the previous year, it is easy to understand the difficulty the Treasurer will find himself in.

Mr. Lutey: Some companies could have taken greater advantage of the gold bonus.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am doubtful about that. The average value of gold won per man employed in the industry was £378.30, which was a falling off as compared with the previous year, when it was £381.26. The average number of tons raised per man employed in the industry fell from 180.61 to 146.76. This is evidence of the growing difficulties the companies have had to contend with, for it has meant a greater cost per ton raised. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, last year we produced over 63 per cent. of the total gold production of Australasia, including New Zealand. After all, we have something upon which to congratulate ourselves. Although the member for Kalgoorlie has endeavoured to show there has been a lack of sympathy on the part of the Mines Department, it is evident that we have not gone back to the same extent as other parts of Australasia. New Zealand produced only a little over 12 per cent. of the gold production for that year, and Victoria a little over 11 per cent. We are, therefore, holding our own very well. I have made allowance for the attitude adopted by the hon. member. Kalgoorlie with other goldfields must feel the pinch. We all know it does. What, however, has caused the comparatively sudden change in the attitude of the hon. member? Twelve months ago he said in this Chamber—

Let me say particularly that I am not condemning the Mines Department. Our present Minister for Mines is one of the most sympathetic Ministers I have ever known; and I have found occasion to see him repeatedly since my election as member for Kalgoorlie. We hear plenty of criticism of the Mines Department. Now, I believe in giving credit where credit is due, and therefore I speak of the Minister for Mines as I have found that gentleman.

What has happened to him during the last 12 months?

Mr. Lutey: You stood on his corns.

Mr. Latham: You have become harder.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not at all. I will tell the House what we have done. Has the hon. member quoted any specific case wherein I have failed in a sympathetic endeavour, so far as funds would permit, and so far as it was humanely possible, to assist the industry? The industry has undoubtedly suffered, and I am endeavouring to explain

the reason for that. It would have suffered a great deal more had it not been for the assistance rendered it by the Mines Department. I will be candid enough to say that we have rendered that assistance in more than one case quite outside the terms of the Mines Development Act. Had we adhered strictly to the Act, the assistance could not have been rendered. The member for Kalgoorlie might have looked round to see whether his opinion was well founded. It is not always appreciated that there is difficulty in holding the balance fairly between those directly interested in the mining industry on the one hand, and the general body of taxpayers on the other. Every mineowner is satisfied that he has the best mine on earth, and that there is no necessity whatever for an independent inspection and report, all his statements being perfectly correct. But of course I cannot act on such assertions. As a trustee, I must necessarily ask my responsible officers to investigate. Then, if on their reports I am satisfied that there is a reasonable chance of success, I am prepared to assist, as representative of the taxpayers, those people who have faith in their own propositions and will spend money of their own on them. Mining has had a flutter during the last year or two, but unfortunately it was in the main only a stock exchange flutter. Companies were formed with capitals aggregating £7,000,000, and this within one year. But every member knows perfectly well that nothing like seven millions of money ever reached the mining industry for development purposes.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. Munsie: Do you think £2,000,000 reached it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing like it.

Mr. Munsie: That is how the goldmining industry of Australia has been capitalised all along.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A boom of such a nature made people with money available for investment in mining feel rather shy. Surely the Mines Department is not to be held responsible for that. The department's duty is not to make such an investigation of every mining proposition as will enable the departmental officers to tell the public exactly what is within the four corners of each lease. All we can say is that our mineral resources are worthy of development. But money subscribed by the public should go where it is intended to be spent, and not, as in many cases, merely towards paying directors' fees and office expenses, never helping the mining industry at all. Last year the member for Kalgoorlie said that I was sympathetic towards the prospector. This year he says I have no sympathy with the prospector at all. But, as I shall presently show, during the last 12 months more has been done for prospecting than was ever done previously. The member for Kal-

goorlie has not adduced a single case of a bona fide request for assistance submitted to the department being turned down, if upon investigation there proved to be even a possibility of succeeding. Before the hon. member adopted his present attitude, he might have satisfied himself on that point. He would have found that the facts were quite contrary to his belief. From July of 1919, when I took the Mines portfolio, to the 30th June, 1922, a period of three years, I have by direct advances, assistance to the industry, and by guarantee to the banks for advances made to mining companies, syndicates, and others, committed the State to a sum of £155,000, an average for the three years of £51,000 per annum. That average of £51,000 per annum for three years is greater than the largest amount spent in any previous single year. Is that evidence of lack of sympathy? Our previous record was for 1911-12, when the Leader of the Opposition was first in office as Minister for Mines, and then we spent £33,572. That amount gradually crept down, until it was £7,809 in 1915-16. I am not quarrelling with what was done in the position which unfortunately had to be faced at that juncture. I wish to point out, however, that during a period of eight years, including the previous record year, the total of assistance to prospecting amounted to £130,978, while for the three years during which I have been in office, when money has not been too plentiful, the expenditure was £155,000. I found the money, realising that capital was not available through the ordinary channels. It was found either by direct advances or by guarantees, for the purpose of tiding the industry over a rather difficult period.

Mr. Willecock: How much are you getting back?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the Mines Department were to treat this question entirely as a business proposition, the State would lend practically nothing. We are not getting back very much; but, generally speaking, we have made the advances on sound security. The security is not always good to the full extent, taking the break up value of the plant or other security offered. The Government have rendered good service not only to the industry, but also to the State, by rendering assistance which was not forthcoming through the usual channels. During the last two or three years there has been a ready approach of the Mines Department even by members of Parliament, asking the Government to undertake financial responsibilities never previously thought of, much less suggested and pressed by members. Banking institutions to-day will agree to advance on a sound proposition if that proposition is backed by the guarantee of the Government. Thus the banks when making the advance are certain of not losing anything. I am again facing the position, as regards one or two mines, that unless Government assistance is afforded

we shall lose not only the wealth which with that assistance will be produced, but shall have a good many men thrown out of employment. I refer to the mines in the Northampton district. The member for Kalgoorlie made reference to the unemployed on the gold-fields, and said I had no sympathy with them and had done nothing for them. As a matter of fact, I went to Kalgoorlie at the request of the Leader of the Opposition. There we met deputations, and our attention was drawn to certain directions in which unemployed might be absorbed. Some of these suggestions were practical and some were not. The Leader of the Opposition himself at the time declared that some were not practical.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not know that you could have done more.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I fail to understand the attitude of the member for Kalgoorlie in declaring that I took no action at all. In order to avoid delay I told off an inspector from the Mines Department in Perth to go to Kalgoorlie, so that the inspectors there would not be able to claim that other duties prevented them from making investigations. But for that action a great many men now employed would have remained unemployed. I do not suggest that it was possible to find employment in the mining industry for the large number of men suddenly thrown out of work chiefly by the closing down of the Lake View mine. But an opportunity presented itself of doing something which in my opinion is the essential thing under existing conditions. Most of our mines during recent years have been eating themselves out of existence by merely following up their rich chutes, without doing any development work. Unless somebody finds the necessary capital for development work, it will not be long before many mines to-day working will also be closed down. I hope, therefore, that members will be sympathetic towards the efforts of the Government to render assistance—sufficiently sympathetic to overlook the straining of the Mines Development Act. The Ives field has, in my opinion, great possibilities. Capital to an extent has been found for it, capital to a limited extent only. The best men engaged on the fields are men who have put into it every pound they have made in other lines of business—fair amounts in many cases—for the purpose of developing the field. A large proportion of those men are now up against it. They, too, are working on much the same lines—getting a rich chute and chasing it as far as they can. I want that field to have, as all our well established fields have had, developments well ahead of their operations. Therefore, by request, I have found a fair sum of money to enable the mines in the Ives field to do development work by sinking shafts and testing the lodes at greater depth. Should we establish that field on a permanent basis, then, even should we not get back one single

pound of that expenditure, we shall be well repaid in—I hesitate to use the phrase—an indirect way. It will be to the advantage of the State if the Ives field is made permanent. I could give the House details of what the Government have done; but the testimony of the Leader of the Opposition, that he does not think we could have done more, is a distinct and definite reply to the allegation of the member for Kalgoorlie that nothing has been done. In the matter of assistance to prospectors, I believe we have done more than is really essential, or even wise. I hold the view that our mineral resources, much in the same way as our agricultural and horticultural possibilities, should be developed from a base, rather than that men should be scattered all over the place. Many mining fields which have been provided with public facilities at the public expense are to-day neglected, while prospectors are testing far back districts. I believe we have done too much rather than too little towards assisting prospectors in back portions of the State. It might be well if for a period we restricted assistance to prospectors engaged in further testing districts which have been but little tried and then practically closed down, districts provided with all the facilities required by a goldmining centre. It has been urged for years that we should put our prospecting on a different basis. A board has been created to deal, in an honorary capacity, with applications for assistance to prospectors. I extended the assistance from mere equipment to the provision of sustenance as well as equipment. I venture to declare that after having done that for a period of two years, we are entitled to have an audit and see just where we stand. I am not satisfied that the best has been done with the money so expended. It has been devoted to prospecting throughout our mineral areas. I do not wish to discourage the genuine prospector. I believe we have a fair percentage of genuine prospectors.

Mr. Corboy: Very good men, too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; but we have also a type of prospector who will obtain equipment from the Mines Department and use it for the purpose of building fences for pastoralists away in the remote parts of the State. Knowing that, surely I am entitled to take measures to prevent it.

Mr. Corboy: You also get some pastoralists who take advantage of the mines development vote.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The ordinary pastoralist is paying contract prices for this fencing work, without any knowledge of the fact that his contractor is actually receiving equipment from the State in connection with the carrying out of the fencing work.

Hon. P. Collier: Has any of this fencing been done in the North?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to state where it has occurred. There is a case I discovered for myself when travelling on the Murchison. A man applied for and obtained not only equipment, but

also sustenance for a period of six months in order to do prospecting work. He approached me when I was in the Murchison district and asked me for a continuance of the arrangement for another six months. When he approached me his appearance suggested that he was doing some work. I thought the man must be working on his show and I asked him what he was doing. He told me he was feeding at the State battery. That meant that when the State battery was working, that man received his full wages and at the same time was drawing sustenance from the department for prospecting.

Mr. Wilson: Cannot you gaol such a man as that?

Mr. Mullany: Did the battery manager know?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, he did not know.

Mr. Wilson: What did you do?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am reminded of the Scotchman who was in charge of a small engine. There was a tank which had to feed the engine. When the manager, who was away from Western Australia for a while, returned and asked what was all the mess in the engine room, he received the reply that the tank had overflowed. When he was asked why it had overflowed, the Scotchman said that the engine-driver had let it spill. When questioned as to why he had not sacked the man he asked what was the use of sacking him seeing that he had only lost 100 gallons when he might get another who would waste 200 gallons? So it was in this case. I might have got someone else there who would have wasted more money still. I thought it was only right that steps should be taken to protect the department from abuses of that kind, and that was the reason why I proposed to appoint an inspector who would be attached to the prospecting board. It was never my idea, nor was it the intention of the board, that we should have a man travelling all over the country to see whether Jim Jones, who was prospecting in the Cosmo-Newberry ranges, was working and to tell him what he should do. What we aim at is to secure a man with some knowledge of geology, who knows where gold can or cannot be expected to occur. The appointment of such an officer would at least save the prospector from looking for gold where it was impossible for it to exist.

Mr. Chesson: He would not be much of a prospector if he did that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the point. Some of the best prospectors in the Murchison have been, to my knowledge, in one district for years, eking out a bare existence. One of them told me that for 18 months he had lived on porridge which he had three times a day.

Mr. Wilson: He must have been a good Scotchman.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The man called himself a genuine prospector and I am convinced that he was one too, but it took him more than three months to locate the place where the ore-body existed. Some

of these men, had they been advised by someone with a knowledge of rock structure, would have been saved years of work.

Mr. Mullany: That is not right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think it is right.

Mr. Corboy: Companies have employed geologists and yet they have wasted money.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so, but, on the other hand, they have saved a lot. If the hon. member's contention is correct, we should dispense with all medical men.

Mr. Corboy: Don't be ridiculous.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We would have to do so. If a medical man loses a patient because he has given him wrong treatment or has diagnosed the case inaccurately, should we proceed to dispense with all medical men? Of course, we will make mistakes, but a man with a knowledge of geology will frequently avoid the spending of money in work from which it is impossible to get a return. The Mines Department has been finding more money than ever before in the history of the State to assist the mining industry. It has lost a certain amount of money, I do not say wilfully, but still we should look into that aspect. We have done something to save waste. I established a State prospecting party. We mapped out a definite area and we had a technical report upon those areas by the geologists.

Mr. Mullany: That was a good idea.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: These men went to spots where it was known, from the rock formation, that gold-bearing ore might possibly occur. They discovered one or two possible areas, from a gold-producing point of view. The value of those discoveries is not yet known, but in those instances in the course of a few months, through being properly guided by technical advice, success has been achieved where otherwise it might have taken years to attain the same end.

Mr. Lutey: I suppose you remember that the best geologists at the time when the Boulder mine was discovered, reckoned the men were pegging out turkey roosts!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. The hon. member must remember, however, that the gold occurrences in those parts, and particularly in Kalgoorlie, were different from anything else known in Australia or, for that matter, in any other part of the world. In these circumstances, therefore, it is quite easy to understand the mistake made by the geologists of the day. I am not by any means asserting that geologists are always correct, but I do say they are more often correct than they are wrong. At least, it is worth while following the advice of geologists in matters of this sort. The idea of the inspector, who would be appointed to supervise the prospectors, was not to do away with the inspectors of mines. Would some hon. members suggest that the inspectors of mines, the registrars, the police and so on in the districts affected should undertake the responsibility of reporting on

mining properties, for which assistance has been sought from the Government? That work must be done by a man having technical knowledge. The idea before us was to work so that eventually the inspectors of mines who are appointed to carry out duties under the Mines Regulation Act would be able to do the work for which they are appointed.

Mr. Mullany: I have been told in the department that it is not anticipated they will change that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those inspectors were appointed to carry out definite duties under the Mines Regulation Act. Our experience has been that the visits paid by these officers, when the occasion has arisen, have been too hurried. If we get an application from Bangemall on the Murchison, I have to send an inspector of mines to report. That officer is supposed to be attending to the interests of the men employed on the mines in pursuance of the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act. I may have to send him 100 miles away to Bangemall to report on the advisability of giving assistance which has been sought. That is no part of that officer's duties. While he is away I may get an application from some other remote part of that officer's district. No sooner is he back from Bangemall than he has to run away to report on an application from some other part. Is it economical to continue that system? If we have inspectors under the Mines Regulation Act, we should allow them to carry out the work for which they are paid, and let us have a man who can look after the other part of the business separately. If members representing gold-fields districts like to take up the attitude that such an appointment is not desirable, I will give consideration to their views. I do not wish to force anything upon the mining industry. As the custodian of the public funds available to the Mines Department, and as one having a certain responsibility to the Treasurer of Western Australia, I am not prepared to continue a practice I have discovered to be weak in certain directions and, if I cannot get better results, I must review the position. I cannot give a man £100 and let him do with it what he likes and incur a cost of another £90 to get a report on that man's operations. The position is not satisfactory. I have tried to find a way out of it. I may not have succeeded, but, in any case, I have tried.

Mr. Chesson: What you propose will cost more than if the work is done by the inspectors of mines.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the hon. member is wrong. The member for Leonora (Mr. Heron) mentioned the case of a mine in his electorate which was supposed to be full of promise. The local inspector in Leonora reported against it. The hon. member will candidly admit that the feeling at his centre was that the official was not friendly disposed towards the man who made the application.

Mr. Heron: That is only too right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is one disadvantage. I do not want prejudice to enter into a matter affecting the welfare of the mining industry and of the State.

Mr. Heron: I think that man was an exception.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will again consult with the members of the prospecting board, who agreed with my attitude at the outset. If hon. members still insist that such an appointment is undesirable, I will not go on with it.

Mr. Corboy: Do you think that one man will be able to do all the work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not suggest that one man will do all the work, but he will be able to organise the work, and that will prevent a good deal of the waste that is going on to-day. At least, he will save the State the salary that is paid to him. The men engaged in the mining industry are entitled to the best consideration the Government can extend to them. I have referred to the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Boyland). I am afraid the complaint from which he is suffering has somewhat warped his judgment and caused him to make most insulting references to myself. I am prepared to pass over that aspect. He suggested I should be pensioned off. If the Treasurer will agree to adopt a similar view, I am prepared, although I am afraid the member for Kalgoorlie rather understated my value, to take £10,000 in order to avoid any further trouble. I will consent to be patriotic to that extent.

The Minister for Works: We will go together.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: All right, but I am afraid we will not stop together for long. Coming to the question of miners' complaint, the member for Kalgoorlie was apparently wrathful because the department had lent itself to a report on miners' phthisis in South Africa, which had been written by Mr. J. Cornell, M.L.C. I am afraid the attitude of the member for Kalgoorlie is not of recent birth. I remember the time when Mr. Jabez Dodd, M.L.C., first took an interest in this question. Mr. Dodd was then a member of the Labour Government. In those days, the present member for Kalgoorlie was not friendly disposed. There was always something with which he could find fault. I suppose we cannot complain on that score. I do not know why the innocent foreword of mine in connection with that report should have called forth the amount of abuse levelled against me by the member for Kalgoorlie. That report was printed and distributed with a definite object in view. For years we have discussed the question of doing something in connection with miners' phthisis. We have merely talked and done nothing.

Mr. Heron: That is right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We established a fund to relieve the position of those who have been suffering from this complaint and also of their dependants. It would be a poor look-out if we were content to merely continue in that direction. We cannot move

in such matters, however, and employ any compulsion until we get the men who will be affected to properly appreciate the advantages of the movement. We cannot get them to agree to such compulsion until we indicate to them the full ravages of the disease. It is not so many years ago that, if an endeavour had been made to deal with the question by asking men to undergo a medical examination, it would have been sufficient to cause a stoppage of work. To-day the men are more ready for some such scheme.

Mr. Lutey: They were quite prepared for it in 1911.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: To-day I think they will be prepared to welcome it, in order that this matter may be dealt with effectively.

Mr. Munsie: The men will accept it all right, provided some provision is made for those who are debarred from going down below.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will come to that aspect later on. The member for Kalgoorlie referred to the foreword and wanted to know if that was all I intended to do. I do not think the hon. member could have read that foreword or he would not have asked that question. I gave my assistance to the movement in order to point out to the men the beneficial results which have accrued in South Africa. I wanted to show them what could be done here in order to deal with this difficulty. But we might make pace too hastily, and I don't want anything of that sort. I have even shown my sympathy by increasing, with the approval of the Treasurer, our donation to the Miners' Relief Fund, which is to-day in a parlous condition, but which undoubtedly would have been closed down had the Government not come to the rescue. Surely there is no lack of sympathy there. The hon. member even said it was a damned crying shame that I, as Minister, should fool men like him, men dying from miners' complaint. Let us see to what extent I have been fooling them. After that report was received, I discussed with the Premier the question of requesting the Federal Government to render some assistance; because it is a Federal matter when we have an industry in Australia, not in one State alone but in several, which is breaking down able-bodied men. There can be no remedial scheme of permanent value which is confined to any State alone. Consequently, with the approval of the Premier, I asked the Prime Minister would he lend his sympathy to the movement. The Prime Minister readily said it should have both his sympathy and support. When we are saying so many hard things, many of them probably well justified, about the Federal Government, we must at least give them credit for having established in different parts of Australia clinics for making close examinations into the effects of industrial diseases. To-day there is in Kalgoorlie such a clinic, where a powerful X-ray plant is employed to obtain data. Is not that something in a practical direction, something bet-

ter than talking around the subject all the time? I hope that, arising out of that co-operation between the State and the Federal Governments, we shall be able, at little or no expense to the State, to do something which will be more than the doling out of charity to broken down men, something which will be in the nature rather of prevention than of cure. That will not be very difficult to obtain, although I admit that the essential alteration would be hard on some individuals, and probably on the Treasury as well. We must act in the direction of removing from the mines men who are a menace to their fellow workers. It has been proved beyond doubt that the man suffering from fibrosis or silicosis is not a danger to his fellow workers except that, being so affected, he is more prone to the attacks of the tubercle than he would be if he were perfectly sound. Of course once he has contracted tuberculosis he becomes a menace to his fellow workers. As a preliminary step to the removal of such men from our mines I, acting in co-operation with the Federal Government, propose to submit a Bill providing for compulsory medical examination. I discussed this matter with the Eastern doctors over here for the purpose of establishing the X-ray plant in Kalgoorlie. In conjunction with them we shall be able to obtain definite data. I am also going to ask to be empowered to remove from the mines men proved to be suffering from tuberculosis. To-day we do nothing until a man is a wreck, whereas by proper X-ray examination we can discover his condition at so early a stage that we shall be able to remove him from dangerous surroundings and put him in a way to earn his own livelihood in another vocation. Briefly, those are some of the points showing our sympathy with the industry. I have not taken undue credit for this, because for years past the question has been discussed by all sections. My friends opposite, and the members of the National Labour Party on this side of the House, have continually drawn attention to the necessity for doing something in this respect. I claim that we are doing something, and that with a little support we shall be able to make it effective. Again, we have at the Phillips River field complex difficulties confronting the production of wealth. Without yet being able to declare it too positively, I believe we have discovered a process which will enable us to treat low grade ore on a profitable basis. Laboratory tests have been made—I am speaking of the work of Dr. Simpson—and it has been found that, subject to the mining costs being as stated, the course of treatment will mean that we shall be able to handle five per cent. copper ore, whereas previously anything less than eight per cent. was unprofitable. If we can do that, there is a great future before, not only the Phillips River field, but many other fields now closed down.

Mr. Lambert: If that can be done, the world will treble its copper output.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It can be done. Also I have been advised that, since the laboratory tests, there has been put through a parcel of half a ton, which Dr. Simpson asserts is a sufficient quantity for a bulk test.

Mr. Underwood: It will apply all over the world, and down will come the price of copper.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Anyhow, we have the first use of it, and it is for us to make the most of it. They put this half ton parcel through a small plant, and I am informed that the bulk test gives a better percentage extraction than the laboratory tests, and that the cost of chemicals necessary for the treatment works out less for the half ton than it appeared to work out in the laboratory tests. The hon. member for Yilgarn (Mr. Corboy) knows that we have a great quantity of sands stored at Phillips River. Those sands are very valuable in gold contents, some going half an ounce to the ton. Up to date it has not been possible to treat it, because it carries also a percentage of copper. Dr. Simpson is now satisfied that we shall be able to treat those sands and recover the half-ounce of gold, as well as the copper. There, again, is a great deal of wealth which at present is wasted. It will mean the production not only of wealth for the owners, but of wealth for the State also.

Mr. Corboy: We shall have 2,000 men there when you get that process going.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then there is the question of the manner in which the Mitchell Government have dealt with their employees. I have heard it stated that we were trying Shylock methods in our recent attempt to obtain a ruling on the basic wage and the hours of labour. It has gone out to the public that we were the first employers in Western Australia to attempt to reduce wages. 'Hon. members will know that, not very long ago, when the railway union applied to the Arbitration Court and obtained an increase in the basic wage, all the other employees in the railway service, and in the Government service generally, immediately claimed that the new basic wage should apply to them also. No member of the Opposition then declared that we ought to make those employees go to the Arbitration Court to get what they wanted; I did not hear anybody assert that it was wrong for us not only to make it apply to all out to make it retrospective.

Mr. Wilcock: It was agreed upon beforehand.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nothing of the sort! The Minister for Works agreed with the particular union which was trying to get an agreement from him that the basic wage for the railway men would apply to them also.

The Minister for Works: We then thought it would be only a matter of a month or six weeks before the case was taken.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But it was not promised to the salaried staff of the rail-

ways nor to others in the Government service, notwithstanding which it was applied generally and retrospectively. Yet, forsooth, nobody complained! But when the same union went again to the court and was awarded a reduction of the basic wage, it was not suggested that the Government, in making new agreements, should review the basic wage and make that review retrospective!

Mr. Corboy: The Arbitration Court refused to alter the hours in the railway service, but you attempted to do it by summary notice.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is mere assumption. The question of hours is used to try and nail down their argument. The hon. member has not offered that, subject to the hours being a condition of settlement by the Arbitration Court, the other conditions will be acceptable as they applied when the new award was given. Nobody has urged that we should take the same action when there is a fall in the basic wage as we took when the basic wage was raised. The Government have not acted unfairly by their employees. Since the Government have to hold the scales between the men and the taxpayers, the Government might well have imposed the reduced basic wage and even made it retrospective to the date of the railway award. Hon. members did not suggest that. I contend that the treatment meted out by the Government to their employees has not been unfair. If hon. members will take the figures, they will find we have exceeded the basic wage by something approaching £300,000. Yet we are charged with being unfair to our employees!

Mr. Corboy: The decision of the court gave you no authority to try to increase hours.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is all very well for the hon. member to rely on the question of hours alone. We were prepared to waive that question.

Mr. Corboy. Oh, no, you were not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was suggested that the question be left in abeyance. Now I suppose I ought to say something about tramways and tramway extension.

Mr. Munsie: I wouldn't mention Como.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not propose to; I propose to mention South Perth. No one in this Chamber regrets more than I do the fact that circumstances had changed to such an extent that we were compelled under the then conditions to commence a work which it was never intended should be commenced until Parliament had been approached. I have said this repeatedly and I say it again. Let members put themselves in our position at that juncture. They know what a sudden shock it was when almost the whole of the timber mills were closed down and the men were thrown on the unemployed market. They know that works in the metropolitan area had to close down because they could not pay their way. The cement works and the fibrolite works put off 150 men in

one week. It is true that these difficulties were not altogether unforeseen; it is true that we realised that there would be an unemployed difficulty for a period, but it came on us much more suddenly, and to a greater extent, than anyone anticipated. I maintain that anyone in possession of the facts which were before us at that time would not have adopted any other course of action. We endeavoured to get country centres to absorb our unemployed but we did not receive a single favourable answer.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Harrison: Largely due to the weather.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, the season was late and the weather conditions had that effect. I ask members, could we continue to take up the attitude, that because of the possibility of adverse criticism later on, we should not do anything, although action might be necessary from the point of view of the community who were certainly entitled to consideration? When I recommended to the then Acting Premier that a commencement be made with this work, the paramount question was that men, their wives and children, were suffering from a lack of the necessities of life, and immediate provision was required to meet the wants of the unemployed. The man who would be so hard or callous as to refuse to help men, women and children in need of the necessities of life, because of the possibility of criticism later on, would be unworthy of any confidence or consideration. If my colleagues could have found ways and means of absorbing the unemployed in works for which, like this work, the material was on hand, those ways and means would have been adopted. We had to meet the difficulty at once. Everyone knows the temper which existed in the metropolitan area at the time. No one knows it better than the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). However, the matter boils itself down to the fact of the Government having broken faith with Parliament after the Premier had given his undertaking that this tramway would not be built. I did not hear the Premier make that promise, and I did not know that it had been given. The words I used, as will be found in "Hansard," were—

I claim it is not the intention to proceed with any general scheme of tramway extension until Parliament is again consulted. It was not my intention to proceed with any general scheme of extension; nothing was further from my thoughts. However, I claim that, irrespective of what might be said to the contrary, the fact that we had that material in store, ready to be put on the road where it could earn interest and provide work for unemployed with homes in the metropolitan area—it was restricted to them—made this the infinitely better course to adopt, rather than leave the material in store costing us interest, and the men to walk about the streets, their wives and families short of the necessities of life. Notwithstanding all

the hard things that have been said of me, while expressing the regret which one only can express for having to admit a breach of faith, I maintain that the balance was undoubtedly in favour of the action we took.

Mr. Harrison: That material consisted of more than rails.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, of electrical plant of various descriptions. I do not propose to go through the whole of the statements as to whether the new line will pay. It is showing a better return per car mile than any other tram route with the exception of Neillands.

Mr. Willecock: Oh!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not expect the hon. member to accept my word.

Mr. Willecock: The people have been travelling for the novelty of the thing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is it paying better than the Inglewood line?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Per car mile, yes. I believe that this line, taking the whole year round, will be one of the best paying propositions in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why did you not extend it to Canning Bridge?

Mr. Mann: You expect that it will open up cheap land for homes?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not considering that for the moment. We have taken over the trams and made them a Government monopoly. At the time, Parliament was not in the temper to give the company any further concession. Members knew well that we were forced into the position of taking the trams over. Since then, a matter of eight years, we have extended our track by only a little over five miles.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That includes duplications.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As a matter of fact we have made practically no extensions. A length of two miles was laid along the foreshore in fulfilment of a promise to the city council when they erected the municipal baths and to the University authorities when they accepted Crawley as the University site. If the Government are not prepared to provide the facilities required by the people, we ought to find a way of handing the trams over to someone who will and can provide those facilities. Then if there is any profit it should go to those who are using the facilities; if there is any loss the same people should make it good. This can only be brought about by different control. I have expressed the opinion on several occasions that a trust representative of all the interests concerned could well take over the control of the trams, thus relieving the national debt of the capital moneys involved which are frequently quoted against us to our detriment and not against other States which have trusts carrying these capital costs.

Hon. P. Collier: The same thing applies to water supply and sewerage in the East.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Make it apply throughout the State and not to one area only.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What is essentially a parochial interest, serving only a section of the community for a definite purpose and of no value to anyone else, should be under the control of a body representing that section, and on them should be the obligation of making it pay or of making good any deficiency.

Mr. Mann: Will the local authorities charge a fare which will permit of houses being built in these outer districts?

Mr. Underwood interjected.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is of no use discussing the question of what we should have done. The fact remains that we have taken over the trams, and we are controlling them to-day. We have made very slight extensions. In 1914, the first year in which the Government operated the system, we carried 10,700,000 passengers. Last year we carried 25 million passengers, an increase of over 14 millions on practically the same tracks as we took over in 1913.

Hon. P. Collier: And left behind 10 million people whom you could not carry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And what does that go to prove? It goes to prove that we have been compelling people, against the general welfare of the community, to reside along the existing tracks. While we have been urging people to go out into the fresh air and open spaces, we have been compelling them to live along the tram tracks. This has had the effect of creating the agitation for a fair rents court. The very fact of people demanding housing accommodation, and of landlords putting up their rents everywhere is traceable to the fact that we have not extended our tram tracks to enable people to take advantage of cheaper building blocks in the outer areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The most important part is that it never cost the State a penny.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. The best way to overcome the difficulties of high rents is to make provision for additional homes. The member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) shakes her head. New South Wales has had experience of fair rents legislation, and has found that the position became worse instead of better, because less building resulted. People eased off in the matter of building homes, and the congestion became still greater. A man will pay any rent that might be demanded rather than face the alternative of his family having to sleep in the open. The best way to overcome the difficulty is to encourage people to build new homes on the cheap lands in the outer areas. Members of the Opposition know very well that the best move ever made in this State to put a stopper on the so-called greedy landlord was the introduction of the workers' homes system.

Mr. Munsie: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was a question of providing additional cheap homes. The housing problem is not common to Western Australia. It is a problem throughout the civilised world. We can do much better by affording facilities to provide additional homes for men working in the metropolitan

area, and who must consequently live there, than by compelling them to live in what are frequently called slums, or what will very soon become slums, unless we enable them to go further out. We have been told that we had no right to make extensions because the trams are not paying. Let me quote a few figures. The capital involved in the tramways amounts to £654,000. The total working expenses since the inception of Government control to the 30th June last were £1,116,000; the total interest paid by the Treasury on the capital was £244,902; or a grand total of working expenses and interest of £1,361,443. The total earnings were £1,412,749, giving a surplus of £51,306.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Of that amount £46,000 should go to sinking fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is true. We have actually paid to municipalities thus provided for a sum of £40,000 in the same period for the right to use the streets, towards the upkeep of which we are paying through the activities of the Minister for Works. Yet some members contend that, notwithstanding the demands made upon us, we should sit down and do nothing. We are not entitled to do this.

Mr. Richardson: The municipalities maintain the tracks for you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not correct. The department has been maintaining the roads for the Subiaco Council for years.

Mr. Richardson: That is entirely wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is correct and I will prove it. By virtue of our having a set of steel rails in the road, we have to keep the road level fairly even. We maintain the roads for the width of the rails plus 18 inches on either side. The double track in Subiaco covers about two thirds of the road. That is kept up by the Tramway Department. Because of the nature of the road practically the whole of the traffic uses that particular part of the road. The other portion is hardly used at all.

Hon. P. Collier: The rest of the road is covered with kerosene tins.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hope to arrive at an agreement with the local authorities under which all the road shall be made by both parties at the same time. I want to provide that the surface of the road shall be kept in an equal condition from footpath to footpath, and that the cost of maintenance shall not fall more heavily upon the Tramway Department than upon the local authority concerned.

Mr. Richardson: But the Government do not stick to their contract.

Mr. Corboy: You stick to your contract to support them despite that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is wrong for the tramways to have to keep the road up. They do not wear it away.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Perth and others referred to the necessity for assisting secondary industries. I may tell them that we are liable to run ourselves

into serious difficulties if we are not very watchful. It is not the function of government to be a huge financial institution to assist all and sundry to establish themselves in some industry. Men who are directly interested in an industry naturally assume that everything about it is in order, that nothing can go wrong with it, that it is foolish for the Government to even suggest an investigation lasting two or three months, and that because they have gone into the matter thoroughly themselves and see a huge profit in it, everything in the garden must be lovely. It is the duty of financial institutions to assist in this direction. The duty of the Government begins and ends in making such investigations as will enable men, institutions, or companies to use our raw materials so that they may be manufactured into the finished article and placed upon the local markets and the markets outside. Having done that, we have no right to put into an industry any further capital.

Mr. Mann: Are you not assisting in research work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The trouble begins from the financial point of view. We ought to help in establishing new industries, especially those which will be using our raw materials in the way I have suggested. It is not economically sound for our raw materials to be sent abroad and returned to this State as finished products.

Mr. Mann: The Government are always well secured.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member does not know of some of the fishy jokes of the past. Frequently, we have to accept the position as we find it. It is worth while taking some risk to establish a local industry that may prove of great value to the State. By the methods we have adopted we have endeavoured to induce people to appreciate the fact that they can help themselves first of all by purchasing the locally manufactured article and using it in preference to the imported article. It may well be said that a person will buy the cheapest article he can get. It must be remembered that in a new State like this we have to compete against the established industries of the Eastern States and elsewhere. When we start a new industry here, we are liable to be interfered with by what are known as dumped goods. People may be able to buy a cheaper article for the moment, when they purchase these dumped goods. Eventually, however, the monopolies behind them, having killed the local industry, will put up the price again and the goods will become dear once more. We are trying to educate the people to buy the locally manufactured article. We have held an exhibition, which has run for 16 months, and has been changed eight times. It is not our intention to make a museum of it. We propose to change the exhibits frequently so that all concerned can display the produce of this State.

Mr. Mann: They are very good exhibits.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is estimated that 150,000 persons have visited these

exhibitions. I was there at lunch time the other day, and could scarcely see the exhibits for the crowd. The accommodation is altogether inadequate. We are not stopping at that. A Western Australian Industries League has been formed. Amongst its members are the member for West Perth, the wife of Mr. Spaker, and many other prominent ladies and gentlemen. By means of this league we hope to bring the Western Australian goods more prominently before all the people in the State. It is not only a question of asking the people in the metropolitan area to buy our own goods, but we want to enlarge the scope of our operations. A travelling van, which will be used for country exhibits, will be sent round, and the league will pay the cost entailed to our railway system. It will, therefore, be no further cost to the State. It will be the means of showing the people of the State what can be done here. It is necessary that the public should understand what is expected of them, and I am sure when they have the opportunity they will avail themselves of it. The question of shipping has been raised. There are some directions in which it is desirable that the Government should be interested in trading operations, otherwise we would not own our own railways. In other directions trade interference may be harmful. The State shipping service has been beneficial from a point of view that is not always appreciated. I have here a cutting from the London "Times" trade supplement which puts the position better than I could put it—

A Government monopoly of shipping in any given trade would almost certainly be less economical and probably more undesirable than even a private monopoly, but the conduct of a Government line of reasonable dimensions on a purely commercial basis and on its own merits, solely with a view to supplementing services provided by a combination of private ship owners, and to discipline that combination when necessary, is a totally different matter; in fact, it is a necessity for a young country with a very negligible merchant marine under her flag, and without capitalists strong enough or willing to undertake the risk of purchasing and attempting to run a fleet of expensive vessels in established combine protected by its deferred rebate system.

That is the position we are in to-day with our State Shipping Service. Had it not been for that service the producers of the North-West coast would have been strangled during the war and afterwards.

Mr. Munsie: They would have had no communication, and could not have afforded to pay the freights asked.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I want to explain some of the difficulties we have to face. We should receive more encouragement and less destructive criticism in this regard. I have referred to the deferred rebate system. The shipping companies operating under the conference provide definite freight rates. It

is also provided that, subject to the shippers not shipping through any other lines of steamers than those which come under the conference, they will get a deferred rebate. Should however, they ship through any other source, they will lose the deferred rebate. That was the reason why the "Kangaroo" had to travel from England to Western Australia without a ton of cargo. The people who had goods available actually to send by her were not permitted by the shipping companies to ship those goods by our steamer without loss of deferred rebates. That may be all right; I am only pointing out the position. Then take the question of other actions of the conference. We had an opportunity of providing freight for some of our products—the member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) will know something about this—at a better rate than the shipping companies were prepared to quote. Shipment was to be via Singapore. As soon as we commenced to operate, shippers were notified that if they sent their goods by our steamers at a lesser rate than that being paid to Holt's line, the cargo would not be lifted out of Singapore, but would be boycotted there. Fortunately, just before action was taken, Holt's line had come down to our rate. Then there are the rates of freight fixed by conference. I have here a journal issued by a certain firm operating in Sydney. The journal gives rates of freight from Australia to different ports outside Australia. The "Kangaroo" is retained at present for one purpose, and one purpose only. When that purpose is achieved, we can dispense with the "Kangaroo"; but until then we cannot afford to do so. It is not a question of State shipping, but of obtaining markets which geographically belong to us, and out of which we have been kept too long. According to this little book, the rate from any port in Australia—Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, or Fremantle—on flour is 50s. per 2,000 lbs. That rate means that a shipper could send his flour from Melbourne right around the north of Australia to Singapore at the same freight as one of our shippers could send it from Fremantle to Singapore. No company operating from Fremantle would dare to quote under that rate. Yet the same people quote to Japan from the Eastern States ports 70s. per ton of general cargo, and 35s. for flour. The latter rate compares with 50s. from Fremantle.

Mr. Munsie: That is patriotism.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a question of business. Similar conditions obtain in every other part of the world. These people have competition to Japan and China in the Japanese line of steamers, and, therefore, they have to fix a competitive rate. But from Fremantle there was no competition, and therefore, they were charging our flour millers 50s. for half the distance as against 35s. from the eastern side of Australia. The distance from Melbourne to Singapore is 5,367 miles; the distance from Fremantle to Singapore is

2,225 miles. Under such conditions we were unable to obtain the benefit of our geographical position. Therefore, we were warranted, irrespective of loss at the outset, in retaining at least one steamer for the purpose of making it possible for the producers of Western Australia to operate in markets out of which they have hitherto been kept. We are compelled to such a course of action for our own protection, for our very life.

Mr. Munsie: I hope your friends on the cross benches are listening. The Country Party want you to sell the State trading concerns.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I try to look at things from the aspect of the benefit of the whole community. My friends on the cross benches sometimes disagree with me; I cannot help that. There is always bound to be difference of opinion. I am now trying to establish the facts as regards this particular matter. Take the case of the "Kangaroo." The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) blames me for not having sold her when there was an opportunity of doing so. But it is not a question of price. Since we refused to sell the "Kangaroo" she has netted to the State, after payment of all costs, including interest and depreciation, no less a sum than £46,700. The hon. member did not deduct that from the loss he estimated, nor in estimating that loss did he allow for the fact that the State still has the "Kangaroo." Here are some of the things we shipped on behalf of our producers in the "Kangaroo," shipped on behalf of the men settled on the land, where we are asking others to settle to-day, things that could not have been taken out of Western Australia except by the "Kangaroo."—

Mr. Underwood: Or some more suitable ship.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The freights were prohibitive.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. There was no space whatever offering.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What about the Commonwealth steamers?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They had no refrigerator space. The "Kangaroo" lifted on behalf of our producers 14,970 cases of fresh fruit, 50 tons of frozen meat, 2,653 tons of flour, 40 tons of soap, 37 tons of biscuits, 345 tons of mother-of-pearl shell, 48 tons of wool, 480 tons of sandalwood, 28 tons of onions, 40 tons of beer, 305 tons of hay and chaff, 19,987 head of live sheep, 1,976 head of live cattle. Omitting the sandalwood, none of these products could have been taken out of the State but for the "Kangaroo." No other ship could have done it. And that is not the only benefit. By reason of having the "Kangaroo" we have been enabled to bring about reductions in the rates of freight on these goods, which mean so much to our producers. Flour has come down by 10s. per ton. Live cattle have been reduced 10s. per head, live sheep 1s. to 1s. 6d. General cargo rates have been reduced by

30s. or 35s. per ton. The reduction on m.o.p. shell, to £3 and £4 5s. to the United Kingdom and America respectively, means a saving to our producers of no less than £25,000, which amount they would otherwise have had to pay to the shipping companies, were it not for the operations of the State Shipping Service. The pearl shellers have sent 125 tons of shell to the United Kingdom for transhipment via Singapore, and the actual saving on that quantity of shell was £5,695. That amount went into the pockets of our pearl shellers, instead of being paid away to the shipping companies.

Mr. Mann: Are you going to endeavour to get a freight to Mauritius?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I shall not worry about that for some time. I want to establish the present position. We have to realise that it is not always a question of State trading but sometimes a question of using what is, after all, a fair means in order to prevent somebody with no very definite or fixed interest in Western Australia from taking advantage of our producers. If the shipping companies can get 2,000 tons of cargo from the Eastern States, where, naturally, freight is available in large quantities on account of the output there being greater, they do not trouble one bit about running an empty ship from Fremantle to Eastern States ports. But we are concerned, surely, on behalf of our primary producers, and with a view to disposing of our raw materials in those markets which geographically belong to us. The State Shipping Service has been the only method available to us; and we have used it in my opinion, quite rightly and quite well. Those who are to-day to some extent criticising the Government for their action in this respect are the people who have received the greatest benefit from that action. The State Shipping Service has been the means of enabling them to dispose of goods which otherwise would not have found a market, or at all events not a satisfactory market. I do not propose to detain the House much longer. I did propose to read the balance sheet in connection with the State Steamship Service, which shows a profit of £264,000. I will pass over that, however.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is just mentioned by the way.

Hon. P. Collier: I think you had better read it.

Mr. Lutey: We get a lot the other way; let us have something good.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will take it as read, because it does not alter the facts I have referred to. I am not concerned with pounds, shillings and pence for the moment, but I am concerned with the promotion of trade and the assistance of our producers and manufacturers. I had intended to deal with the oil prospecting question. As, however, I intend to introduce a Bill dealing with that aspect I will not do so at the present juncture. I believe I can justify the course of action pursued by the Mines Department and I will do so when the Bill is submitted. Reference has been made

to the motor coaches which have been run over some parts of our railway system. Since the motor coaches were put on some little time ago, they have worked satisfactorily. The results have exceeded anticipations and it almost appears as though the people are travelling more than when the ordinary railways were run. Of course, it may be the novelty of the new coaches that has induced people to utilise the new vehicles. The experience of the first three weeks on the Tamhellup-Ongerup run showed that people were travelling in greater numbers than had been the case for some time previously. The traffic there was greater than on the Denmark line, which is always regarded as heavier. Thus our first experience with the motor coaches has been entirely satisfactory from the point of view of revenue and the way the public are patronising the conveniences.

Hon. P. Collier: Are the running costs satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to mention that aspect, but the coaches are profitable.

Hon. P. Collier: Are the costs satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. Latham: I was told they ran out at 1s. 4d. a mile.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the hon. member is wrong.

Mr. Latham: I don't think so, although I got into trouble about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will neither deny nor affirm the hon. member's statement. Reference by way of a question was made to the operations of the Inspection of Machinery Act. I admit we can overdo the inspection of certain plant. The essential purpose of this Act is to protect the general public. It is to protect the man who is working with dangerous machinery, and unless we provide means of safeguarding his interests, injuries and loss of life will be recorded where they could have been avoided. It is not a question of demanding fees. There are, however, some kinds of machinery which it is unnecessary to inspect and I am submitting to the Premier an Order in Council in pursuance of the powers vested in me by that Act to exempt certain plant. The Order in Council I propose to submit, is as follows:—

Electrical motors used exclusively by agriculturists, pastoralists, orchardists, and dairymen, and used for irrigating or dairying purposes only in pursuance of their calling upon which no labour other than their own is employed and which are not used for driving dangerous machinery such as circular saws, corn crushers, refrigerating plants, ammonia compressors, and other dangerous machinery. I hope to make this Order effective as from the 1st September next.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That will relieve market gardeners regarding their pumps?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Mr. Mann: You are not considering the city requirements.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: City requirements are on an entirely different basis.

Mr. Mann: They may be.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are. Where there are men working about machinery, where men have been electrocuted and many people have been in the vicinity and in many other cases, it is necessary to have such plant inspected. We must give full protection to the general community. I wish to deal with the reference made by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) to the sinking fund contributions. That hon. member endeavoured to draw an analogy between the action of the present Treasurer and my proposal of 1915.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know the difference.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the hon. member does. I believe that under the conditions then prevailing and taking into account the practice throughout the civilised world, and particularly throughout the British Dominions and Great Britain, the action I suggested then was not unreasonable.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was better.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: My proposal was that we should use money to purchase our stock in the open market before it matured and instead of paying interest to the stockholders, we should issue inscribed stock to the trustees of the sinking fund which stock would be held until we got over our difficulties and we could raise a special loan to clear off that liability.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not go so far. They suspended it altogether.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. My proposal would have relieved us to the extent of £374,000. We had to find that money out of revenue, and borrowing at that time meant that we had to get money at a higher rate of interest to pay off that which was carrying a lower rate of interest. Every other country was faced with the same difficulty in those days. No country was doing well. The present Treasurer has not followed that course and he has not continued to borrow money at the higher rates of interest. He has done what any ordinary business or private individual would do. When a person gives an undertaking to his bank that he will meet an obligation on a due date and he has sufficient at his disposal to wipe off the overdraft long before that due date, do hon. members think any bank would turn round and say to such a client—"Although we know you have more than is required to meet your obligations, you must go on paying interest on the overdraft and lock up all that capital, which might be available for use in other directions." No bank would adopt such an attitude, and the trustees of the sinking fund in London did not adopt it either. There is no analogy whatever between the two proposals. In one case, we met our obligations fully, and the sinking fund trustees have accepted the proposal of the Treasurer, seeing that all due

provision has been made to cover the position. I have concluded. I know that from time to time criticism has been hurled at me because of my changed attitude towards various questions. That criticism will continue so long as I am in public life and will probably follow me through to the end. Such has been the experience from time immemorial. Without classing myself on the same plane as many great statesmen who have preceded me, and whose names will go down in history when mine has long been forgotten—that will not worry me because when I am under the sod, it will avail but little—my experience has not been singular. Sometimes conditions compel one to change one's views. If it were not for such changes, what progress would any country make? I ask my friends of the Opposition would they suggest that they subscribe to the same principles and the same platform which held good years ago? On the contrary, their platforms are changed from conference to conference, and so the views of that party change from year to year. The actions of men from time to time are governed by conditions of the moment which, in turn, compel a change in attitude and in opinions. I am not ashamed of the changed opinions I hold on many subjects. It is a position which greater men than I have been confronted with in years gone by. Let me tell hon. members what Frederick Harrison in his book on the life of Chatham, who was known in the House of Commons as Pitt the elder, said of that statesman. I assure hon. members that I do not put myself on the same plane as William Pitt by a long way. This, however, is what Harrison wrote of Pitt—

Pitt's career, especially at this time—This was subsequent to the fall of Walpole and at a time when there was considerable turmoil and change in England. The same might be said of Western Australia during the last year or so—

—was full of incongruities. He was above all things an opportunist, as we say to-day; and in times of change a real statesman must be an opportunist, as were Cromwell, William of Orange, Henry IV. and Richelieu . . . In an age of change and confusion, consistency may become a grave political fault.

Hon. members will agree that I cannot be charged with a "grave political fault," because I have certainly changed my opinions. I urge it with confidence that I have not changed my attitude of faith in Western Australia, but have constantly applied myself to those bigger matters which count in the progress of the State, leaving the smaller questions, important though they may appear, to some hon. members, for consideration when time will permit. My changed opinions have perhaps led to some confusion in the mind of others but I believe I have at least done my duty. I have no regrets regarding my past actions, although I may have made mistakes. Every man will make mistakes, but I want members to balance

what I have attempted to do and what I believe I have accomplished and place them against the mistakes, which I am afraid are sometimes advanced for political purposes only. I believe that while I may have failed in some directions, I have succeeded in other ways to an extent that does me some little credit.

Question put and passed; the Address-in-reply adopted.

BILLS (11)—FIRST READING.

1. Licensing Act Amendment.
2. Closer Settlement.
3. Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.
4. Married Women's Protection.
Introduced by the Premier.
5. Wyalcatchem Mt. Marshall Railway Extension.
Introduced by the Minister for Works.
6. Miners Phthisis.
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.
7. Agricultural Seeds.
8. Broomehill Racecourse.
9. Dairy Cattle Improvement.
10. Dairy Industry.
Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.
11. Administration Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mrs. Cowan.

The House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th August, 1922.

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

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT, STAFF APPOINTMENTS.

Hon. J. EWING (for Hon. C. F. Baxter) asked the Minister for Education: 1, What are the qualifications of the following officers appointed to the wheat branch of the Agricultural Department:—(a) Wheat Experimentalist, (b) Field Officer, (c) Agricultural Adviser? 2, Will he present a return showing a saving of £2,000 has been effected by retirements and transfers after allowing for the above-mentioned new appointments?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, (a) Aptitude for experimental work, a thorough training as professional draftsman and computer, several years W.A. farming experience as owner, and two years' experience assisting the Wheat Commissioner with experimental work. (b) Practical farming experience as manager and owner. (c) Graduate in Agriculture in W.A. University. 2, The saving referred to was effected by the following abolitions, retirements, and transfers:—Under Secretary; Agricultural expert generally assisting. Retirements: Accounts clerks (3); fruit inspectors (2); stock inspector (1). Transfers: Accountant; sub-accountant; accounts clerks (4); correspondence clerk (1).

QUESTION—TORBAY-GRASSMERE DRAINAGE PAPERS.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (for Hon. H. Stewart) asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House the report by Mr. W. H. Shields, B.Sc., consulting engineer, on the Torbay-Grassmere drainage scheme, and all papers relating to the report.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes.

The Minister for Education laid upon the Table the papers referred to.

SELECT COMMITTEE—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin the time for bringing up the report was extended to Tuesday, 19th September.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the 24th August.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [4.37]: In endeavouring to say a few words this afternoon, I desire at the outset to offer you, Mr. President, my hearty congratulations on the position you have attained. I am sure your long public career has fully justified the House in selecting you for that position. I hope you may be long spared to preside over the deliberations of this Chamber. In saying that, however, I also desire to express my sincere regret at the defeat of Mr. Kingsmill. I am sure his defeat was a great loss to this Chamber. He was a man who knew practically every part of the Constitution and was thoroughly conversant with the Standing Orders. I am sure we shall feel his loss very much. I extend a hearty wel-