

oppose the second reading of the Bill, I cannot but enter a strong protest that the business affairs of this country should be carried on in such a way that we should be funding deficits in the manner that we are doing. There seems to be no limit to the extravagance of the Government. They can go on as they like and borrow sufficient every year to pay off what is owing. I do not know what the result of this method of finance will be. I am in accord with what the Colonial Secretary said, that it would be foolish to borrow money at a high rate of interest in order to invest it in a sinking fund at a lower rate of interest. However, I will not oppose the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

QUESTION—COLLIE COAL TESTS ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Were certain tests of Collie coal carried on last week between Perth and Armadale? If so, will the Minister notify the House at a later date of the results of such tests?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS replied: I am not aware of any such tests having been made.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Insurance Companies.
 - 2, Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
 - 3, Land Tax and Income Tax.
- Introduced by the Colonial Treasurer.

ROYAL COMMISSION, COST OF LIVING.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy-Moore) [5.48]: I would like to make a statement to the House. Members of the Royal Commission on the Cost of Living have sent in their final report. The chairman called on me this morning, and now I have the final report for submission to His Excellency, the Commission having completed their labours.

Hon. P. Collier: Have you tracked down the other Commission yet?

The PREMIER: They are nearly through.

SELECT COMMITTEE, RABBIT PEST.

Extension of time.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [5.49]: I regret very much I have to ask for an extension of the time provided for bringing up the report of the select committee. We have this afternoon completed the drafting of the report, but there has not yet been time to have it typed. I move—

"That the time for bringing up the report be extended until Tuesday next."

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.50]: I do not know whether the House will be justified in granting this extension of time.

Mr. Davies: The rabbits are increasing all the time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is just the point. It is not because I fear that owing to the delay in bringing up the report we shall not have time to consider it, because now that we are to go on with the session in Kathleen Mavourneen fashion we shall have ample time in which to deal with it. The point is that the rabbits are flocking in in ever increasing numbers and approaching nearer and nearer to the more closely settled districts.

Mr. Harrison: On the other hand, the poison carts are already at work.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but the select committee may advise the House that this is an entirely wrong method of dealing with the rabbits. In the meantime the department is going on with the poison carts, while we are awaiting information as to the most effective method of dealing with the pest. What will happen if the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Department continue expending considerable sums of money in the purchase of poison carts, and the select committee reports that those poison carts will be obsolete and of no use whatever next week? It may be that the committee will recommend an entirely different method of dealing with the pest. However, I hope the committee will take warning and get a move on. Of course, I know it was necessary for them to go round the rabbit infested areas. I may say in all seriousness that whilst in Kalgoorlie last week I met some men who had just come in from the Great Western Railway. They informed me that all along the country traversed by that railway, and even across the great Nullabor plain, the rabbits are making overland in millions, that the whole country side is infested with them. I questioned the men as to how the rabbits were getting on without water, but I was informed that there is a heavy dew nightly in that part of the country, and that sufficient moisture is thus provided for the rabbits.

Mr. Smith: Are they climbing rabbits?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think so. In any case they would not have an opportunity

of exercising that extraordinary faculty on the Nullabor plain. The question is a serious one, and I hope the select committee will present its report without much further delay.

Mr. Green: The rabbits will be in this Chamber before long.

Question put and passed.

BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th March.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.54]: I must confess that in discussing the Bill I cannot call to my aid any practical knowledge or experience of either horse-racing or betting.

Mr. Mullany: You once made a bet, I remember.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and was taken down. It has been a warning to me ever since. But there are in the Chamber hon. members who will be in a position to discuss the effect this tax will have on the totalisator from the point of view of actual experience. Of course, it occurs at once to the mind of the average man in the street that horse-racing and betting constitute a sport or a luxury and therefore afford a justifiable channel in regard to taxation. Certainly the increase the Treasurer proposes is a very heavy one, in that it amounts to 140 per cent.; that is to say, it is to be increased from 2½ per cent. to six per cent. It is a very heavy increase. If the racing clubs can stand this tax, if they can afford to have the six per cent. deducted and still carry on successfully, it follows that they must have been making a fairly substantial profit out of the sport in previous years, because the amount which the clubs themselves will have left to carry on with will show a material reduction. The Treasurer said he had consulted leading members of the several racing clubs, and that they had agreed to this increased tax; and that also the racing clubs of Kalgoorlie and Boulder had not offered any objection. If that be so, I do not know that I am called upon to object on their behalf or on behalf of any, except it be the poor, lone punter, who has no say in this matter and who might not be very well satisfied.

Mr. Smith: He is the man who finds the money.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, both for the clubs to carry on with and for the Government's taxation as well. The tax will amount to 2s. 6d. in the £ to be deducted from the punter; that is to say, that if a man should be fortunate enough to win £5 he will contribute 12s. 6d. to the revenue.

Mr. Smith: And be caught again by the income tax later on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

The Colonial Treasurer: It is pretty hard to catch, under the income tax, any of the winnings on the racecourse.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Treasurer is like the man at a show: what he misses with the

swings he picks up on the merry-go-round. Twelve shillings and sixpence in £5 in a very heavy tax on the bettor. I do not know the mind of the punter very well, but I should imagine that he would object to being specially singled out in this manner.

Mr. Smith: Then there are the fractions.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are retained by the club, except that the Government get six per cent. on them and on the unclaimed dividends after six months.

Mr. Munsie: They do not get six per cent. on the fractions.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think the Government will get six per cent. on the fractions and on the unclaimed dividends. I do not know why the man who speculates on horse-racing should be singled out for a special penalty. After all, there is no great difference between the man who goes to the racecourse and speculates £5, and the man who speculates a similar amount in the Stock Exchange on a mining venture. We know well that many of those who speculate in mining are not genuine investors in that industry, but merely speculators with a view to making money in the same manner as the man who goes on the race-course. The Treasurer received £14,000 from this source last year and anticipates receiving double that amount next year, when the tax has been a full year in operation. The amount he expects to receive is £28,000. After all, the number of men who frequent race-courses and indulge in betting is comparatively small, that is in relation to the total population of the State.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I do not know.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And if we draw forth the sum of £28,000 from this class of people in one year in addition to their having, as citizens, to meet all other forms of taxation as well, the country will be able to say that they are contributing their fair share to the revenue, to use a hackneyed phrase, in times like these. I do not object to the Bill, but shall listen with interest to the remarks of other hon. members more experienced and more qualified than myself to speak as to the effect this tax will have upon horse-racing and horse-breeding. We have heard of how great a value is horse-racing to the breeding of the horse, and that it keeps up the standard of the blood of our stock. That is a good old defence which has been put up by the horse-racing community, possibly for centuries. Now the Bill ropes in the trotting clubs. Whilst the man who owns the trotter is not able to say that his animal tends to improve the breeding of horses, he has another good defence, in that the animal is a utility horse. Though the horse may not be a thoroughbred and may be anything but handsome, the owner claims that the blood-horse is a mere squib and may run five or six furlongs, but is of very little value in the improvement of the breed of horses in this country, and that his animal, being a utility horse, really does the work of the world so far as horse-power is concerned. If those concerned believe that they can carry on, and apparently they have an unquenchable faith in the gullibility of the punter that no matter how we

may increase the tax or take him down he will still come up smiling again, one cannot object to the Bill. It is the only pursuit—I will not say occupation or profession—that I know of, that one can continue to tax in this way, for the men who are interested in it may be taken down ever so often, and they will ever come up smiling. In any other pursuit or occupation, if a man is bitten once or twice, he will not be caught again so easily. In the case of the punter, however, he seems ever possessed of the belief that some day he will strike a fortune. If he does so the Treasurer will have a fair share of his good luck, and the punter will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has helped the Treasurer in times of need.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.5]: In my opinion there is altogether too much racing in our community, especially in these times. Whilst we are going through our present troubles, in my opinion, all luxuries should be taxed to the very bone before we impose any other form of tax at all. Horse-racing is carried on to a great extent, particularly in the metropolitan area, and I believe the real canker in the social life of the community is found in this direction. We see young men owning horses and keeping other young men employed to train those horses. I do not think it is right at all. There is altogether too much racing in the metropolitan area, and there has always been from the very beginning. The wonder is that there are so many young men who occupy responsible positions in the country purchasing race-horses and indulging in the pursuit in these times. I have no objection to taxing racing in the form as laid down in this Bill. I think, too, that the bookmaker is going to be recognised by the Government. I do not know that it is a wise thing to do to allow the bookmaker to go on, because I am of opinion that he should be wiped out altogether. If the totalisator is taxed the bookmaker will also have to be taxed, otherwise the totalisator will be driven out of existence and the public will fall back upon the bookmaker. I notice that the Treasurer is imposing a tax of six per cent. on unclaimed totalisator dividends.

The Colonial Treasurer: After three months,

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not think it would be unfair if all the unclaimed dividends were paid into the Treasury, instead of a tax of six per cent. being imposed upon them.

The Colonial Treasurer: The amount would not be very large.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not see why the Government should not take the lot.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I cannot see why they should not do so either. We might just as well put all these unclaimed dividends into the Treasury. The Treasurer says that he expects to get an increase from £14,000 to £28,000 from this taxation. In my opinion a great many people go to race meetings in this State. On Saturday afternoon we have a race meeting on a galloping course, and on Saturday evening we have trotting meetings, and probably the same people go to both. We also have an army of bookmakers and trainers in our midst. Perth, indeed, is disfigured by

horse-racing, and especially is that the case in war time. I am fond of racing myself, but in my opinion when it is carried on to this extent, it becomes decidedly objectionable. If we can tax this form of sport I see no reason why we should not do so. The tax may, of course, press somewhat heavily upon the small country clubs which only race on a few occasions in the year and only have a small turnover from their totalisators. The tax upon these may represent a fairly big one. Racing in the metropolitan area should at any rate be taxed. The Government, I understand, made a raid upon the betting shops recently. I have no intention of opposing any of the proposals in this measure. I hope the Government will take into consideration the whole question of racing before long and, if the war lasts, will bring it under control and cut down racing to a great extent. There is less racing now than there was in normal times, and yet the Treasurer says that he is getting as much from racing as he ever got. I do not know how that can be. Most people claim to be hard up but they always seem to have money for luxuries, sports, and pleasures. I welcome this tax, at any rate upon this form of luxury. I hope the Treasurer will take into consideration the question of taxing luxuries generally, when the Treasurer is looking for money with which to balance his ledger.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.10]: I do not propose to oppose this Bill on the second reading, but I do want to see a few amendments made to it in Committee. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) has just stated that he could see no reason why the Treasurer should not claim all the unclaimed dividends after three months. I do not think he would get very much revenue even if he took the lot.

The Colonial Treasurer: Only a very nominal sum.

Mr. MUNSIE: The amount is very small indeed. I have just heard of an incident which recently occurred in Kalgoorlie in connection with this matter, and it is probably from circumstances of this sort that the Treasurer will get some unclaimed dividends. A horse won a race in Kalgoorlie and was disqualified for being under weight. The fourth horse was then given the third place. Most of the people who had tickets on the fourth horse had torn up their tickets by the time the decision was given. There then remained a sum of about £200 to be distributed on the third horse which had run fourth, but was placed third by the club. The secretary of the club had an advertisement put in the paper notifying holders of tickets that if they could establish their claims they would participate in the dividend. There was only a sum of £200 to be distributed, but applications for something like £2,000 worth of tickets were made. The people were evidently looking after the unclaimed dividends.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. MUNSIE: Everyone who had a ticket on that race apparently had it on the horse which ran fourth but was subsequently placed third. I admit that racing clubs are getting one per cent. less to carry on with than they had previously. I see that the Treasurer has a provision whereby any fractional parts of 1s. shall not be paid.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the same as in the old Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is where I contend, seeing that the Government are to get 12½ per cent. of the gross takings, the Bill certainly needs amending. I can quite understand clubs which are running a 5s. totalisator being prepared to forego one per cent. and keeping all the fractions of 1s. which amount, of course, to considerably more than one per cent. It is unfair to the punter who keeps both race horses going and the race clubs. He is the man who speculates the money and keeps both going. It is unfair, in cases where 5s. totalisators are in existence, to allow the club to keep the fractions of 1s. These fractions should be wiped out and reduced to 6d. so as to give the punter an opportunity of benefiting to the extent of 6d. There is no other State in the Commonwealth in which the totalisator is being run in this way. I realise that if the fractions were cut down to 6d. the clubs would probably raise some objection to the payment of totalisator dividends.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We are studying the people and not the clubs.

Mr. MUNSIE: The people who go to these race meetings are the people who keep the clubs going and I am raising my protest on their behalf. I do not contend that all people who go to race meetings are bad. Some of our best people in Australia are racing people, both as regards trotting and horse racing.

Mr. Troy: Who suggested they were bad?

Mr. MUNSIE: A sporting man may not be all that is desired, but if a man wishes to amuse himself in this direction, he has a right to do so. Other men have their sources of pleasure in which there is no taxation at all.

Mr. Foley: That is a good point.

Mr. MUNSIE: It is only fair that we should to a certain extent look after those who are the means of keeping up sport in Western Australia. If this Bill goes through, permitting the 5s. totalisator on race courses and the clubs to keep the fractions up to 1s., we shall be killing the goose which lays the golden egg. People will not be robbed, and they will divert their money from the totalisator to the bookmaker from whom they will get more advantage. I realise that the Treasurer later on is going to deal with the bookmaker and that the punter will then have to suffer to a certain extent. I hope the Treasurer will give consideration to any amendments which may be suggested when the Bill is in Committee. I do not intend to oppose the second reading because I realise that at a time like this, or any other time, people who are prepared to go to a sport and spend their money on it, will not complain at fair taxation and will be prepared to pay it. I believe that the portion of the population which attends racing pays, in comparison, more to the State in revenue than any other section of the community. There is no doubt about that. If the Government run a train to a sports meeting they charge double or treble fare, and the sport pays the money willingly. If they are running a train in connection with any other class of amusement they charge the ordinary fare, or a reduced fare. I hope that will be taken into consideration, and that the Treas-

urer will listen to any reasonable amendments when the Bill is in Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin—in reply, [5.15]: Unlike hon. members who have spoken, I do not know much about racing. I am rather sorry in a way that I have not had the experience of, say, the member for Murchison in dealing with this question, because the matter of fractions is constantly raised. The position did not strike me as it struck the member for Hannans, and I was not thinking of the man outside at all. I was looking at the question from the position of how far I could legitimately tax the sport and keep it going. We had a meeting of all the racing clubs and they said, "Do not interfere with the fractions. Tax us on anything else," and the suggestion then was that we should only charge five per cent. It was decided afterwards to take another one per cent. and leave the fractions untouched. Not being a racing man, however, the view put forward by the member for Hannans did not occur to me. I am now in this position, that however willing I may be to take it into consideration the suggestion of the hon. member, I must honourably abide by the obligation I entered into. If I had had more experience I might have looked at the matter from the bettor's point of view. The only view I took into consideration was how much the sport would legitimately stand. I will, however, make this promise: that if I find the public complaining that it is manifestly unfair, I will look into the matter. As it is now, whatever fault there is it is entirely mine, because the bettor's side was never put before me. I have entered into an obligation and I must stand by it.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Colonial Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 3; Duty on takings of totalisator:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Subclause 2 reads—

No fractional part of a shilling shall be paid by any racing club by way of a dividend on a totalisator.

I do not know why the Treasurer has inserted this subclause. In South Australia they pay only 6d.; here no part of a shilling is paid. If a dividend works out at 19s. 11d. the 11d. is retained. I suggest that the subclause be struck out.

Mr. WILLCOCK: By virtue of the fact that we are increasing the percentage we will undoubtedly decrease the dividends. Very often in connection with the 5s. totalisator, the dividend paid is even money. Say that the amount to be divided between the three placed horses is 18s. 3d., the totalisator would pay 6s. to each drawer of the placed horses. Under the proposed system the dividend would be reduced to 17s. 10d., and the public would have their dividends reduced by 1s. It will thus be seen to what extent the race club will benefit. The clubs will be considerably better off under the new arrangement. The extra 2½ per cent. which is proposed will have the tendency to make the dividend smaller, and an injury will thus be done to

the better and those who are supporting racing.

Mr. HOLMAN: I pointed out on a previous occasion when dealing with the subject of totalisators, that if anyone were to start with £1,000 and keep on continually putting that sum through the totalisator, almost the whole of it would be absorbed, and at the finish there would be practically nothing left. The proposal in the Bill will not give the public a fair run. There is too much deduction even at the present time. On the 5s. totalisator it may be possible, in connection with the three dividends, for the fractions to amount to 11¼d. in each case. The club then will get the full benefit of the whole of that amount. The public surely will not stand that. They should have just as much protection as those who engage in other sports. The average winnings on the place totalisator would not be more than a few shillings. We should give the public some protection and some consideration. The member for Hannans mentioned the penalties imposed on people who go to races, but it is their enjoyment and why should we penalise them? If we tax these people why not tax everyone on the same scale? I move an amendment—

“That in line one of Subclause 2 the words ‘a shilling’ be struck out and ‘sixpence’ inserted in lieu.”

In Queensland every penny is taken, whatever the fractions are. The same practice is in vogue in South Australia. That is giving the public a fair chance. When it comes to a question of three or four dividends on one race—that is the straight-out tote and the place tote—there might be a shilling fraction on each, and this goes to the clubs. The game is sufficient to encourage the people, but we must give them some protection. It is a pity we did not do what Tasmania did some years ago, and allow sweeps to be legalised here. Scores of thousands of pounds are sent out of Western Australia every year from which we get no benefit whatever. We recognise gambling because we allow the totalisator. We are really co-gamblers with the public, accessories after the fact, but we penalise those who get a share of the spoil when there is no chance of losing. Yet we hold up our hands in holy horror when it is proposed to run a sweepstake. We should do all we possibly can to protect the public from any source of danger. We already take 2½ per cent. of the public's money.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It was pointed out to us—the member for North Perth was with me on most of these occasions—that we must not tax the clubs out of existence. The proprietary clubs say they cannot carry on as it is, but the racing clubs would be able to pull through with the fractions. The clubs are at present paying 1d. stamp on every dividend declared over £1. So that when we consider this matter, it is a pretty big amount we are getting from the clubs now. I do not want to over-tax these people. That is no good to a Treasurer who wants revenue. We are doing a great deal of penalising already. We get four per cent. on the stakes.

Mr. Holman: The winning owner pays that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We are getting a penny for every dividend over £1 declared by the clubs, and if we take away everything and do not leave any fractions the Government will not get nearly the revenue that I expect.

Mr. HOLMAN: The two parties whom we should consider mainly are the race-horse owners, who keep the sport going, and the public who patronise the sport. If it was not for the horse owners, who pay a considerable amount of money for their pleasure, and the public who patronise the sport, there would be no racing at all, and if we show any consideration, these are the persons who should receive it. I have a fair knowledge of the game, and I know that the horse owners and the public are penalised to a great extent now. I go further and say that the time has arrived when the control of horse racing should be taken away from those who have it; the Government should have absolute control. The sport would then be much better and cleaner. We should have something similar to the inspection of liquor, or the inspection of mining. The Treasurer should not give any consideration to those who do not keep the game going. Of course the trainers and the jockeys should have some encouragement, but the horse-owners and the public are those who should receive the greatest consideration.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If we reduce the fractions, will the clubs be left with sufficient to carry on?

The Colonial Treasurer: They say not. The proprietary clubs say they cannot keep going with the fractions.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If we further reduce the amount by carrying the amendment, will the clubs have sufficient to carry on with? So far as the goldfields clubs are concerned, those at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, the patronage accorded to racing has fallen off considerably in recent years. I think they have got down to a very narrow margin. Further than that, any profits that those clubs have made in recent years have been expended for the general benefit of the residents of the goldfields. The goldfields racecourses are utilised as public parks, they are the only beauty spots on the goldfields. I have had no representations made to me in connection with this Bill, but when previous legislation was foreshadowed the goldfields clubs protested.

Mr. HOLMAN: We should not consider the proprietary clubs. The profit on the charity meeting, which was held a week or two ago, amounted, I think, to about £800. The West Australian Turf Club gave £400 and the other clubs £50 each. Everybody paid to go in, when usually the attendants go in free. Really, the profit of that meeting was over £2,000. I think the profits of an ordinary meeting amount to about £800. We should encourage those who keep the sport going by giving them an opportunity of getting something in the straight-out and place totalisators. I hope the

amendment will be carried, for I do not think it fair to penalise the small tote investor. The profits from trotting meetings have repeatedly been published, and those meetings are run almost entirely on the 5s. tote. There must be in racing, as in other sports and amusements, a reduction in the number of meetings, because the same amount of money is no longer available. But let racing be treated fairly, and do not let us tax the small tote investor up to 15 or 20 per cent. I know of an instance in which a tote dividend came to 4s. 11d. and a fraction of a penny—a shade less than the money put in—and the club, instead of paying that 5s., retained the entire fraction of the shilling and paid only 4s. If the racing question were before Parliament once more, I should favour giving the Government more control over the sport. It is not fair that the entire control should be practically in the hands of one committee. Far better let the control be in the hands of the Government of the day, who would be free from certain influences.

Mr. SMITH: I support the member for Murchison. I am not a racing man, but I ask myself, who really owns these fractions? They belong to the public who invest their money in the totalisator. They do not belong to the Government, or to the clubs; and what right have either the Government or the clubs take them? The reason for not handing over the fractions to the public in the past was that the fractions were inconvenient to divide and pay out. But when it comes to the point of considering 11d. a fraction, the thing is being carried too far. The proper procedure would be to reduce taxation on the clubs so as to allow of their carrying on without the assistance of fractions. Manifestly, this clause would operate unfairly to the small punter; and my belief is that the public will not stand it.

Mr. Pilkington: It is not 11d. off the 5s. It will average only 6d.

Mr. SMITH: But the fraction which is to be handed over to the club belongs really to the man who backed the winner. While originally the clubs retained the fractions as a matter of convenience, the retention is now elevated into a principle.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am sorry the Treasurer has made such a definite promise. Seeing that the use of the 5s. totalisator is extending, the clubs will derive more and more benefit from the fractions. Such a thing as this might happen three or four times a night on the 5s. tote at the trots. Say £400 is invested on each of three placed horses, and that the fraction pans out at 11d. in each dividend. In such a case, the club would take £52 of the total money invested, just on account of fractions. The fraction should be reduced from 1s. to 6d. I realise that this would mean a fairly considerable loss to the clubs; but the proposal under this clause means that with the 5s. tote the clubs will be absolutely robbing the people who keep the game going.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	20
Majority against					6

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Chesson	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Davies	Mr. Smith
Mr. Greco	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. Munro
Mr. Jones	
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Maley
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Foley	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Brown
Mr. Hudson	(Teller.)
Mr. Lefroy	

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am not going to see the public robbed, to see those who go to race meetings and invest their money deprived of their winnings. I will object to this as long as I can. Race goers should be allowed to speculate their money as they like, and should receive just the same protection as is afforded to any other section of the community. The poor unfortunates who have 5s. to put on the totalisator are robbed up to 20 per cent. of their money.

Mr. Harrison: They know what they are doing.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is the difference between them and the hon. member. That is why we have so much sympathy for the hon. member. The public can lose up to 11¼d. of the shilling.

Mr. Harrison: Have you ever lost the 11¼d.?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, many a time.

Mr. Harrison: Then you are an interested party.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the public are to be bled like this, presently there will be very few people able to enjoy the only pleasure they have at week ends. If the Treasurer proposes to run hand in hand with the clubs for the purpose of bleeding the public, we must raise an objection. I intend to move further amendments. I will endeavour to have the sub-clause amended to read as follows:—

That no fractional part of a shilling shall be retained by any racing club out of a dividend paid by a totalisator. That will allow the public to get all the fractions. The money belongs to only those who put it into the totalisator. In 1905 I declared that the fractions should go to the Government for the purpose of being distributed amongst charitable institutions, and I still

think that is a good idea. Why should the small investors on the totalisator be penalised in this fashion? If anybody must be bled, why not bleed some of the highly paid officials of the racing clubs? Why penalise only one section of the community? The investors on the totalisator should receive at least some protection.

The Colonial Treasurer: This has obtained for years.

Mr. HOLMAN: But it is now proposed to take another $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of their money. The fact that it has been going on for years can be claimed as an argument why it should now be done away with. This is a serious question and is fully deserving of the attention of every member of the Committee. Even the fractions at the ladies' totalisator are taken. On a race that brings in £400 to the place totalisator, it would be quite possible for the club to take over £20 from fractions. That is not fair. The fractions should go back to the public. I am going to oppose this provision for as long as I possibly can. My amendment should have support from both sides of the Committee, because it has consideration for all parties concerned. In New Zealand and in Tasmania, all the business goes through the totalisators, there being no bookmakers at all. Personally I believe in running totalisator and bookmaker together.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HOLMAN: In Tasmania bookmakers are not allowed. Personally I think the totalisator and the bookmakers should run together. There is no fairer class of man than the bookmaker. One can make a bet to-day involving an amount of £1,000, and if that money is won, it can be got on the following day. There are members on the Government side who do not believe in racing at all, but they are willing to support the Government in taking a portion of the totalisator receipts. It would have been a fair compromise to have accepted the fractional part of sixpence on the ten-shilling totalisator, but if in the ten-shilling totalisator the fractional part of a shilling is to be taken, then, in the five-shilling totalisator some smaller fraction should be received. Already too much is taken from the public in the ten per cent. The Committee have shown that they desire that the clubs shall receive some of the fractions, but I think the Government want too much. I move an amendment—

“That the following words be added to Subclause 2—‘Provided that when the investment in the totalisator is five shillings, no fractional part of sixpence shall be paid.’”

When the Totalisator Bill was before the House in 1905, I advocated that the whole of the fractions should go to charitable institutions, and this is what was carried out in Queensland. But there the clubs soon found a way of distributing the fractions. It is only fair that the fractions should be distributed, because the money belongs to the investor. In any business in life, in ordinary purchases in shops, the fractions are not retained by the

shopkeeper. If an article purchased amounts to 1s. 11d., and the shopkeeper has not a penny to give in change, he gives some article worth that amount. The proposal in the Bill is unjust. If the Committee recognise the principle of taking a portion of the fractions, then the major share should go to the people who invest the money. Take banks, for instance: all unclaimed deposits after a certain period are not retained by the banks, but are handed over to the Government. It was the policy of the Government a year or two ago to restrict racing, but they have not done so. They are trying to get all they can out of horse racing.

Mr. PICKERING: The fractions are really the property of the people who put their money into the totalisator. I cannot see why the totalisator should get these fractions at all, and I am in sympathy with the amendment moved by the member for Murchison.

Mr. BROWN: For the past 13 years these fractions have been withheld from the money invested in the totalisator. The only alteration effected by this clause is one which will result in a difference of three halfpence on a 5s. ticket. Four hundred investors at 5s. represents £100, and 10 per cent. of that would leave £90 for division amongst the investors. That would give a return per ticket of 4s. 6d. If we take £87 10s. we will find that there is a return of 4s. 4½d. on each ticket, and that the investor will be handicapped to the extent of only three halfpence. If an investor can afford to spend 5s., he can afford to lose this three halfpence. Instead of talking about totalisators and dividends we should, after 3½ years of war, be talking of serious work, and I hope that we will soon stop talking of sport and get on with our work.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The various racing clubs in the community thoroughly agreed that the bookmaker was a necessary evil, but they hoped that the day would come when he would cease to exist. They also said that five per cent. was all they could afford with the fractions. It is now proposed to impose a tax at the rate of six per cent. on the gross takings of every totalisator. I have to put on that other one per cent. and the fractions are to remain untouched. If I go back on this, what am I to do? I shall probably have to take back the one per cent, and I am not going to do it. I have made no secret of what I was going to do. It has been mentioned in the Budget and in the public Press. We have already agreed to adhere to the principle of any fractional part of a shilling. Without exception the racing clubs were emphatic that we could not take away the fractions and the extra taxation as well. I did not want to tax this sport at all, but there was a cry in the House and throughout Western Australia that whatever appertained to what appeared on the surface to be a luxury should be taxed. The Committee which went into this matter did not desire to kill that which was giving revenue to the State, but to see how far it could be taxed and still give revenue to the Treasurer. I am assured that by this Bill I can get revenue. My personal be-

lief is that if people realised what they were paying for their pleasure in the way of racing, they would recognise that the proposition is unpayable. And that does not apply only to horse-racing. I have thrashed this thing out with the people controlling what for the moment I may term the racing industry—the people from whom, in the first instance, the revenue will be secured. The arguments used against this measure might also be used against the proposed stamp legislation. The Bill as it stands, however, represents what I consider to be best in the interests of the State. I regard the Bill purely as a taxation measure, and from the standpoint simply of a tax-gatherer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There would not be much difficulty about making an arrangement between the Treasurer and, say, myself that I would pay certain taxation if I could get the necessary money from somebody else. The persons who under this clause are to pay the tax of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. will obtain the money from funds invested in the totalisator. The charge, therefore, is not one on the racing clubs at all, but a charge on those who patronise race meetings. If the tax were increased even to 10 per cent., it would make no difference to the racing clubs. But we would hear the clubs squeal if this were a proposal to tax their net revenue $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., because that impost would really affect them. As it is, the clubs are perfectly willing to have "the other fellow" taxed. In that respect they resemble the Perth Chamber of Commerce. The Treasurer is perfectly justified in imposing any taxation during these times, but he should see that the taxation applies fairly. He ought not to tax the race-goer $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while taxing the proprietary clubs only one per cent. I do not doubt that the proprietary clubs have made and are making good profits.

The Colonial Treasurer: They brought me their balance sheets.

Mr. Holman: I, too, have balance sheets of racing clubs.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I entertain no doubt that the racing clubs jumped at this proposal.

The Colonial Treasurer: They did not jump at it by any means.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Apart from the one per cent. tax on themselves, I should have said. However, let us hope the result of this legislation will be to keep people away from race meetings, even though the Treasurer will not obtain the revenue he anticipates. Let us hope the money now expended on racecourses will be directed into channels more advantageous to the community.

Mr. JONES: My absolute ignorance of racing—I have never yet been on a racecourse—impels me to seek further information. Much of the phraseology of this discussion has been Greek to me. However, I gather that the fractional difficulty represents an effort to take from winners some of the money which should come to them. Until I get more information, I shall not be able to support the amendment of the member for Murchison, which proposes to allow this fleecing of fractions from the larger winner, but not from the winner who

holds only what is mysteriously termed a leger five-shilling ticket. I favour that all men should receive all the money to which they may be entitled; and any attempt to take away from them any of that money I view with extreme distrust. According to my present information I shall, unless meantime I receive further enlightenment from the member for Murchison, move, later, an amendment which will provide that the whole of the fractions shall go to the winners.

Mr. HOLMAN: We know that taxation measures must be brought down for our consideration. With regard to this particular one, the Treasurer told us that he had thrashed out the matter with the bodies interested. He forgot, however, that there was a larger body, namely, the general public, who attend the races and who are more particularly concerned. I am making my appeal on behalf of the general public, and I shall always claim to have the right to criticise any measure which, in my opinion, does not deal fairly with the general community. It has been said that no protest has been made against the proposal of the Treasurer, but I would inform him that there has been a protest, and that it has been a loud one. With regard to the fractions, it frequently happens that a dividend works out at 11s. 11d. The club retains the 11d., and there are many of these elevenpences, too, because whenever the dividend is small, it is collected by a great number of people. Then, in connection with the leger totalisator, which is a 5s. one, the dividend there also may be 5s. 11d., but, in that case, the investor only gets his own 5s. back. My amendment will have the effect of securing for him 5s. 6d., which will place him in the same position as the 10s. investor, who receives 11s. back as his dividend.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have just been looking up a return in connection with racing and it may be of interest to quote a few figures which seem to indicate that racing is a flourishing business. In 1905-6 the number of meetings at which the totalisator was used was 65, and the amount which passed through the machine was £223,200. We skip the intervening years and come to the first year of the war, and it might be mentioned that each year shows an ever increasing amount. In 1914-15 there were 187 meetings held and the amount which passed through the machine was £484,881. In 1915-16 the race meetings increased to 261, at which the totalisator was used—the machine was introduced that year for the first time at racecourses from which it had been previously absent—and the amount which was registered was £497,534. During the last financial year the race meetings numbered 280 and a sum of £590,960 passed through the totalisator. The duty collected increased from £5,580 in 1905-6 to £14,775 last year. That would seem to indicate that the war and stress of circumstances have had no effect on horse-racing. No doubt a considerable sum of that half a million was invested over and over again, but it is an indication that we are a fairly sporting, not to say gambling, community.

Mr. Teesdale: It will read well on top of no-conscription.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I venture to say that the men who put that money through the totalisator were conscriptionists, because it has been proved that the majority in Western Australia are conscriptionists. Therefore, they were my friends's friends who invested this money. In the metropolitan area last year the galloping races numbered 101, and the trotting races 56, or a total of 157. On the goldfields there were 38 galloping races and 29 trotting races, a total of 67. In the country—and this will interest my friends on the cross-benches—I am glad to say that the figures are in an opposite direction, for while there were 93 galloping races in 1913-14, there were only 55 last year. For the whole State in 1914 there were 154 galloping races and last year the total was 194. The trotting races in 1913-1914 numbered 47, while last year the figures were 86. In view of these figures we cannot expect the Committee to be too lenient in the matter of taxation.

Mr. HOLMAN: Although the figures quoted by the leader of the Opposition may seem very large, it is unfair to put them before members without an explanation. The whole of the money which has been given as having been put through the totalisator goes through that machine no fewer than six times in one day, and occasionally there are seven and eight races, and then it goes through seven and eight times. It would be interesting for hon. members to know that if £1,000 were invested on the first race, the club would take 10 per cent. of that and leave £900 to be distributed. Then that £900 would be put on the second race, and the club would again take 10 per cent. from that; and so it would go on until the last race, when the investors would find that they would be left with a little over £600 of the original £1,000. So it will be seen that the apparent total amount of the investments runs to about £4,630, or nearly five times the actual amount. Clearly, therefore, this is not a fair comparison. The investments for that one year would apparently amount to over £100,000; but there were 280 race meetings held, and so the amount put through the totalisator would represent but a very small sum when divided among the patrons of the racecourse. The amount paid in stakes affords a very much better criterion of the actual position. From 1915 to 1917 the stakes dropped from £110,000 to £89,000, or a reduction of £21,000. The money that goes through the totalisator would not average more than 10s. per head of the investors.

Mr. Harrison interjected.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is just the remark one would expect from a hide-bound, crusted Tory. The whole policy of such a member is "Let the other fellow bear the taxation, and let me go free."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will confine himself to the clause.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am sorry that the interjection caused me to digress. One ought to realise that it is useless to cast pearls in a place like this. What is required is justice for the small investors.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you reckon you are being just to the country?

Mr. HOLMAN: Unlike the hon. member, I am game to stand up when injustice is being done. I do not sit like a stuffed parrot, saying nothing, or making only the same remark in a rough, rasping voice every time I speak.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the clause.

Mr. HOLMAN: The figures I have quoted are unchallengeable. All that I ask is that a person investing a small amount on the totalisator shall not be penalised to a higher extent than is the man who invests a larger amount. I am not personally interested, for I do not make my investments on the five-shilling totalisator. We should be fair in our taxation, and not penalise the small investor. The man who puts 10s. on a totalisator is mulcted anything up to a shilling, while the man who puts on 5s. is subject to precisely the same impost. The poor man should be justly dealt with.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 8

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Collier	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Green	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Holman	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loghlen

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Brown	Mr. Leifroy
Mr. Davies	Mr. Maley
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. Durack	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. George	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. HOLMAN: Seeing that we cannot get any reasonable compromise from the Government, I am going to oppose the clause. The Treasurer said he was afraid that if he taxed racing clubs any more they would not be able to carry on. We have been told that no racing should be indulged in at the present time, and the statement has been made that those opposed to conscription refuse to assist recruiting, and take themselves off to race meetings. By way of showing that personally I am prepared to close down racing until after the war, I am going to test the members opposite. It has been said that injustice will be done if we inflict this extra one per cent. on the racing clubs, and six per cent. on unpaid dividends, in addition. One phase of the question has been overlooked. In addition to retaining the 12½ per cent. which is now taken from the totalisator investors, the

clubs have another source of income, namely, the unclaimed dividends, which at present are retained by the clubs. Occasionally the posting up of winners is incorrect; the wrong names are given, and in consequence people tear up their totalisator tickets. Such an instance occurred only a fortnight ago. This sort of thing sometimes allows the club to retain a large amount of money, because, of course, the dividends represented by the destroyed tickets cannot be claimed. It is impossible for members on this side to increase the impost in a taxation measure. We were told by the Treasurer that he had consulted with the heads of the racing institutions and had thrashed the matter out and was satisfied that he is now doing what is right. I can quite understand the Treasurer accepting anything after the clubs allowed him the extra one per cent. We must deal fairly with all taxpayers and not pick out one class and tax them more heavily than another class. It is my intention to vote against the clause because it is unfair, unjust, and unreasonable. The Treasurer intends to make members accept just what he thinks is right and what he desires.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. HOLMAN: The control of racing is under the West Australian Turf Club and yet without any information we are asked to strike out the words "the rules of the racing club." What does the clause mean? The Treasurer might explain it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We wish to strike out the words, "under the rules of the racing club" to make the section refer to what has just been passed.

Mr. HOLMAN: All racing in this country is governed by the rules of racing and this amendment may refer to the payment of money. I do not know if there is any jurisdiction by the Turf Club over other clubs as to the payment of money. If this provision only refers to the dealings with the shilling, it is not material.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Substitution of Commissioner of Taxation for Colonial Treasurer:

Mr. HOLMAN: What is the reason of this amendment?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The Commissioner of Taxation now controls all taxation. Previously it was controlled by the Treasurer.

Mr. HOLMAN: If we are to place authority in the hands of the Commissioner, we are making a great mistake. If there is any maladministration by the Commissioner or any mistakes made, the Treasurer can come down to the House and say that Parliament had placed the authority in the hand of the Commissioner and that the Minister had no power. I think that we should say that the Commissioner of Taxation "under the authority of the Treasurer." If we could put the Commissioner of Taxation in the same position as the Auditor General we would be on sound ground, but, as it is, we may make as many complaints as we like but there is no way of having them remedied. I complain that we have not had time to fully consider this mea-

sure. The Colonial Treasurer may think he has ample information upon the matter, but to-night he has told us that we will have to take the Bill whether we possess the necessary information or not. An important and vital alteration is being made to the existing legislator, and the authority which existed has been taken from the Colonial Treasurer and vested in the Commissioner of Taxation. If anything goes wrong the Government will have to take the blame.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin.) [9.2]: I move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [9.3]: I wish to draw the attention of the recent arrivals in the House to the position we will find ourselves in. By passing the third reading we shall be prevented from making any further inquiries regarding this measure. What is being done may have a far reaching effect. There is no necessity to pass the third reading to-night. If another place was waiting for the measure I would have no objection. This only goes to show that it does not matter how important a Bill may be, we are not going to be given an opportunity to fully consider it. Bills are to be rushed through all stages at one sitting, and important matters into which members should have an opportunity of inquiring will be forced through the House, simply because the Government have a lot of blind supporters behind them, who do not think for themselves but allow others to do the thinking.

Mr. Teesdale: Have you all the wisdom on your side of the House?

Mr. HOLMAN: It does not matter what Bill is brought down we shall find ourselves in this position. Bills are to be passed through in this way, and next session the Government will come down with a lot of amendments undoing the bad work which will have been done during this session. I protest against the passing of the third reading to-night, because there is no necessity for it. The Government are merely utilising their numbers, and the blind stupidity of their supporters, to carry out their desires.

The Colonial Treasurer: I object to the term "blind supporters." It is not parliamentary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the Colonial Treasurer take exception to the remark.

The Colonial Treasurer: I do.

Mr. HOLMAN: I withdraw the remark.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin—in reply) [9.5]: I like to hear a protest when that protest is just and reasonable. A protest is made more forcible, if it is uttered in a dignified manner. I

made a stipulation that my Bills should be on the file for some days before the second reading. This is a small Bill, and we have been debating it for some time. How often, Sir, in your experience has any exception been taken to a Bill on its third reading? It is generally recognised in this Parliament, and in every other Parliament, that the third reading of a Bill is merely a formal matter. If I thought there was one thing which had not been thoroughly discussed I would not have moved for the third reading of the Bill. I thought we had thoroughly thrashed out the matter, and that it would be just as well that we should have it off our own Notice Paper and sent to another place.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1917-18.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 19th March; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Mines Department, Hon. C. A. Hudson, Minister.

Vote—Mines, £62,882:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. C. A. Hudson—Yilgarn) [9.10]: I have been waiting long and patiently for the introduction of the Mines Estimates, and have to thank members of the Committee for not taking the subject late at night at any previous sitting. It is a compliment and a satisfaction to me to know that a considerable amount of interest is being taken in our mining industry. I was pleased to hear the observations made last night by the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) that Perth itself is in a prosperous condition. I should like to see greater interest taken in Perth in the mining industry, because the City greatly depends for its prosperity on the welfare of the industry. Complaints are frequently made as to a falling off in the gold yield, and we have to admit that there is such a falling off. I often think a great deal could be done to further the interests of mining if only those people, who gain an advantage from the industry, would themselves evince a greater interest in it. I am pleased to find that a new association has been formed in Perth with the object of helping the industry generally. I do not know what the rules and objects of this association are, because I have not yet been favoured with a copy of them.

Hon. P. Collier: There are one or two on the council who will not further the interests of mining to a great extent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I understand that one of the objects of the association is to further the interests of mining in this State, and if that is the intention of that body it will have the co-operation of the Mines Department. The only change of serious importance in the Mines Department has been brought about by the removal of the Under Secretary to the Lands Department. The subject was discussed under the Lands

Department Estimates, and I have nothing further to add, except to say that now that Mr. King has taken over his new duties the question of the appointment of his successor is in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner and will be dealt with in the ordinary course. Hon. members will notice that on this year's Estimates there are some items of increase and a few of decrease. With regard to the staff, it will be found in the majority of cases that the one corresponds with the other. If we take the Estimates as a whole we find that there is a reduction in expenditure of about £1,812. It is not proposed to curtail the expenditure in the administration of the Mines Department further except in one particular. On inquiry by the Public Service Commissioner it was found—and my inquiries have led me to the same conclusion—that the department is not over-staffed, and that there is very little scope for the exercise of economy except in general ways. Until better housing accommodation is obtained for the officers of the department, it will be extremely difficult to effect any considerable curtailment of expenditure. Since being connected with the mining industry of Western Australia, I have always had the idea that the work of the Geological Survey Branch was somewhat belated. One had to recognise the extreme value of the work from a scientific point of view, and there never has been any gainsaying the fact that the work has been excellently done. But I am still imbued with the idea that the branch might be made more up to date in this sense, that they should not leave their reports so late for distribution to the public. In the past it has fallen to my lot to urge on various Ministers for Mines that the results of the visits of geologists to my particular constituency should be made available before the information was too stale to be of value. I propose, therefore, in the administration of the Geological Survey, to see that the work of that branch is utilised to better advantage. At the same time I must acknowledge that since I have held the Mines portfolio I have still further recognised the great importance and great value of the Geological Survey work. Still, in these times, when economy is indispensable, we cannot continue to indulge in expenditure on work which, however good and advantageous it may be, is not in the immediate sense strictly necessary; the money is too urgently needed in other directions. Accordingly it is proposed to curtail the Geological Survey staff. Arrangements have been made by which we estimate to effect a saving in the neighbourhood of £3,000 annually. Not that that effect will be shown in next year's Estimates to the full extent; but such will be the ultimate effect of the saving which is contemplated, and which will come into operation almost immediately.

Hon. P. Collier: By what number are you going to reduce the staff?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The geologists will be reduced by two. One geologist is away at the Front, and his place will be filled by another man. Further, a clerk will be replaced by an officer from the Explosives Branch, who will not be replaced in that

branch. Altogether the saving will represent about one-half of the expenditure in this connection.

Mr. Foley: Is the number of field geologists to be reduced?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; not in the work undertaken by the metallurgical section. I take it that the work done by the men in the field is now, in a certain sense, complete. The survey of the Yilgarn field has been finished, and bulletins have just been issued in respect of other fields. I may mention a few figures to show the general position of the mining industry of Western Australia. I have already referred to the great importance attachable to the gold mining industry, and that importance will be realised if we only glance at the figures of the production of gold during the period gold mining has obtained in Western Australia. No less a sum than 140 millions sterling has been realised from the gold bearing ores of this State. The figure is not one which is readily grasped, but I mention it because the importance of the industry is liable to be overlooked. True, last year there was a falling off in the returns from gold of something like £380,000. That decrease is, however, to some extent accounted for by the fact that gold mining is a diminishing industry, and by the further fact that something like 5,000 mining operatives are at the Front. There is the further important fact that the cost of the materials requisite in the production of gold has increased considerably, while there has been no corresponding increase in the price of the product. Next in importance to gold is coal. The coal-mining industry has been discussed in this Chamber recently.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Do you wish to discuss it again?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. I wish merely to give figures showing the prosperity of coal-mining during the past year, and, in fact, ever since the inception of the industry. The total value of coal won to the end of December of last year is £1,849,237. Much has been said recently about the necessity for fostering and encouraging this industry by Government orders. It is well to note that during the past year the coal-mining industry had a record output, despite the fact that war conditions had intervened in the meantime.

Hon. P. Collier: The war conditions assisted the industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: For the year ended on the 31st December last the output amounted to 326,550 tons of coal, equal in value to £191,821.

Hon. P. Collier: Was that an increase over the previous year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think that is shown in the report of the Mines Department.

Hon. P. Collier: But we have not last year's report. The latest we have is for 1916.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The figures I have given are for 1917. In connection with the coal industry, I wish to mention the discovery made on the Irwin River of a coal of good quality. The quality is not quite so good as represented in some of the reports

which have been circulated; but, nevertheless, the coal is of sufficiently good quality to demand more than passing interest. Accordingly, assistance is being given to the discoverer to develop the find which he has made, in the hope of our being able to obtain from that locality coal supplies that will put us in a position perhaps to work the northern railways at less than the present cost. It is true that if the field were opened up, this would necessitate the construction of a line of railway into the district. However, that phase of the question need not be considered at present, because there has not been sufficient development done in connection with the discovery.

Mr. Johnston: Is the find on the Midland Company's land?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The man who is working the discovery is not on the Midland Company's property.

Hon. P. Collier: He is on a Government reserve.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. This is an old discovery, originally made by the man now working it. It is in close proximity to land held by the Midland Company. The locality of the find, where the shaft has been put down, is, as the leader of the Opposition has pointed out, on a Government reserve. The probabilities are that when further development takes place, or further prospecting is done, the seam finds its way to a dip into the country owned by the Midland Company.

Mr. Willcock: What measure of assistance is being given?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Only in a very small way. The concession has been extended. Further, an application has been made to the Mines Department for assistance, and that application is now under consideration. When I said that assistance has been given, I did not mean that it had been given in any elaborate fashion. The discovery, I have to point out, is only in its infancy. The find was made by this same man some 20 years ago, and it has only recently been re-opened. On account of the inflow of water, it is not possible to ascertain at present the real width of the seam. As regards copper, I wish to quote a few figures showing the output which has been reached in Western Australia by the development of this industry. The value of the copper produced in this State, to the end of last year, was £1,530,745. It is on the Phillips River district that we are now mainly dependent for our output of copper. There we have mines being worked mostly by small holders and tributaries, and the ore is treated at the smelter run by the State, which has leased it from the proprietors. That policy was initiated by my friend the leader of the Opposition when Minister for Mines; and it has served the district so well that last year's figures are deemed to be most encouraging. Ore to the value of £91,877 was won from the Phillips River mines, and that amount really has been distributed during that period.

Hon. P. Collier: In 1917?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; in this respect, that the State last year expended £91,877, of which £43,000 odd was advanced

for ore purchases and £47,000 odd represented working expenses. The whole of the amount has been, or will be, repaid to the Treasury.

Hon. P. Collier: But what was the value of the copper?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is hard to say, because we have not yet the full realisation charges, nor the returns from the electrolytic people, who make the final treatment. The copper mining industry in that locality is in a healthy condition. It is true that we are not obtaining the price which was obtainable last year, or even in the previous year; though the difference is not very material. Last year the price was £116 13s. 4d., and for this year it has been fixed at £108. That is a satisfactory price, although it is necessary to have a price somewhere in that region, taking into consideration the extra cost of production.

Mr. Foley: Has anything been done to get over those iniquitous conditions which the late Minister for Mines tried to have done away with? The late Minister for Mines endeavoured to induce the Commonwealth Government to take off the restrictions they had imposed. Has there been any success in that regard?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hardly know to what the hon. member refers. There has frequently been difficulty in getting shipping, but that difficulty has not been so acute since we have been selling the copper in the Eastern States.

Hon. P. Collier: Nothing has been done. We cannot get much consideration from the Commonwealth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Whilst dealing with copper, and being about to mention the subject of tin, I may refer to the War Profits Taxation Act.

Hon. P. Collier: As a matter of fact, the export of copper is a monopoly to-day, and a bigger profit is being made now than ever before, although we have succeeded in cutting out the Germans.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We cannot make any better conditions. The matter is in the hands of the Commonwealth, and we have to take what we can get. Certainly, we are unable to obtain shipping to send the copper away, as we did before. Even if bottoms were available to carry the copper it would not pay us to ship at present charges, because we do not know what price the metal will bring on arrival in England. The British Government fix the price. Although copper is quoted at a high price on the London Stock Exchange, according to the newspapers, that price refers only to small quantities, and does not truly reflect the condition of the market.

Mr. Foley: Do the same conditions apply to base metal mines also?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The same conditions apply to nearly all mines. I am now just dealing with matters cursorily; I shall be prepared to give as much information as possible later on, in answer to hon. members' inquiries. With regard to tin, we are adversely affected by the war profits tax. With the assistance of the Tasmanian Minister for Mines, I am endeavouring to induce

the Prime Minister to take into consideration the difficulties under which lead is mined and marketed, and, in view of those difficulties, to induce him to extend to lead mining the exemption or relief which can be granted under the War Time Profits Act. That applies also to copper. With regard to lead, I recently had an opportunity of visiting the lead-producing part of this State, the Northampton district, as far as Geraldine, and I was greatly taken with the developments in the mines there. It is true that the greater number of the mines are in the Northampton district, but those in the old Geraldine district are such as to give encouragement to the department to advertise that there is an asset there which is little known, and which in the near future should prove of great advantage to the State. We have been asked to assist there in the way of providing a smelter, and it is suggested that that should be erected at Geraldton, but on inquiry as to the opportunities there are of having the ore treated, and taking into consideration the fact that the greater number of the bigger mines are in the hands of the men who own the smelter there, I do not think we are warranted in laying out any money to establish a smelter. With regard to other minerals, the member for Leonora has mentioned molybdenite, and not only this, but in tungsten ores, scheelite, wolfram, graphite, and other minor metals, there is a great world-wide interest being taken. I recently came across an article in a magazine which illustrates the necessity for the production of as much tungsten as is possible in the British Empire. The Germans had obtained a monopoly of this commodity, and it was not until Britain woke up and found what was in her own dominions, and commandeered it, that it was discovered what a great asset we had. It will prove a valuable asset in Western Australia if it is properly developed. With regard to molybdenite, although this metal has been discovered in many parts of Western Australia the principal place where it is found is Warriedar. The department proposes at an early date to convert the State mill there into a plant for the treatment of the metal, and we hope to make use of that plant, not only for the production of molybdenite, but also for the purpose of experimenting with the production of gold from ores which are otherwise too refractory to treat. That work will be undertaken at once, and we hope it will be the nucleus of interest being taken in the production of molybdenite. With regard to tungsten and the production of scheelite, we are going to make use of the battery at Coolgardie and the laboratory there so as to give those on the goldfields the opportunity of testing their shows, and encouraging prospectors to go out and search for these metals. We do not anticipate that this will be a profitable undertaking immediately, but if it has the effect of encouraging men to take an interest in the production of these metals it will possibly lead to the development of propositions throughout the State. I think that by the undertaking of these works and the general research which the department is carrying out at the present time, with the assistance which

will be given, we shall be able to get a proper inventory of the mineral wealth in Western Australia. We shall then be prepared, as we ought to be prepared, to do something for those of our returned soldiers who may desire to engage in the occupation of mining. It is the hope and the desire of the Government to keep the mining industry in that degree of supremacy which it hitherto enjoyed. I leave the Estimates in confidence with the Committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [9.36]: I quite agree with the opening remarks of the Minister for Mines with regard to the lack of interest generally displayed by that section of the public who live outside the sphere of the influence of the goldfields. As a matter of fact it can be said with truth that a considerable majority of the people of the State, although in a general way appreciating or acknowledging the great value the gold-mining industry has been to the State, have nevertheless given very little practical help to it. That is borne out by the fact that no matter what vicissitudes the industry may pass through, whether new and rich fields may be discovered, the people in the commercial world and those who might be expected to take a sufficiently deep interest in the industry, have never invested any of their capital in it, and have allowed all opportunities to pass by. Whatever capital has been forthcoming for mining generally in Western Australia, since the boom days, has come entirely from the Eastern States, mainly South Australia and Victoria. It is a great pity that that indifference has existed because, had it been otherwise, many of our citizens would have been drawing handsome dividends for many years past, instead of those dividends going to other parts of the world, as has been the case. I am not stating anything which is unfair, because it was my experience during the time I was Minister for Mines, and the present Minister has also referred briefly to that aspect of the case. There is no doubt about it that whilst the mining industry generally has unquestionably contributed in a greater degree to the onward march of progress, and the development of this State during the past 25 years, than all the other industries put together, we have for several years past, unfortunately, been on the downward grade, and I believe that the depression—if I may use the term without being considered pessimistic—which prevails to-day in Western Australia, is due largely to the decline of the gold yield. Whilst the agricultural and other industries have been operating mainly with borrowed or paper money, the mining industry has always put in circulation ready cash from week to week, and from month to month, and that has enabled the merchants and the commercial classes to carry on. In that respect the industry has been of immense value to the State. I need only quote a few figures to show the tremendous decline in the gold yield in recent years. Going back to 1902 we find that in that year the industry was at its zenith, and the gold produced was 2,100,000 ounces. That was an enormous output when we come to calculate that we are dealing with gold. In 1916 the

gold yield was 1,061,000 ounces, almost 50 per cent. less than that of 1902. One can readily realise what effect that has on the general trade and prosperity of the State. Again, last year the value of the output of gold was £4,893,000, being £590,000 less than the value of 1915. That was the greatest decline in any one year in the history of the State. It can be understood what a tremendous influence a thing like that has on the general prosperity of the State. On the figures of last year quoted by the Minister there was a further fall in value of £380,000, showing a total decline of £984,000 in two years, or, in round figures, a million pounds. This is a serious matter and it really demands the greatest consideration from every member of the House and every section of the community, because, if the gold yield is going to continue to fall at the rate of half a million pounds sterling per annum we are within measurable distance of seeing the extinction of the industry altogether. I regret to say that the decline has been general. The East Coolgardie Goldfield still produces, as in years past, more than 50 per cent. of the total output of the State. If anything serious should happen to that little spot, the Golden Mile, or should it reach that stage when the big producing mines cease to operate, we can see what an effect the cessation of work there would have on the State.

The Minister for Mines: I drew attention to that in my remarks.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. The effect of a decrease in the value of the output is not so serious as is the effect of a decrease in the tonnage. It must be remembered that these mines are owned in Great Britain, outside the State. If several mines had ore to the value of four ounces to the ton, the value of the output would be very large. If that value decreased to two ounces to the ton, a great decline in the value of the yield would be shown. But that would not affect Western Australia, because the same number of men would be required to raise the two ounce ore; and, after all, practically all that the State gets out of the industry is the payment of wages and the purchase of commodities used on the mines. The seriousness of the position lies in the fact that this decrease in value is due largely to a falling off in the tonnage, which in 1916 showed a decrease of 440,000 tons as against the preceding year. Such a serious falling off in the tonnage indicates that there are mines closing down, going out of existence. And every mine closing down pushes the industry a little farther back.

Mr. Harrison: You consider that the primary cause, the secondary cause being the number of miners who have gone to the Front.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not due to the number of miners who have gone to the Front, because there has been no scarcity of labour on the goldfields.

Mr. Holman: There has been a little.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I admit there has not been the same efficient labour available, and that in consequence inferior labour has been utilised.

Mr. Holman: That makes the position worse.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course so, because it increases the costs, and increased costs may mean the closing down of a mine working on a narrow margin of profit. But in respect of the Eastern goldfields there has not been any shortage of labour. The mine managers have been able to get all the labour they required, although perhaps not of the same high class as before. The position is due in some degree to the shortage of labour but, in my opinion, to only a very slight degree. The fact is, and the sooner we recognise it the better, that many of the big producing mines are becoming worked out, and are closing down. Unfortunately, mining is not like wheat-growing. The greater the energy put into the working of a mine, the sooner comes the extinction of that mine, while of course the more energy put into the working of the soil, the better for the country. For a number of years no doubt, while on rich ore, the more labour and the more capital put into a mine, the more will that mine produce; but unfortunately those methods lead to the earlier extinction of the mine. That is clearly shown by a trip to the out-back goldfields. I notice that some of our new friends in the House have displayed commendable energy in travelling about the country with a view to familiarising themselves with the resources of the State; I hope that all new members will adopt that policy, for it will allow them to bring to their deliberations a greater knowledge of the potentialities of the State. I would like to see more frequent visits by members of the agricultural districts to our goldfields. It is very rarely that the people of the goldfields are permitted to see a member of Parliament representing any but a mining constituency.

Mr. Smith: Do you think it would lead to a stimulation of the industry?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It might even do that, inasmuch as the visiting members would probably come back here imbued with a desire to assist the goldfields, and so by legislative or administrative acts do something which would result in giving a fillip to the industry. I take this opportunity of extending a cordial invitation to all our friends to visit the goldfields so that they may become better acquainted with the problems peculiar to those districts. But I was referring to out-back mining centres. One has only to travel out-back, say, away up to Laverton, to see the remnants of once prosperous mining towns. There is no more saddening spectacle than to go through a partially abandoned mining district and see houses standing as the owners walked out, even the furniture being left behind, and a once smiling town presenting a picture of desolation. I refer to this because I am convinced that those mining towns have not fallen into decay because the mineral resources of the district were exhausted. Like the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) I am a little optimistic, and just as my friend thinks he can turn those fertile flats and valleys of the Gascoyne into flowing fields of corn, so do I think that many of those old mining towns can once again be revived and rendered prosperous. It has been the history of mining in all coun-

tries. First, there is the period of prosperity, to be followed by decline and depression, which in turn gives place to a more enduring rise. There has been a general decline on every field, with the exception of Mt. Margaret and West Pilbara. Not only has there been a decline in mineral output, but there has also been a decline in the area held, a decline of 2,800 acres in one year. In 1907 the dividends paid represented $1\frac{1}{4}$ million; last year this fell to £632,000 or practically 66 per cent. in 10 years. That, of course, is reflected in the money invested in the industry. The number of men employed has fallen off. Last year only 9,000 men were employed in the industry as against 16,000 or 17,000 eight or nine years ago. In 1915 the mines employed 1,500 men more than they employed in 1916. I have no wish to be pessimistic. I do not want to exaggerate the seriousness of the position; undoubtedly it is serious. With the exception of about three big properties, the mines of the Golden Mile, producing 50 per cent of our gold output and upon which so much depends, are working on such a narrow margin of profit that the slightest increase in their costs would mean their shutting down. As a matter of fact, one of the most famous mines in the State, the Perseverance, one of the largest employers of labour—for over a decade that mine employed directly in its workings 800 or 900 men, to say nothing of all those indirectly employed—for the past three or four years that mine has been working on a margin of only one penny per ton. The manager has had one penny per ton to work upon, so if his costs were increased by one penny he would be on the wrong side of the ledger. In that condition that mine has carried on for about three years, but unfortunately during the last few months it has crossed the border line between profit and loss, with the result that only 200 men are there employed to-day, and they are simply working out the ore in the upper levels. If no change takes place that mine will be closed right down in the course of the next six months. If we average the wages of the 900 men that mine once employed at £4 per week we find that it represents £3,600 per week taken out of circulation in the business centres of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. And what I have said of the Perseverance mine is true of several others. Of course, we cannot help those properties. The closing down of the Perseverance, which has been worked to a great depth cannot be avoided, because it is safe to say that the mine has exhausted its possibilities as a great mine. But whilst we must expect the extinction of great mines like the Perseverance that has been working for a quarter of a century, on the other hand, we must bend our energies towards discovering new mines to take their places as they become worked out. That is the only way by which we can save the industry from total extinction. That is the problem with which the present Minister is faced. I know the seriousness of the position and the difficulty he will have in grappling with it. In that respect he has my

sympathy and support. It was a problem that was ever present with me during the years when I had the privilege of being at the head of the Mines Department, and I endeavoured by many little schemes to meet the difficulty. Nothing very substantial resulted, but that is no reason why we should give up hope and not carry on our efforts in that direction. The decline in the gold yield is due to the fact that these mines are going out of existence, and that new ones are not taking their place. That new mines are not being discovered is due in turn to the fact that there are fewer men out in the country in search of gold. The prospectors are not there who used to be there. For many years the prospectors were spread out on the goldfields in the hope of discovering something. Unfortunately the old band of prospectors, the pioneers of 20 years ago, have drifted away. Many of them have gone to the great beyond, and others have grown too old and have drifted to other parts of the State. The younger men have not gone to the goldfields to succeed them. This is due to the natural condition of things. The attractions which existed on the goldfields 20 years ago are no longer to be found, to the same extent at any rate. There are not the great possibilities and opportunities which formerly presented themselves. The spirit of Eldorado, which is ever a little further ahead, is not there to lead them on.

Mr. Green: I would draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the spirited altercation which is taking place in the back benches.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: There have not been the attractions of late years on the goldfields to lure our younger men out there, as was the case 20 years ago.

The Minister for Mines: Do you not think that the men who are coming back to these shores will render some assistance in this respect?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is what I am working up to. The position will continue to get worse unless we succeed in inducing men to go out into our auriferous areas to search for new finds and again try the old. How are we going to effect this purpose? Here enters the question of repatriation. Whilst much is said about settling our returned men upon the land—and that is a good thing, for the more we can get on the land the better it will be for the State—we never hear a word said, unfortunately, or any scheme discussed or proposal submitted in the direction of inducing returned soldiers to go out in search of gold. Although the war has drawn a number of men from the goldfields, I am convinced that upon their return many of them will not go back to their old work on the fields. They have spent a number of years there and have become tired of the industry, and have taken up other avocations.

Mr. Holman: A lot of them went to the war for safety. They went to save their lives.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would not go so far as to say that.

Mr. Pickering: They realised their duty.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have met a number of returned men, and I gather from many of them that they do not intend to go back to the goldfields.

Mr. Munsie: Not into the deep mines.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, and there is nothing else offering. The war will, therefore, inflict a permanent blow upon the mining industry, more so than upon any other industry in the State. In one respect, the agricultural industry in the years to come will benefit as a result of the war. Many efforts are being put forward and so many inducements held out to returned soldiers to settle on the land, with the result that when the war is over and the men come back, the agricultural industry will greatly benefit, as well as those industries allied with it. There will be more men engaged in it than there were before the war. On the other hand, the loss to the gold mining industry will be a permanent one because these men will not go back to it. I have learned that this is the case from men I have met after their return from the Front.

The Minister for Mines: Some of them will go back.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am only speaking generally. How are we to induce them to return to the goldfields? What is the State going to do, and what is the repatriation scheme going to do to induce these men to go out in search of gold in our auriferous areas? I have been told, and I do not know whether it is a fact or not, that the patriotic fund which assists returned men will not give any assistance to a man who wishes to prospect on the goldfields.

The Minister for Mines: That is not so in the case of the Mines Department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The administration of that fund is entirely outside the Mines Department. There are a few men, who are in receipt of a pension of from 15s. to 20s. a week, who will thus be enabled to sustain themselves whilst prospecting, in addition to the provision that is made for them by the Mines Department in the way of a horse and cart. The men who are not getting any pension are those who will specially need assistance. I came to the conclusion, in the closing period of my ministerial existence, that had I to commence again, I would, at least for a number of years, set aside a sum of not less than £100,000 a year towards the assistance generally of the mining industry, that is to say if the money was obtainable as was the case in former years. The money spent on mines development has dwindled down to about £7,000 or £8,000 a year.

The Minister for Mines: It is about £13,000.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was £8,000 the year before last. This amount is of no use whatever.

Mr. Smith: The expenditure has not dwindled down, unfortunately.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is true.

The Minister for Mines: People think more about cutting down the cost of administration than of developing the industry.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We cannot cut down the administrative cost in the same proportion as our expenses on the goldfields might decrease. An expenditure of from £8,000 to

£10,000 a year on mines development is of no earthly use; it is only a drop in the ocean.

The Minister for Mines: It is very hard to make the money go round.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Undoubtedly money is difficult to obtain. I do not blame the Minister, for I am in this myself. We have to realise the fact that whilst Parliament has been finding such large sums of money to assist agriculture, and we can spend £3,000 or £9,000 in one year on tiding the agriculturists over their difficulties, it is our duty to likewise assist the mining industry, and we should seriously consider the advisability of setting aside £100,000 a year for that purpose. I am convinced that it would be a good investment. If we only found one other field like Westonia the State would be repaid for its outlay in one year. If we could only establish a little mining town with a population of from 600 to 800, such as we see at Westonia, the State would soon be recouped on account of the various avenues of revenue which flow through any prosperous mining centre. Even if we drew 20 blanks in this connection the drawing of one prize would repay for our expenditure.

The Minister for Mines: And the City would be able to reap the benefit as well as those concerned in the mining industry.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The City would also greatly benefit. I venture to say that if one went into a big commercial house in Perth one would find that the biggest source of the firm's income, in the shape of direct cash from week to week or month to month, was the goldfields. Our commercial houses have to wait for 12 months to get their money from other sources. All the trade which is required to keep a big goldfields population going has to flow through Perth. All the inward as well as the outward trade, goes through that centre, and the people in it get the benefit. People in other walks of life also derive benefits from the mining industry. We have the instance of the owner of the land which was recently purchased by the City Council. This was not worth 1s. an acre 20 years ago at the time of the discovery of Coolgardie, but it was sold by the owner the other day for over £18,000. This value was given to the land through the discovery of the Coolgardie goldfields and the prosperity which flowed throughout the State as a result. Trade and commerce increased generally and city values went up accordingly, and the man who owned land in the city did nothing to bring about that value. In this regard the men who have been working at Laverton, Lake Way or Wiluna have contributed their share towards increasing the value of land in the City of Perth. That is a positive fact.

Mr. Davies: And of the whole State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. I only illustrate Perth as an instance. The same thing applies to Albany, Bunbury, and other parts of the State. We ought to do something for the mining industry out of the money which will be made available to the Government for repatriation purposes. I do not know what has been done, but we were promised 12 months ago by the Prime Minister that a sum of upwards of £250,000 would be distributed.

The Premier: That is only for land settlement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Here again we find that the mining industry is being neglected.

Mr. Foley: He said it was for the development of industries.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, for land settlement. This only shows that there will be no money available for the mining industry.

The Minister for Mines: Their Repatriation Bill did not deal with mines.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have not seen that Bill. Of course, mining is an extinct industry in the Eastern States, and the people there have developed their other industries. At the same time, mining was the foundation of their wealth and prosperity in the early days. It was Ballarat and Bendigo which made Victoria, Mt. Morgan which made Queensland, and Broken Hill which made South Australia. Although the mining industry has declined in those States the people do not feel the effect of that, because they are now independent of it. We feel the effects in Western Australia, because we have not yet developed our other industries. No doubt mining will eventually become extinct in this State, but we shall not feel the effects of that if in the meantime we have succeeded in building up our agricultural, pastoral, and other industries to take its place. We have not yet reached that stage, unfortunately, and therefore the decline in our gold yield has had a serious effect upon the general prosperity of the State. If no assistance is forthcoming with respect to our mining industry I do not know what we are going to do.

The Minister for Mines: There is some.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would urge upon the Ministry to make an attempt to get the money somewhere.

The Premier: We have to find that specially.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government will have to endeavour to set aside some of their loan moneys for mining specially. I urge the Minister for Mines, no matter how adamant the Treasurer may prove, and no matter how clamant our other friends may be, to keep a stiff back and to insist that he gets, anyhow, £50,000 annually for a year or two to endeavour to revive interest in mining.

The Minister for Mines: I have a promise of a substantial increase.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Whilst no prospecting is going on, the continuous decline of the industry is as certain as sunrise to-morrow. We have arrived at the stage when something more must be done. It is not sufficient inducement to the man who thinks of going out prospecting to offer him a horse and a cart and let him find himself. We will have to pay selected, reliable men £1 per week by way of sustenance allowance, in addition to furnishing them with a turnout. If that is done, the State will, I am satisfied, be amply repaid for the expenditure. I have spoken perhaps at some length on this subject, but I have endeavoured to give the Committee the benefit of my views, if they are of any value, on the position as I observe it to-day. There are a few other

matters on which I desire to touch. I should like to know from the Minister for Mines what he proposes to do with regard to the request for the appointment of a Royal Commission, or some other form of inquiry, into the earth movement which took place on the Golden Mile a few months ago, and by which a couple of men lost their lives. In Boulder and Kalgoorlie there is a widespread feeling of anxiety with regard to that earth movement; in fact, a number of men have refused, because of it, to go below. The belief is general on the Golden Mile that an earth movement has taken place. Certainly, a tremendous body of country has collapsed. The ground is completely honeycombed; and it is fair to assume that, owing to the extensive operations underground, a big settlement is in process, a settlement which might possibly result in the entombment of the whole of the men employed in one mine. A request was made to the Minister in this connection for a competent inquiry a good while ago, and I had hoped that he would deal with it before this.

The Minister for Mines: The request was not made nearly so long as six months ago.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is four or five months since the request was made by the local people. The object of the inquiry would be to ascertain whether this was merely a local fall, or whether it was due to an earth tremor, or due to a general movement. As Minister for Mines, I would not carry the responsibility of the possibility of a catastrophe occurring there without assuring myself that I had made all and every effort to investigate the matter. I hope the Minister will give this subject his serious consideration at an early date. With regard to inspection of mines, I do not know whether the same number of inspectors are employed to-day as a year or two ago. I do not know whether the position of Inspector Hutchinson has been filled.

Mr. Munsie: It has been filled and unfilled again.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it was filled, it was filled by a man not qualified in the same way as Mr. Hutchinson, not possessing Mr. Hutchinson's special qualifications. The late inspector was appointed because he had special knowledge of ventilation, air currents, and so forth. It has been generally conceded that his appointment was very gratifying to the miners. I think it would be well to have in the number of inspectors at least one specialist with regard to ventilation, more particularly as applied to the great mines of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. I trust that the Minister, when he makes a fresh appointment, will see that those special qualifications are borne in mind. Next, with regard to copper. I am glad to learn from the Minister that an increase in the output has taken place, although we have not the figures for last year. But I was surprised to learn that in 1916 the value of the output was some £26,000 less than in 1915. I fail to understand that, because the price of copper was higher in 1916 than in 1915.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. I remember perfectly well that in 1915 the price of copper started at £80 per ton and gradually rose to £100, or even more. It was only at the end of 1915 that we secured the contract with the British Government at the very high price.

The Minister for Mines: If I remember rightly, the price rose to £150 per ton during that time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was not in my time. I think £124 per ton was the highest price while I was Minister. There may have been a higher price obtained for perhaps one shipment. However, we made a contract for the whole year, which we thought was better than taking our chances of a high price for one shipment and a low price for the next. In pre-war days copper ruled at about £66 or £67 per ton, but after the outbreak of war the price rose to about £120. That being so, one would have expected a considerable increase in the output from Phillips River. Of course, one has to take into consideration that the cost of production, and of output generally, has increased, as well as the price of copper. Anyhow, it is fortunate that we had the Phillips River mines working when the war broke out. As the Minister knows, the field was practically dead until a few years ago; and the fact that we had available the output of even this small field represented a substantial assistance to the State, and, what is of more importance still, proved of some assistance to the Empire in the war, in turning out a material essential for war operations. Copper, as we know, is one of the essentials of munitions; and it is a satisfaction to know that we have, even though in a small way, contributed our quota of that very necessary commodity. Whilst the Prime Minister has succeeded in cutting the Germans out of the Australian base metal trade—and we know that they had a complete grip of it—it is unfortunately a fact that the control of the trade, though it has got entirely into British hands, is now one of the most complete monopolies existing in Australia. Unless something takes place when the war is over to free the trade from the grip and control existing to-day, all the small producers of copper throughout Australia, such producers as those at Phillips River, will be entirely at the mercy of the body who control copper at the present time. The board, or the men, who advise the Prime Minister with regard to the price of copper, are the big men of Broken Hill and other mining districts interested in the metal. They fix the price at which they will buy the copper from us or from any small producer; and there is no appeal. The copper cannot be treated anywhere else. If in Western Australia to-day copper were coming from the North-West—some did come from Roebourne—the men raising that copper would have to sell it to the body in Sydney at whatever price that body liked to fix. The producers could not sell it anywhere else. Export of copper is not permitted by the Commonwealth—not even in

British ships consigned to the Agent General. When I was Minister for Mines I tried to secure permission to ship our copper ourselves, consigned direct to the Agent General, who would of course give an undertaking that the metal would pass only into the hands of the British Government. Surely the Agent General represented a channel that might be expected to prove absolutely reliable. But we were not permitted by the Commonwealth Government to adopt that course. We were forced to sell to the controlling body in Sydney, although treatment in Sydney cost us several pounds per ton more than the freight at which we could, during those days, have shipped it home. Thus, the producers of copper in Western Australia were penalised to that extent. I have no doubt whatever that the body in Sydney are making a very large profit out of the arrangement. Whilst I do not suppose there is any chance of getting an alteration made during the period of the war, I say that the strongest effort should be made to have that condition of things altered immediately the war is over. With regard to coal, it is pleasing to learn that there has been an increase in the output, notwithstanding war conditions, and notwithstanding the fact that the bunkering trade has been entirely, or almost entirely, cut off. The Collic coalfield has maintained, and indeed has increased, its output. In this connection I should like to refer to the find which has been mentioned as having been made along the Midland railway on the Irwin river. Originally that seam was discovered about 25 years ago. But no notice was taken of it. The man who then found it has come back, and during the past year or two has done some boring, with the result, which I think is beyond doubt, that a new seam of coal has been discovered of higher value than Collic coal. It certainly gives better results by analysis. It gives something like 10,500 or 11,000 B.T.U. as against 10,000 or 10,500 given by Collic.

The Minister for Mines: I hesitate to confirm the figures: but that is about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Those figures are pretty correct. The seam is of a good thickness, something like four feet, and the coal is clean. The party now working it are a party of four working miners, who reside in my district. They are sturdy old Cornishmen and Welshmen—a good mixture. These four working men have expended £600 on that discovery. They are steady men, who had saved their wages, and they have expended their savings in trying to prove that seam. They are 10 miles from a railway, and of course the seam is no use to them without a railway. I recognise, however, that before a case can be put up for the construction of a railway, the value and extent of the field would have to be proved.

Mr. Holman: What depth is the bore?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is quite shallow. That is the point. The men have had some little assistance from the Mines Department by way of the loan of a bore, but they are "up against it." They are on a reserve consisting of only 1,300 acres, and there is no doubt that that seam is dipping in and will run under the Midland Company's land. I wish to ask the Minister to see that those men get a fair

deal, and also that they receive some little measure of assistance. A party of working men spending £600 of their own cash are, I think, entitled to some consideration from the Mines Department. The only assistance they ask is that they may be enabled to prove the extent of the coal seam. They want to bore further along the seam.

The Minister for Mines: You are not suggesting that they are making any complaint?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. And I am not making any complaint. The Minister will have no difficulty in knowing it when I do make a complaint. I am urging the Minister to give the men some consideration. It will not cost very much. All the Minister will require to do is to supply the party with a bore, and if necessary with a little financial assistance as well, in order to go along the line of the seam and prove its extent. After the party have succeeded in proving the extent of the seam, they will have no difficulty whatever in raising the necessary capital to finance them. Then it will be a question for the Government whether a railway shall be constructed into that district. I apologise for keeping the Committee at such length, and in conclusion I desire to say that the Minister will have to seriously consider that phase of the question which I have touched upon with regard to granting substantial assistance for prospecting, and also to hold out something in the way of an attractive inducement to returned soldiers who may not be fitted for farming life, and who may not have any desire to engage in farming. Many of these men may be possessed of an adventurous or roving spirit, which will take them out into the goldfields districts, and it is up to the State to meet them should their desire be in the direction of prospecting, by placing at their disposal all the assistance necessary to enable them to go out.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [10.33]: The one question on which hon. members agree is that of assistance being rendered to mining. This industry was responsible for many of us coming over here. I hold a miner's right today, and I think it is 25 years old. I worked as a miner for many years, and until I came down here. It is a matter of regret that the present position of mining is not altogether satisfactory. We have been drifting year by year, and the returns have been getting lower and lower. No new discoveries have been made, and the serious question which we have to face is that of the declining yield and the steps which we should take to bring back the industry to something like its former prosperity. One of the factors responsible for the retrogression in mining has been the heavy taxation which has been imposed on the individuals engaged in it. I have given instances only recently where men who have developed some properties and made a little money out of them have then set out to develop others, but have been forced to pay taxation on the small profit they had made. We were told years ago that provision would be made to prevent anything of that kind taking place.

The Minister for Mines: There was such a provision included in a Bill, but it was struck out.

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not think that was the case. If the matter was grasped in the proper spirit no time should be lost in bringing it about. I know of cases where men have been obliged to give up their mining propositions because they were taxed to such an extent that they were not able to utilise the profit that they made in the direction of development. We have heard now of the formation of an association to deal with mining. I do not know what the objects of that association are, but I do know that there are names appearing in connection with it which will not assist towards the success of the association, and will not help mining if they remain connected with it. I can trace back the careers of these men for many years. On the other hand, of course, there are connected with the association some estimable men, but the others to whom I refer should be blotted right out, as their connection with the association will prevent sound people from joining it. It certainly requires an association, or some body, to give mining a fillip. The policy which must be adopted is one of assistance to those who are desirous of going out to prospect new fields. I consider that we should take steps in the direction of further developing some of our existing fields. The present methods are not satisfactory. If a man wants assistance at the present time he may get a spring cart if he waits long enough. Of course, I do not deny that the Mines Department has done a great deal of good in that direction, but I agree with the leader of the Opposition that £100,000 a year should be set aside for prospecting. That would not be too much; in fact, it would not be enough. Several years ago, and before the war, when mining was slumping and many men were on the goldfields unemployed, I put forward a proposal in the direction of giving assistance to enable leases to be worked. The idea was to supply working parties with equipment and to give them a fair chance of having their ores treated at the public batteries free of cost, and that if the returns were satisfactory payment should then be made.

The Minister for Mines: We are putting through now 25 tons for nothing.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes; I understand that the present Attorney General was responsible for that. My idea was that we should assist not only the men who were in the mining camps at the present time, but also returned soldiers, and that depots should be formed in the various centres, in places like Kalgoorlie, Gwalia, Cue, and Meekatharra. These centres could be under the supervision of the Mines Department, and prospectors could secure equipment and provisions at these places. Then, of course, we would expect the State to get some return in the event of success following the operations of the prospectors. For instance, the State could retain an interest in a proposition and the prospector would be only too glad to give it. No assistance has been given to those men to go out prospecting. From my experience of the goldfields I feel

that many of our abandoned areas will eventually be returning a good deal of gold. Only a few months ago Meekatharra itself looked as if it was going back, but, fortunately, owing to the opening up of a new property, we have an extension of the Paddy's lease right out to the Gwalia, and good gold has been discovered. That lease returned 6,000 ounces of gold from less than 1,000 tons of stone; yet that place was prospected 13 or 14 years ago. Experts said that the Fenian reef would not live to a depth, but only recently in the No. 10 level, at about 1,000 feet, they have had a splendid development which they did not expect, assaying over three ounces to the ton. That gives a new lease of life to the field, and there are grounds for hoping that other fields will develop in the same way. Instead of the dividends from the Meekatharra field going out of the State, as in the case of the dividends from the Golden Mile, almost the whole of the wealth won is retained by local residents, who are spending their money in the State. When it comes to a question of taxation, I hope that some consideration will be given to the unsuccessful men on the fields, that the taxation will be somewhat on the lines of amalgamation, or of concentration of labour on the leases; that is to say, when a small man gets a little money out of one lease and spends it on the development of another lease, I hope he will not be taxed on that money.

The Minister for Mines: You suggest that his leases should be taken as a whole?

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, as a going concern, restricted, of course, to the one district. That proposition is worthy of consideration. I mentioned the question of men going to Wooroloo. Owing to bad development of the mines, inadequate ventilation and the lack of necessary facilities, hundreds of men have had to go to the sanatorium at Wooroloo. Although those men owe their affliction to working in deep mines, they are quite prepared to go out prospecting, because that would serve to improve their health.

The Attorney General: It would be as good as Wooroloo.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I disagree. Wooroloo is the best place for a man with miners' complaint.

Mr. HOLMAN: I say prospecting is good for such a man. I was affected with miners' complaint many years ago, probably before the hon. member ever saw a mine.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Wooroloo is the best place for a man with phthisis.

Mr. HOLMAN: My father died of it when 44 years of age, and I suffered from miners' complaint before I was 20 years old. Fortunately, I recovered, chiefly by living in the sun most of my time. If a man can get away from the deep levels before he is too far gone, and live and work in the open air, he will probably do just as well as he would at Wooroloo. I would do anything possible to assist men suffering from miners' phthisis. Of course, when once a man is seriously affected, there is no place better than Wooroloo.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The trouble is they are very seriously affected when they go to Wooroloo.

Mr. HOLMAN: That is so. They are generally beyond all hope. As soon as a man is affected at all, he should be sent to Wooroloo, and on his recovery he should be helped out into new country instead of being forced back into the deep mines. Doctors, when appealed to, advise affected miners to go away for a change, and tell them that if they continue to work in the deep mines it can have but one result. Those men are advised to leave mining for a spell. But what are they to do? They have their wives and families to maintain and, of course, they have no special ability at anything but mining. Those men should be assisted to go out prospecting on the surface or at a shallow depth. They would then have a chance of recovering. I know that once a man is seriously affected with miners' complaint, there is no hope for him, and I am sorry to have to admit that many cases have been taken to Wooroloo too late to admit of cure. The development of mining has been a serious proposition. Insufficient attention has been given to the opening up of new fields.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You require to find the new fields to open up.

Mr. HOLMAN: I can say without fear of contradiction that the new copper fields in the northern part of the district I represent are pretty good.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): What there are of them.

Mr. HOLMAN: It is remarkable the knowledge some men have in consequence of having merely passed through a place in a motor-car; they know all about it. The returns for that district speak for themselves, and the fact that men with much greater knowledge than has my friend are prepared to spend their time and money there, leads me to think that they should be given some encouragement. So far as I am personally concerned I shall give them all the encouragement and assistance I can. In no part of Western Australia has the same percentage of copper been returned as in the district I am speaking of.

The Attorney General: What is the percentage?

Mr. HOLMAN: It is about 50 per cent., but it is not so great in the big lodes. This copper has to be carted some 200 miles in some instances, which is out of all reason. Before the war started Mr. Montgomery went through this district and made arrangements to purchase the copper on the spot. It was to be stacked until such time as it could be removed. This gave the workers an opportunity of going on with their development, but the war prevented the scheme being carried out. Mr. Montgomery knows the district very well and he speaks well of it. His knowledge of mining is very great and he has given good advice to the men on every occasion that he has been through this district. We took a trip right through to Wiluna and I was greatly impressed with

Mr. Montgomery's desire to advance that district. He speaks well of the copper fields there. I know nothing about copper mining myself. I am a gold-mining man, but I am willing to take Mr. Montgomery's word, and he speaks highly of this place; I would take his advice before I would take that of the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood). A great deal of harm has been done to mining in the past by booms. Take the first boom at Phillips River. A man named Kaufmann got a promise from the Government that a railway would be built to this district and with the knowledge that a railway was to be constructed, he went to Phillips River and purchased all the properties there, really at a nominal sum. He placed these properties on the market and in a short time there were a great many propositions floated on the market. After a time the boom collapsed and the mines became idle and the owners had their properties taken from them. The railway was rushed through but the miners had left the district. Then we had the big boom at Bullfinch which did a great deal of harm to the country. It was worked on the same system as the Phillips River boom. I do not decry the Bullfinch district at all, but the fact that the Government built the railway there, gave an opportunity for this boom. I think I am safe in saying that this boom brought hundreds of thousands of pounds into this district when there was no hope whatever of getting any return. People thought they were investing their money in good properties when there was no hope really of any return being obtained. I have been amongst mining men in Adelaide and they have told me that they were not prepared after what has been done in Western Australia, to give any credence to reports and the booms that take place in this country. Then we had the Westonia boom. That turned out all right and I am sorry we have not had more finds like Westonia opened up.

The Attorney General: They will be found.

Mr. HOLMAN: I have no doubt they will and in some of the old places success will be met. Something has been said about new members, especially country members, travelling to the goldfields. Two of the largest Parliamentary parties that ever left Perth have resulted in good. I myself organised, in the early days, parties to go into the goldfields districts. One party went through the Eastern goldfields on to Meekatharra, and we were able to show the visitors the prospects of the place and the disabilities the people were labouring under. When these members came back they were willing to vote for the railway and assist the people. The increase of gold at Meekatharra in consequence of the railway has been about 100 per cent. and it is going on the same to-day. The yields from Meekatharra are very high and they will continue to be so. It is one of the most prosperous centres in Western Australia and had not the members of Parliament gone on this trip and seen the possibilities of the district and the disabilities that the people laboured under, there would have been no railway. It has been since proved

that this was one of the most warranted railways ever built in the State. Meekatharra is improving and showing better prospects to-day than ever before. There may be other places of equal importance. I would like to see members, especially country members, travel to the goldfields, and when we get into recess by all means let the country members and far-back members organise trips through the Eastern goldfields and the Murchison and I am sure it will do good for this State and assist those members when discussing matters affecting those districts in Parliament. We have had it pointed out that instead of assisting mining, the Railway Department has risen the freights and those engaged in the mining industry have had to pay them. We should not penalise these men outback any more than they are at present penalised. They are, in fact, altogether too much penalised. An increase of 10 per cent. has been effected in our railway freights and the men outback, the miners at Meekatharra, Peak Hill, Wiluna, and Mt. Egerton, for instance, have not only to pay the increased cost on the railways, but they have to pay the increased freight after the goods have arrived. It is utterly impossible for them to pay the high impost placed upon them.

The Attorney General: They deserve to get 3-oz. stuff.

Mr. HOLMAN: They deserve to get it but do not get it. They have to struggle hard to pay the high rates that they are called upon to pay. Men have been working at Mt. Egerton for the last 12 years and are now leaving it to go farther north. They find they have a proposition there with which they can make no headway. They could not even finish their crushings because the local battery broke down. One man who has been working there for 20 years told me he had become disheartened, that the battery had broken down, and that he had 140 tons of ore to put through. He said that he was going to take a trip out to the back country where there were good prospects for him. He and others expected to make good and I hope they will do so. The question of coal in the Irwin district has been mentioned. The same thing was spoken of 20 years ago. The ground was tested, and doubt arose as to whether coal had really been discovered there or not. It was even suggested that coal had been brought there from some other place. Since then bores have been put down to the north of the Irwin river and other discoveries have been made. If coal is discovered in the Irwin district it will be of great assistance to our mining fields. To the north of the Wilgiemia and Weld Ranges we have the greatest iron proposition in the world, not only from the point of view of quantity but from that of quality. The percentage of iron there is higher than anywhere else. If we could only get the coalfields near by, we should have an iron proposition the wealth of which would be incalculable.

The Attorney General: There must be coal there.

Mr. HOLMAN: I hope there is. The iron is there, and we have the best proposition of its kind in the world.

The Attorney General: Nature always places some commodity to assist in the disposal of other products in the vicinity.

Mr. HOLMAN: The reports of the Mines Department on the Wilgiemia and Weld Range districts show that this is the best iron proposition in the world. The Australian natives have worked a mine at Wilgiemia for centuries, in order to get out of it red ochre which has been traded amongst the natives for hundreds of thousands of miles around. It would be worth the while of hon. members to pay a visit to this mine, which has been worked by the natives for hundreds of years. They would then see for themselves the crude methods of timbering which have been adopted, how they used to light their way down by means of wooden torches, and how they have penetrated to a distance of hundreds of feet in following the vein of red ochre. The rest of the mountain is one vast mass of iron. I believe it has recently been taken up by a man and that a portion of it has been pegged out.

The Minister for Mines: I reserved that portion.

Mr. HOLMAN: It should be reserved. It has historical interests, and it would be worth while for the State to keep hold of it. If coal has been discovered on the Irwin, or if it is necessary to go in for further boring to find out exactly whether the proposition is a good one or not, it would well pay the Government to assist the men concerned in this direction. I understand that there has been an influx of water which has prevented the men from working. If these men have really discovered a coal proposition, it would be an easy matter for the Government to give them a gas producer engine and a pump in order to keep the water down. They should be given an opportunity of testing the coal seams in a proper manner, and should not be forced to place the whole thing in the hands of other people. If the proposition is going to be a payable one the Government should give the necessary assistance to enable it to be developed. The earth movement at Kalgoorlie, as mentioned by the leader of the Opposition, is a matter for regret. In other mining centres, where there have been big developments at great depths, there have been earth movements. I remember that on the South Broken Hill mine a very big earth movement occurred. It seemed as if the mine was going to fall in. The movement had the effect of tearing up rails and twisting them into the shape of a corkscrew. Wheels were torn off trucks, and eight or nine men were killed and several others injured. This movement was due to the fact that the mine had not been properly secured, and in all probability this movement on the Eastern field may be due to something of the sort. After mines have been worked out, or have been worked down to a considerable distance, once the overhead ground begins to move it must find a resting place somewhere. A good deal of this can be stopped by means of proper supervision and inspection, in order to see that not only is a mine properly timbered but there is a proper filling in after the ore from the lodes has been taken out. It is useless to timber a mine unless it

is filled up properly. It must be timbered, too, so that if the earth begins to move, it will not travel any great distance. The Government should impress upon inspectors the necessity of carefully watching for any neglect in this direction. I am pleased to know that workmen's inspectors on the Murchison have been of material advantage. These workmen's inspectors have been very highly spoken of. This goes to show that the system we advocated for years has proved to be a success. No complaints have so far been made against these inspectors. They have been the means of exercising a much more strict supervision on the mines than existed before. As they were practical men their knowledge was of assistance to the management, and did not retard the work of development. So far as any of our industries are concerned that are likely to benefit Western Australia, I shall be only too glad to render any assistance I can, or to give any knowledge that I may possess towards their development. As soon as we can we should introduce a system of assisting those who will go out prospecting for the development of the various leases that are already opened up in our mining centres. These leases are not worked out by any means, although development on them has been suspended for the time being. Many of these deserted mining centres, if properly assisted and encouraged would, in the not distant future, become flourishing mining centres.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [11.10]: Whilst with every member of the Committee, and possibly, going further, with every citizen of Western Australia, I regret to note the continuous decline in the gold yield of this State, yet I think, when we bear in mind the disabilities under which the industry is being carried on at the present day here, and indeed throughout Australia, we can congratulate ourselves on the decline not being even greater than it has been during the past four years. Gold mining overshadows all other forms of mining in Western Australia, and it is worth while to illustrate the difference between the conditions governing it and those which govern the mining of base metals. The former is far more severely handicapped, and has suffered much more severely, by reason of the war. The prices of all the base metals—tin, iron, lead, copper—have risen to a very considerable extent during the war, while the product of the gold mining industry remains at the pre-war level. Though the cost of producing gold has risen in as great a proportion as, and perhaps in a greater proportion than, the cost of producing base metals, the price at which gold can be sold has not increased. Therefore, whilst we regret the decline in our gold production, yet we must recognise that Western Australia owes a great deal to the owners of the gold mines, who have battled to maintain the production under most adverse conditions. As the leader of the Opposition has pointed out, there can be no doubt that many of our mines have been working on a very narrow margin of profit for some time back. We must not overlook, in this regard, the increased prices to-day of all mining re-

quisites, and the lack of that efficient labour which, we deplore, is at present out of Australia. The prices of explosives, mining machinery, steel, and all other materials used by up-to-date gold mines—and what material, one might say, is there that an up-to-date gold mine does not use?—have all risen enormously. Therefore we should express our admiration for what those in control of the gold mining industry of Western Australia are accomplishing to-day. Had they decided that, from a business point of view purely and simply, they ought to and would shut down, we could hardly have blamed them, though we know what the effect would have been on this State. Not only the mines working on a narrow margin of profit are feeling the pinch, but some of the high-grade mines also are undoubtedly making a sacrifice in continuing to produce gold in order to assist Western Australia and the Empire along under present conditions. We, as representatives of the people here, should not fail to recognise that fact. It must be apparent to everyone in this State, I think, that the war profits taxation imposed by the Imperial authorities has exercised an adverse effect on our gold mining industry. The profits from shipping have been taxed very heavily indeed. The profits from the manufacture of commodities have also been heavily mulcted. While undoubtedly it is right that all who are in a position to pay should contribute correspondingly towards the cost of the war, yet it is equally without doubt that those engaged in gold mining on these outskirts of the Empire are suffering very severely on account of this Imperial taxation. We cannot in any way control this factor in the position. All we can endeavour to do is to keep the industry alive, in the hope of better times and of normal conditions after the close of this terrible war. Much has been said by way of comparing the amount of money spent by the State in the development and in, as it were, the upkeep of the agricultural industry, and the relatively small amount which has been spent on or is now available for the encouragement of the mining industry. Unquestionably the discrepancy which is disclosed can only be described as enormous. If the gold mining industry, which has been, and is to-day, of such vital importance to the well-being of the community, is to be encouraged, the Government—I care not who they may be—will need to take a much more active interest in that industry. In my opinion, there are two directions in which encouragement may be offered. One, of which we have heard so much to-night, is to stimulate prospecting. All of us must realise that if no new mines are being discovered whilst the existing mines are being depleted of their ore, the industry must eventually come to an end. Another direction in which encouragement may be offered—and this I consider to be our best hope—is to do a great deal more than has been done hitherto towards reduction of mining costs. The best scientific knowledge obtainable should be applied to the working of our gold mining propositions. If the industry is to be kept going—and unfortunately neither

this nor any other Government of Western Australia can do much in this respect—the extraordinarily high cost of mining requisites must be reduced. There is also to be considered the comparatively inefficient labour on which the industry has at present to depend. However, these problems will be faced and eventually overcome, and possibly gold mining here will have a future even more prosperous than its past.

The Minister for Mines: We can help the industry by research work.

Mr. MULLANY: One aspect of the gold mining problem touched on by the leader of the Opposition is very striking indeed. The difficulty of obtaining any money in Perth for a Western Australian mining proposition is thoroughly well known. But that fact in itself should occasion no surprise. As a fact, the money made in business in this city does not, for the most part, remain here. Most of the large commercial houses of Perth are—what? Mere branches of still larger establishments in the Eastern States or in some other part of the world. No manufacturing is done here. The chief function of the Perth mercantile community is merely to act as distributing agents between manufacturers in Eastern Australia or in some other country and the primary producers of Western Australia. While this condition of affairs obtains, Western Australia cannot be a flourishing State, unless the gold mining industry is prosperous. Whilst we cannot keep the industry up to the level which it has reached in the past, we still can do a great deal to encourage it. Once gold mining begins to languish, without steps having been taken—and they have not been taken—to establish other industries, we cannot expect to see a prosperous state of affairs here. As regards assisting the mining industry by encouraging prospectors to go out and find new fields, we must bear in mind that something remains to be done even after a new field has been discovered. We must then induce people to interest themselves in the new field financially. If a prospector does find a promising goldfield, our people must assist in its development. I believe that a good deal could be done, more than has been done, by a well organised system of sending men out to endeavour to discover new goldfields. As soon as it is possible to do this a sum of money should be set apart for the purpose of sending men out, and to keep them in fairly decent comfort and to provide adequate equipment. There would have to be strict supervision, or else there would be a danger of men who are not genuine imposing upon the department, men of the type known as the public house prospector. There is ample machinery in existence to enable wardens, mining registrars and inspectors of mines to see that the department is not imposed upon. There would be no difficulty in finding men who would work earnestly and diligently to benefit themselves and the State as well. This is what should have been done in later years, but unfortunately for the State no such action has been taken.

I am not blaming the department because circumstances have been such that they have had very little encouragement, and the type of man who would have gone out on such expeditions 20 or 25 years ago, and very probably met with success, is non-existent to-day. At any rate, there are very few of such a type. Another point to which I desire to refer is the administration in the department in Perth. There is altogether too much delay in connection with applications which are lodged with the department. For instance, a man may make an application and the application is approved, but before the assistance which he has sought is made available, it seems to be necessary to refer the request to other departments and prolonged delays are the result. I am not referring to the delays which must occur as the result of a responsible officer of the Mines Department being asked to report upon a proposition. A brief delay must take place, but I have in mind a case which occurred recently. An individual applied for certain assistance, and after enquiry, the assistance was assured and the applicant was informed that it would be granted to him subject to certain terms being agreed to. The applicant consented and on the 14th February last he wrote to the department to that effect. Then we find that the Mines Department had to consult the Crown Law Department in regard to the matter, and before the deal could be finally fixed up, although the Mines Department and the applicant had come to an agreement, a considerable delay took place while the Crown Law Department arranged the legal technicalities. Having written to the Mines Department on the 14th February agreeing to their conditions, the papers were sent on to the Crown Law office and were not returned to the Mines Department until the 11th March, four weeks later. Surely it ought to be possible to expedite matters of this kind. I do not know where the blame lies. It may be that the Crown Law officials have too much work to do and that the papers relating to the matter had to await their turn before being considered, but four weeks is a very long period for the Crown Law Department to take to put the legal position of the application in order. I hope the Minister will look into this point. He ought to know that he gives twice who gives quickly. I have no desire to speak at any greater length but I trust that the Mines Department will consider the importance of carrying out prospecting work especially when returned soldiers who may desire to engage in it will be available. The carrying out of a systematic programme of prospecting will be the only means by which the State can be brought back to its former prosperity.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [11.26]: I listened with great interest to the Minister for Mines and also to the leader of the Opposition, and with regard to what the latter stated I can endorse all that he has said. I have learned considerably more about mining

ing during the past three years than I did during the whole of the time I had previously resided in the State. We are coming back to what the Country party members recommended in this House, namely, the basic principles by which we realise that the National wealth comes from the earth. It does not matter from whatever source we stimulate it, the whole of the community will derive a benefit from it. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) when speaking on the general Estimates made the remark that he thought it would be a good gamble for the Government to give a reward of £10,000 to any prospector who found a goldfield which would maintain 10,000 inhabitants for three years. A member of the Government interjected that he thought it would be a good thing and generally the idea seemed to meet with approval, but I think if it is wise to make a grant of that description to any prospector who might discover a goldfield capable of carrying 10,000 people for three years, why not bring the suggestion down in its true proportion and offer say, £1,000 to the prospector who finds a goldfield capable of carrying a population of 1,000 people during a period of three years. I would like to suggest that the finder of the Westonia field should receive further encouragement than he has had at the hands of the former Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: We are giving it to him.

Mr. HARRISON: I am glad to hear it. I have been in touch with this prospector for some time past and I understand he knows of another place near Westonia where he thinks he can make good. Besides the finding of Westonia, this same individual found gold inside the rabbit proof fence, but further development has not yet been successful. I am pleased to find that the Government Geologist states that the Westonia body of ore is likely to live to a great depth. This is the more pleasing in view of the fact that the reports of a few years ago did not tend to commend the Yilgarn field to investors. It should encourage the Government to give assistance to that field. It has been advanced that the overburden which occurs at Westonia some 60 feet deep or more and which serves to make prospecting much more difficult than in other parts of the State, could best be met by putting in bores to prove the lead and so assist the prospector. Something should be attempted in this respect. Another problem is that of water supply. I am aware that there is a certain rate for water supplied to mines and that the Cabinet is adverse to any alteration of those terms. Deeper water is supplied for sluicing purposes. From the Cabinet standpoint it would be altogether wise to let the mines at Westonia have water at a lesser rate for certain purposes. If they do not take from the scheme the whole of the water required, there is a charge of 10s. a thousand. This extra charge must retard the development of the field. With only three pumping stations, Westonia is in a different position from the

other fields and should be getting certain concessions. If they were to take the whole of the water from the scheme it would mean putting in largely increased service pipes. During the last few years there have been three different increases in the service to supply that centre. Great development has taken place, and the number of inhabitants has doubled. There are over 1,000 people on the field to-day. There is more activity on the share market for this centre than obtains in regard to almost any other mining centre in the Commonwealth. Any action taken to bring about the further development of Westonia would be an incentive to mining development generally throughout the State. If the Minister could see his way clear to rendering assistance in regard to the water supply, much good would result. Something has been done already in regard to railway facilities. I voted against Mr. Walker's motion for the resumption of work on the Esperance-Northwards line. It may be that a firewood railway will be required from Carrabin to Westonia, and certain developments are likely to take place which may render it inadvisable that our vote should be earmarked. In the near future an improved railway service for the supply of wood and material to Westonia must be provided. I am fully in accord with those members who have already spoken. We have heard a good deal of repatriation. In this regard there is considerable scope in the various mining centres. I trust the Government will give consideration to the few suggestions I have made.

Mr. FOLEY (Mt. Leonora) [11.38]: Apparently members representing industries other than mining are taking a keen interest in mining, for some of them are prepared to tell us a good deal about it. When the Loan Estimates come down I trust that mining will get the consideration it is undoubtedly entitled to. We have to take into consideration the question of repatriation in relation to the mining industry. We are frequently assured of hon. members' appreciation of the value of mining to the State. When we remember all that the industry has done for the State and the immense value of the gold production, together with the accidents fatal and otherwise that have occurred in the industry, we have to ask ourselves whether the cost has not been a little too high. Let me tell the members representing other industries that we desire to see a more hopeful state of affairs in the mining centres. The war has been very bad for us. The figures we have show that the number of men who have been injured in battle is enormous. We all deplore this. Has any hon. member taken the trouble to add up the figures, as shown in the Mines Department reports since their inception, relating to those men who have been permanently injured and rendered unfit for further work in this State? Over 6,000 men have been permanently injured or have been killed while engaged in this industry. There are also hundreds of men in our sanatorium at Wooroloo only waiting to die as a direct result of the conditions under which they have worked in our mines. I heartily

endorse what other speakers have said as to the necessity for pushing on this industry. I wish to put in a plea for those men who, while working in the bowels of the earth, have been the means of producing the wealth that has accrued to our mining companies and to the State. Much of the wealth of the State to-day owes its existence to the mining industry. There are men who have been buried in our cemeteries who would have been with us to-day, I believe, had better conditions prevailed in the industry. Many of our best farmers, who had spent their earlier life in the mines, have gone under as a result of the strain upon their health in those days. Much has been done of recent years in the way of the inspection of mines, and of the care that has to be exercised as to the safety of those employed in them, but much more remains to be done. I trust that before members go to the country again some legislation will have been brought down that will make for still better conditions. A great deal has been said about the finding of new mines. The phrase has really become a hackneyed one. What assistance was given to our early pioneers? Slaterry and Ball, who in 1886 discovered gold in the Kimberleys, Cook and his mates who also found gold there, Hannans of Kalgoorlie, the discoverer of Broad Arrow, and many others, certainly got their rewards for the discoveries they made, but received no other assistance whatever. I believe after the war there is going to be a revival in mining. When that time comes I trust we shall find that money is provided on the Estimates to assist those who are endeavouring to find something new in the State. In travelling over the goldfields one comes across many shows, but can scarcely point to one which will go over 10 pennyweights to the ton. I know of none at any rate. If any show went up to as high as 10 weights it would be worked. There are many shows which will go under that amount to the ton. Some of these yielding only five or six weights were being worked at a time when the cost of treatment was less than it would be now, but worked by men who did not possess the scientific knowledge which they have either acquired since, or which could now be placed at their disposal. When men come back from the front and think there is a chance of their finding something new I think it is our duty as legislators to give them every opportunity of doing so. If ten such men were only to have given to them the amount that was given to each of the soldiers who were settled on the Riverton estate, so that they could put this money into their shows with the assistance of other experienced men, they would be able to work leases which at present are lying idle. On the Kalgoorlie belt there are doubtless mines which are not now in as flourishing a condition as they were. The mining industry is of necessity different from the agricultural industry. A man who takes up a holding and develops it is creating an asset for himself, and the more assistance he gets and the more energy he puts into his work the more valuable does that asset become. But a miner cannot put gold into the ground, and no matter how hard he may work

he may find that there is a water level near the surface and that he is near the end of his resources, and nothing he can do is of any avail. He, therefore, has to lose his property and his work has gone for nothing. If we can do something to help either the individual miner, a party of miners, or even a company, in such circumstances so as to enable them to overcome their difficulties, and assist them to get on their feet before the smash comes, we shall not only be giving them a greater incentive to work but will also be doing a great deal for the mining industry in general. It is one of the characteristics of this country, especially that portion of it which lies between Norseman and the Murchison, that at the 200-foot level a poor zone is found. I contend that our departmental officers should be put to work on this geological question, and by their knowledge and advice help render timely assistance to miners so that they can go on with the development of their leases. The Government should find out the faults of the country, and let the State enjoy the knowledge of the departmental officers who are paid by the State to impart it. There are also some parts of the State which are on the up grade. The Sons of Gwalia mine, in my electorate, has been developed to the 4,000ft. level, and the lens of ore is now greater than it ever was before. North of the shaft on the upper levels there was nothing, but at about the 3,600 level instead of the chute dipping south it is going west, and there has been revealed a chute of gold of over 2,000 feet in length. The mine never looked better than it does now. The costs of working are, however, much greater than they were previously. This, of course, applies throughout the goldfields areas. Not one thing that is necessary for the production of gold are we turning out in this State. Everything that is required has to be imported and taken up from the coast. Gelignite has gone up to a big price. Ever since we started gold mining here we have had to buy every commodity necessary for the production of our gold. At the same time, this State is capable of producing the ingredients of almost every article that is required in the reduction plant of our mines. I trust that the war has taught us a lesson in this respect. There is the question of zincs used in the reduction process from the cyanide point of view. These zincs are being cut here now by lathe. We have the zinc shavings produced in Australia. Assistance can be given to mining by other means than money alone. We can give assistance from the Australian national point of view. There are many commodities in Australia which could be used in the mining world if only a little science was applied in their production. We should give to our manufacturers, and everyone else who is endeavouring to make something, an opportunity of carrying out their object, and if we assist them we shall be assisting the mining industry. There is great trouble in regard to the water question. If it can be shown to the Government that only one of our big mines will have to close down because of the difficulty of getting water, and in that way

throw out of employment perhaps hundreds of men, it is the duty of the Government to provide that water from the goldfields scheme at a price that will enable the mine to keep open. I want to refer to what the Minister said in regard to the geological portion of the Mines Department Estimates, when he said that the number of men engaged on field work was going to be reduced. I have travelled over a great portion of this State. I have been from the most southerly portion in which gold has been found right up to Meekatharra. Though I have not travelled much about Meekatharra, I have been through the country lying out beyond it. I have seen the country almost to the South Australian border, along what is now the route of the Great Western Railway. The country I have visited recently, almost on a direct line between Leonora and Hall's Creek, astounded me with its various classes of country rock. There is in that country schist, and schistose formation, and also limestone. Mr. Talbot, who made a survey there, said it was the purest limestone in the State. True, the limestone itself is not much good, but limestone country is certainly good as pastoral country. I have brought down samples of the ores to be found in those districts, and to my mind these samples disclose a possibility of a new era of prosperity in Western Australia being opened by the chemists, if they will set to work and ascertain what those outlying districts contain. No matter how much people may say that they wish to see prospectors out, is is all moonshine to think that now-a-days a prospector can go out with tin dish and pick and find new shows. The ores we are dealing with in Western Australia differ in almost every particular from the ores in the Eastern States, in most of which I have worked as a miner. But what I wish to urge on the Minister is that it is the chemist who is going to be Western Australia's prospector in the future, that it is only the chemist who can prospect Western Australia. In all seriousness, I contend that the Minister should show every consideration to his scientific officers, and make the best use of them. If he proves that good work is being got from those officers in the field and in geology and chemistry, then he will be supported if his next Estimates show a considerable increase on these. We all desire to see the mining industry prosper; but, along with the prosperity of the industry, I desire to see every consideration given to the conditions under which the miners work, so that as the mines get deeper there will be closer supervision. I trust the Government will make evident that it is their policy, as it should be the policy of any Government in power, to ensure that the men who are causing wealth to accrue to the State, are provided with the best possible working conditions, which they have not had up to the present day. When that time comes, I will say from my seat in this House that the Minister has done his duty as a worthy administrator of the mining industry.

Mr. LUTEY (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [12.0 midnight]: I was disappointed when the Estimates were presented to Parliament to find a

decrease of £1,816 in connection with mining. The mining industry is still the most important of all the industries in the State, and it should be fostered at the present juncture. My opinion is that it will be many years before the other industries of the State will be able to stand on their own, as they should be, without the assistance of goldfields backing. With regard to prospecting, I contend that Western Australia has only been scratched up to the present time. I have failed to find that the Government are doing anything in the direction of assisting prospecting. At the present time there are many returned soldiers on the goldfields, and a number of them are looking for work, being unable, of course, to go down to the 3,000 or 4,000 feet levels. These men, however, are quite capable of carrying on prospecting work; and if their services were availed of, and they were sent out prospecting in the auriferous areas, the State would derive an advantage. The policy of the Government, I regret to say, has been lukewarm so far as the mining industry is concerned. To illustrate my contention, I would mention that when I was first returned to Parliament, I drew attention to the fact that adjacent to the Golden Mile, some 19 or 20 years ago, a company known as the Great Southern Development Company carried on extensive diamond drilling, and spent thousands of pounds in sinking shafts. But after doing a considerable amount of work they went into liquidation. Later on a working party of miners attempted to carry on operations on that particular lease but they encountered a great quantity of water and their work had to cease. I would like to know whether the Government have made any search of the records of the Great Southern Development Company in the hope of being able to put that country which they worked to some use again. The property is situated at the southern end of the Golden Mile, right at our very doors in fact, and steps ought to be taken to thoroughly test that area. They were shrewd people behind the Great Southern Development Company, and though they spent thousands of pounds and then abandoned the property, I feel sure there is something there which is worthy of receiving the State's attention. We know that what saved the South African goldfields was the Deeps mine, and the companies which began operations there afterwards sank thousands of feet before they got to payable ore. If the development of the southern end of the Golden Mile is taken in hand seriously, I am under the impression that a similar condition of affairs will be found to exist there. The north end of the Golden Mile as well has only been scratched over. We have heard a good deal about boring operations, but nothing definite has ever been done. If the Government are really sincere they should get to work in earnest and the greatest filip the industry has ever had will be the result. The leader of the Opposition made reference to the creep in the Great Boulder mine. Members may remember that one of our comrades, Flannagan, a man whose loss I

felt keenly, was killed as a result of the creep at the Great Boulder Mine some months ago. The union requested that a Royal Commission should be appointed to investigate the conditions at that particular mine, and a deputation waited on the Minister. That occurred months ago, but it is only within the last few days that the State Mining Engineer's report has been presented. There is something wrong in the administration of the Mines Department when a serious creep can take place and a report is not obtained from a departmental official until months afterwards. The creep is a serious one. I live almost a mile and a half away from the Great Boulder Mine, and on the occasion of the creep—personally I believe it is a crack in the country—the tremor was so violent that I was almost bounced off my bed. The situation is extremely serious inasmuch as a number of men are daily taking their lives in their hands when they go down in this mine. It seems to me that if such delays must always take place before a report on an important question like this is presented, the State Mining Engineer, or whoever is responsible in the department for the delay wants shaking up. The Minister smiles, but I can assure him I feel very keenly the loss of Flannagan.

The Minister for Mines: I was not smiling at the seriousness of the subject.

Mr. LUTEY: Knowing as we do that hundreds of men go into that mine daily and fearing a catastrophe at any time, it seems extraordinary that a report on such an important question as a creep should take months to prepare. We want a Royal Commission to investigate a matter of this kind, an independent commission, preferably an inspector from Broken Hill where the country is somewhat similar to that of the Golden Mile. There are differences of opinion about this misfortune. Some say it is a crack, some a subsidence, while others declare that gas was responsible for it. We know at any rate that one miner was burned through the explosion of gas and it is astonishing to me to think that although the disaster occurred months ago, the Government have not taken any definite steps to see that the lives of the men engaged in that mine are safeguarded. I would be lacking in my duty if I did not move in this Chamber in the direction of galvanising some life into the department. There must be a full inquiry by an independent man or tribunal to see whether it is possible to protect the lives of many men. I would not be surprised on opening the newspaper one morning to find that a big collapse had taken place in which hundreds of men had lost their lives. What is the position of the members of that district and the Minister? It is not as it should be, and I hope the Minister will see that a different state of affairs exists in the future and that something will be done immediately in the direction of causing an inquiry to be held into the whole position. I would like to refer to the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie and the good work which it has done. We have heard members in this

Chamber refer to the fact that in connection with higher education the people should pay for that privilege. I consider that education is the greatest asset a State can possibly have. The position of gold mining in Western Australia to-day is due in a very great measure to the education which the Australians engaged in it have received. In this State, as far as gold mining is concerned, we can hold our own with a country like South Africa where black labour is employed. The idea of the Treasurer that there should be introduced a suggestion box struck me forcibly. I consider that is a good idea, because it will give the State an opportunity of recognising what is often done for us by the community. There are many problems to be faced on the goldfields, but unfortunately the Chamber of Mines in the past has not been inclined to give encouragement to men with ideas. I can illustrate the case of one man who made a suggestion which had the effect of saving one company thousands of pounds and which meant a great deal to the mining industry. I would not have minded so much if only one company in that particular instance had benefited by the suggestion made, but other companies were brought in, and recognising the importance of the suggestion, adopted it. The suggestion established the success of cyaniding and filter press work and the individual responsible for it did not receive a sixpence for it. With the introduction of a suggestion box at the Mining School, any person responsible for an innovation would receive some reward if that innovation proved effective and saved the mining industry a considerable sum of money. There is a problem which has been engaging the attention of the people on the goldfields for a considerable time, and that is re-precipitation. They have been experimenting for years to see if it is possible to overcome this and keep the gold in a soluble state. It would mean thousands of pounds, not only to the companies, but to the State. Suggestion boxes have been established in the mining industry and in other industries as well. Something has been said about the visits of the members of Parliament to the goldfields. We scarcely ever see other than a goldfields member on the goldfields, except perhaps at election time. The people of the goldfields are always pleased to meet visitors, and if agricultural members would visit the goldfields they could be sure of a hearty welcome. Quite recently I had the pleasure of visiting several farming districts. I was agreeably surprised with much of the country that I had never seen before, and my tour served to broaden my views in regard to the wheat areas out in the Mt. Marshall district. I entirely believe in members moving about the State, and I am sorry that the salary of members of Parliament is so low. I should like to see it sufficiently large to enable a member to travel the country more thoroughly than he can do at present. Members without private means find it impossible to do much travelling on the Parliamentary allowance. The Perseverance, the Australia and the Kalgoorlie mines are just at the paying stage; are in fact about to close

down. Machine miners have been taken out of the Perseverance, and no development work is going on there. The few men employed are merely taking the ore out of the shrinkage stopes, which means that the Perseverance will finally close down in about 12 months time. From a State point of view that mine has been the most valuable we ever had. For years past it has employed more men than any other mine. The three mines I have mentioned are only just paying their way to-day. Members have spoken of zinc cyaniding and machinery, which have increased the cost of mining. But what can the State do to relieve those particular companies and the people of the goldfields? There is, of course, the question of railway freights. The Government should, if possible, reduce those freights so as to give the mines which are just existing an opportunity of pulling through until prices generally shall be again reduced after the war. The railway freights on cyanides and mining commodities should be lowered rather than raised. Such a policy would result in advantage to the State. If the Perseverance, the Kalgorli and the Australia mines close down, from 1,500 to 2,000 men will be thrown out of employment. Even Ministers themselves must have a conception of what that would mean to the State. Reference has been made to miners' complaint. I have known numbers of men who went into mining as healthy, robust lads and are now in their graves. Remembering the fights we have had over the question of miners' phthisis I should like to offer a tribute to the leader of the Opposition and to Mr. Grenard, one of the mining inspectors, who since his arrival in Kalgoorlie has done very good work. If we had had an energetic officer like Mr. Grenard 20 years ago, we should have saved the lives of many valuable citizens now in their graves. I hope the Minister will do all he can to improve the conditions of mining, not only underground but also on the surface. It is not necessary to go underground to contract miners' phthisis, for dry crushing plants are worse than many bad places underground. When, in 1910, Dr. Cumpston made his examination, he found that machine men suffered to the extent of 30 per cent. Next to those were the men in the mills, who suffered to the extent of 27 per cent. But, whereas Dr. Cumpston in compiling his figures took the men actually working on the machines, many men working in the mills work in places not subject to dust, notwithstanding which the men in the mills were found to be suffering from miners' complaint to the extent of 27 per cent. I consider the energy of the Minister and his inspectors should be directed to seeing that the surface working are made as healthy as possible. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) said that what was wanted was, not a mining policy, but merely administration. If the hon. member were to go and tell that to the few Britshers left in Leonora, where the miners to-day are mostly "dings," he would have some hard words directed to him. We want an energetic policy at this juncture, and I appeal to members representing the farming districts to assist us in securing it. At election time we always find

that local requirements are put before anything in the nature of a national policy concerning the interests of the whole State. Yet if hon. members will look at what the Labour Government did, they will find that although that Government was composed largely of mining members, their best endeavours were used to foster the farming industry. In view of this I now plead with members representing agricultural districts to give the miners every possible support, in the interests of the State generally.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [12.27 a.m.]: An apology is due to the mining representatives on the score of the scarcity of members in the Chamber to-night, while the mining Estimates are being discussed. I particularly apologise for my colleagues of the Country party. We have to regard mining as the springboard of development in the State. I make no apology for speaking on the mining Estimates, because I represent the oldest mining constituency in the State. I say emphatically that by the development of the mining industry in my electorate we will achieve the greatest advance possible in that electorate. Speaking on these Estimates brings back to me old associations in connection with mining. Of all the energetic and enterprising citizens in the State, the most enterprising are those who came to the State in the quest of gold. Turning to the report of the Mines Department for 1916 I find that absolutely no reference has been made in the general remarks of the Under Secretary to the branch of the industry which I represent. In the whole of the departmental report the only reference is on page 29 where, under the heading "Northampton and Yandanooka mineral field" we find the following:—

No minerals were reported from Yandanooka. In the Northampton field the output of ore was 34,578.34 tons, valued at £110,872, and in the preceding year 15,678.30 tons, valued at £29,396; an increase of tonnage of 18,900.04 tons, and in value of £87,476.

There has been a good deal of activity on this field, and a continuance of its improved output is anticipated.

The only other reference in the whole report is on page 36 and it says—

Northampton mineral field—A certain amount of renewed activity has been displayed in this field. The Baddera and Narra Tarra mines have been fully occupied, and the Uga main lode and Kirton's have been actively worked. The Nooka, which has long been idle, has been re-applied for. Prospecting work is being carried on north of Kirton's mine and at Howatharra. At the Baddera lead mine the main shaft is being sunk below the No. 3 level. At the Narra Tarra lead mine the main shaft has been sunk to 350 feet.

That is the whole attention that is paid to the lead mining industry of the State at Northampton in the report, an industry which, for the year 1916, had a production valued at £110,872. During the last 12 months the development has been fairly ac-

tive and a fair amount of prospecting work under difficult circumstances has been entered into. I contend that no serious attention has been paid by the department to the encouragement of the prospecting in that industry. It is carried out under rather difficult conditions because the greater part of the area is held under the old Imperial freehold grants, and the prospectors are working under a system of tribute. The prospectors are developing these mines to make them prove eventually, if the industry advances, profitable to those people who enjoy themselves and are not endeavouring to develop these freehold blocks. The principal area where prospecting has been carried on is near Northampton and at Geraldine beyond the railhead at Ajana. These are mostly surface shows, and I may state that the ore carries such a high percentage of lead that it is possible by hand dressing—a very crude system—to obtain \$5 per cent. of lead. These prospectors have to get the lead ore carted to the railhead, a distance of ten miles, over a very difficult road, and the cost of cartage amounts to approximately £1 per ton. The Minister for Mines has intimate knowledge, or should have, of the circumstances under which the prospectors are working in the area, because he recently paid a visit to the districts and he knows from personal observation, besides the facts have been placed before him by various deputations and the disabilities which the prospectors are working under have been described to him. Prospectors and mining people generally are akin to farmers in this respect: if a farmer has a crop, he generally reckons it is going to give him five bushels or 10 bushels more than it really does, and the prospector generally places the lead contents of the ore on a higher basis than what he generally realises. There is an agreement at the present time between the Government and the Fremantle Trading Co., that is the company that own the larger mines around Northampton and the Narra Tarra mine, and the system by which the prospectors gain their results or their account sales is not satisfactory. These prospectors have been under a misapprehension in some respects as to the treatment they have been receiving at the hands of the Fremantle Trading Co. Recently, in conjunction with the Minister, I had the privilege of being shown over the Fremantle Co.'s plant by the manager, Mr. Sutherland, who explained the methods by which the ore is railed from Northampton, or the prospecting shows at Ajana and treated, sampled, and weighed, and I have come to the conclusion, after a full knowledge of the facts, that the prospectors receive very fair treatment indeed from the Fremantle Smelting Co. Their further complaint is that their account sales are too long in coming to light—they have to wait too long before they get their returns. I do not know whether it is possible to expedite that in any way.

The Minister for Mines: We are negotiating with that object.

Mr. MALEY: I am pleased to hear that because, after all said and done, the men are working away and relying on the returns to

keep them going. There is just one other matter I wish to place before the Minister, as to the development of the prospecting shows at Geraldine, and that is the state of the road from the mines at Ajana. This road is an entirely new one and representations have been made to the responsible Minister for a grant to repair the road, in consequence of the excessive damage caused by the late floods, and the only basis on which the Minister has seen fit to assist them is on the pound for pound principle. He has granted £100 for the work, provided the Northampton roads board, who have the control of the road, will find another £100. The Northampton roads board has been pretty severely taxed during the last winter and I may say that the damage in the country caused by the rains has been much more severe than the Minister realises, and if something is not done to effect repairs before the next winter starts, I consider that eventually it will take treble or four times the money to repair the damage that it would now cost. I happened to travel during last week, in company with the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe, through a considerable portion of the roads board area of the eastern districts, and I can honestly say that during the whole 540 miles traversed, we scarcely passed over a single bit of bad road. That was a considerable distance to travel, and if damage had been caused by last winter's rains, traces would have been evident. The situation in my own particular district is absolutely the reverse of the conditions obtaining there. Mention has been made to-night of the finding of a new seam of coal on the Irwin river coalfield, and if the development is as good as we hope it will be, it points to a very interesting result in connection with the provision of fuel for the establishment of smelters at Geraldton. With the development possible in the district, it is absolutely folly to think of railing the ore that can be raised in the district by systematic working, all the way to Fremantle to be smelted. If the Irwin coal seam will develop into a better article than the Collie coal, I hope the Government will eventually assist the Northampton district in providing a smelter there. I agree with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition that to a very great extent our mining industry is going to afford assistance by placing returned men in various parts of the State, whether in gold mining or in mining for base metals. A number of men will certainly come back from the war who previously worked in mining districts, and no doubt they will like to go back to their old occupation. These men ought to be assisted in taking up some of these lead mines which, in my opinion, is a much safer and surer occupation than that of chasing the golden pennyweight. I have nothing further to say with regard to the vote for mining generally excepting as I said before that I feel the development of my district is intimately tied up with mining and I make no apologies in speaking on the Estimates of the industry.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [12.44 a.m.]: I regret that the most important industry of

mining has to be discussed at an early hour of the morning, but we must recognise that some portion of the Estimates must necessarily be discussed at an early hour of the morning, if we desire to get through. The mining industry has been discussed at great length many times in this Chamber, and many members agree that the great problem of mining is not that we are all willing to do what we can, and offer what suggestions we may, but to come to some solution and point out what is the best thing to do to resuscitate the industry to which the State owes so much. I am glad that although the industry is in rather a bad way, compared with what it was in 1903, when it was in the full flood of its prosperity, it is still far and away the most important industry in the State. Notwithstanding the fact that the war has brought in its train a certain amount of depression in mining circles, some of the baser metals have benefited by this great struggle. The value of our copper during the year 1915 was only £41,000, but for the year 1916, beyond which we have no record, the value had increased to £74,000. I mention this because the impression may have been created by the remarks of the leader of the Opposition that, owing to the value of our copper export having been less, this really represents the position of the copper industry, whereas the fact is our copper which has been raised is nearly 80 per cent. more than it was in the previous year. The position of the gold mining industry is largely responsible for our present deficit, although we must not forget that the great European struggle in which we are now engaged is a contributing factor. When we come to consider that in 1903 the number of employees engaged in the industry was 18,000 as against 9,000 to-day, it indicates to us that there are two million pounds a year less wages now being paid in the State in connection with this industry alone, than were being paid in the former year. Such a falling off in the wages bill must have a serious effect upon the whole of the ramifications of the subsidiary industries which depend upon the primary industries. That is perhaps the greatest factor in regard to the position in which we find ourselves to-day. Although our gold yield has fallen to one half, as compared with what it was in the maximum year of production, we still retain the proud position of producing 54 per cent. of the total gold yield in Australasia, including, of course, Papua and New Zealand. It is perhaps rather cold comfort to consider that the other States are in the same position as we are in regard to the constantly reducing gold yield, but I would point out that their yield has decreased to a greater extent pro rata than ours. Mention has been made of the decreased expenditure on the mining vote for 1916. I am sure that the Minister deplores that fact as much as any other hon. member in the Chamber. "Needs must when the devil drives." Our finances are not in such a position that we can avail ourselves of more money. I hope to be able to prove that the war affects this industry perhaps to a greater extent than is generally recognised. From the report of the Chamber of Mines for 1912 we see that the total cost per ton of ore raised in that year was 19s. 3d., whereas in

1916 the total cost per ton raised was 22s. 3d., or exactly 3s. more per ton. Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of mining knows that a difference in costs of 3s. per ton means that hundreds of tons of ore less have been raised than would have been the case under pre-war conditions. That is a very serious situation, and one which can only be removed when the peace of the Empire is once more restored. In my opinion, and in this I am backed up by people who know more about the question than I do, the future of Western Australia so far as gold mining is concerned lies in the low-grade shows. The problem then to be determined is how to reduce the costs so that these low grade shows can be worked. South Africa, which contains the largest goldfield in the world, depends very largely on low grade mining. It is because of the low mining costs that South Africa has been able to work these low grade shows. The very extensiveness of the areas concerned tends to assist in this direction. Perhaps in the Minister's own electorate there is the nucleus of what under more scientific conditions, would probably be an extensive and payable gold mining area, second only to the Golden Mile in production of gold, but it would first be necessary to solve the problem of how to work such low grade shows at a cost of only a few shillings per ton. When we see what advances have already been made in chemistry and the scientific treatment of ores we need not fear but that within a few years stamps will be falling by the hundred on the ore from low grade shows, which are at present not considered good enough to work. I should like to say a few words upon the mines at the north end of Kalgoorlie. In this respect we have the opinion of one of our leading geologists in the person of Mr. Lecombe. He stands fairly high up in the profession and is the lecturer on geology at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines. He has done more than any other man in the State in connection with research work on our goldfields, and his large treatise on the gold bearing ores of Kalgoorlie is well known to all mining men. He holds the opinion that deep boring is eminently justified at the north end of Kalgoorlie. In that portion of the field there are vast lodes of anything from 50 feet to 60 feet wide of a low grade nature, somewhat similar to those which exist in the Yilgarn district round about Nevoria. In the opinion also of the greatest geologist in the British Empire, Dr. McLaren, whom I personally consulted on the matter, deep boring could be resorted to on the north end of Kalgoorlie with profitable results. Some of the best mine managers on the big belt have resorted to deep boring, and on the Great Boulder alone something like 10 miles of diamond drilling has been done. Several of the old prospectors around Kalgoorlie join with me in the belief that deep boring could with advantage be pursued to the south of the belt on the flat country, with a view to demonstrating whether or not the deep lead could be picked up. Many a miner, after getting together

a little money, has spent every sovereign in shaft sinking with a view to picking up the deep lead. I know of at least 50 shafts which miners, out of their own pockets, have sunk in their endeavour to secure the deep lead around the Golden Mile. In the Eastern States, wherever rich and extensive gold-fields have been found, it has invariably been discovered at a later stage that a deep lead shed from the mother lode has been established which has proved to be much richer than the original find. This recalls to my mind the fact that there are at present a couple of returned soldiers on the Commonwealth reserve in Kalgoorlie, engaged in sinking a shaft who, although they are miners, do not care to go down into the deep levels after having once benefited by open air life. I believe that Mr. Heys and party are even now making application for assistance to the Minister. I know that if the application is made the Minister will request his responsible officers to furnish a report upon their show, and I trust if this is at all favourable that he will do all he can to help them. Men of this class are more deserving of help than any others in the State. The whole future of this State's mining industry undoubtedly rests with the prospector, and I regretted very much to learn from the Premier this evening that no consideration whatever has been given by the Federal Repatriation Minister to assisting mining by assisting prospectors. I trust, however, that when we have agitated more strenuously in this State for that phase of industrial activity it will receive some attention at the hands of the Commonwealth authorities. The position of the gold mining industry here, contrary to the opinion held by an uninformed few in this State, is not due to labour conditions; or, shall I say, has not been caused by industrial troubles? For, if there has been one industry in any part of Australia which has been remarkably free from hostile clashes and strikes such as are to be found elsewhere in the Commonwealth, it is the gold mining industry of this State. True, the workers in that industry have had several heart to heart talks with the employers; but the good sense of the men has been such that the two parties have been able to meet at round-table conferences and finally adjust their differences without resorting to the extreme step of lock-out or strike. Let me say, too, that the attitude of the Chamber of Mines has on occasion been passably fair from the workers' point of view. I desire to illustrate by a few figures from departmental reports what the one man engaged in our gold mining industry means to the State. I care not what industry one takes, or what part of the world one selects, there is not to be found another industry in which the production of wealth is so great per capita as in the case of gold mining here. According to the latest report of the Department of Mines, that for 1916, the return per man employed in gold mining was £453 for the twelve-month. For the East Coolgardie field, that is to say, the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines, the average return per man was £603; and that allows for men above ground as well as the

men under ground. Taking only the men underground, each miner on the Golden Mile produced in 1916 no less a sum than £1,078. When one bears in mind that the wages of these miners do not average £250 per annum, it is plain that the underground man produces four times the amount that he receives. Thus, the position of our gold mining industry cannot be ascribed to any methods of sabotage on the part of the working miners. The miners of the Golden Mile are not only renowned in this State for their efficiency, but, on the expert evidence of mine managers from the "land of hustle," they are better miners than are to be found in any other part of the world, the United States of America not excepted. A few words are necessary concerning the working conditions of the men on the Golden Mile, and, indeed, of the men employed in the gold mining industry throughout this State. During 1916 the number of men killed and injured in mining operations in this State was 816. Of these no less than 622 were killed and injured in mining operations on the East Coolgardie field. The total number killed in Western Australian mining during 1916 was 21, ten of them losing their lives on the Golden Mile, and eleven elsewhere in Western Australia. A miner was killed, too, on the Collie coalfields. The 21 men I have referred to were, however, killed while engaged exclusively in gold mining. Bad as these figures are, the number of men killed, 21, shows a gratifying reduction on the corresponding figure for 1915, which was 34. Thus, from 1915 to 1916, the number of fatalities was reduced by approximately 40 per cent. That reduction I consider to be largely due to the appointment of workmen inspectors, who have done magnificent service at all events in that section of the mining industry, with which I am best acquainted, Kalgoorlie and Boulder. As a result of the efforts of workmen inspectors, the number of men killed has fallen markedly, which amply justifies that humane legislation fought for in this Chamber during a number of years by members representing the gold mining constituencies, who naturally knew the facts of the position better than other members of the House.

Mr. Munsie: And the number of accidents other than fatal has been reduced as well.

Mr. GREEN: Yes. Let me point out that of the 21 miners killed during 1916, 10 lost their lives as the result of falls of earth, which fact demonstrates that falls of earth are of frequent occurrence. Yet, if examinations of the back are carefully made, falls of earth are the most easily preventible of accidents, though, of course, they cannot be entirely eliminated. They are the most dangerous form of accident, and the workmen inspectors have rendered more valuable service in preventing falls of earth by their inspections, than in any other direction. But, notwithstanding the efforts of workmen inspectors, and apart from the large toll of accidents and deaths, our great industry is, unfortunately, responsible for a disease which could be largely prevented if spraying conditions were thoroughly carried out,

so as to minimise the dust evil—I refer, of course, to miners' complaint. I regret that some of the miners themselves have to be kept up to the mark in this respect. With the inauguration of a more thorough spraying system, and with the freer use of water, the dust trouble in our mines should be very largely reduced; and in this connection I have in mind especially the Golden Mile where, on account of the deep workings, the disease is more prevalent than in any other part of Western Australia. I trust that the number of poor fellows filling our sanatoria and, alas! our cemeteries, because of a disease incidental to the gold mining industry, will largely decrease. Some agitation has been afoot in Kalgoorlie recently regarding the filling of the appointment of Under Secretary for Mines by a mining inspector from the fields.

Mr. TROY: Or by a warden from the fields, do you mean?

Mr. GREEN: No; by a mining inspector from the fields. I wish to record that my knowledge of mining leads me to differ altogether from that idea. From what I know of the men qualified for the position—of course there may be men qualified for it of whom I know nothing—there is no better man available than Mr. Calanchini, who should, as a matter of rotation, take the position, having acted under Mr. King for so many years. As regards the vacancy for a mining engineer, however, if the Government were to select a practical mine manager from the goldfields and pay him a decent salary and let him reside on the belt, that appointment would be of more utility to the gold mining industry than any other step of which my knowledge enables me to conceive. At this late hour I do not wish to extend my remarks, but let me express my conviction that the gold mining industry cannot receive too large a measure of attention at the hands of Parliament. As I said in opening, the future hopes of this State depend very largely indeed on the revivifying of that industry. I am satisfied that with the advance of knowledge reducing costs, and with the advance of mineralogical research, we shall see the development of low-grade propositions on the Yilgarn field and also towards the north end of Kalgoorlie, and in other parts of Western Australia as well. We have the largest auriferous area in the world, and it will one day hum to the tune of thousands of stamps on payable gold mining ore.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet) [1.6 a.m.]: I do not think it would be wise on my part to speak at any length at this hour of the morning, but representing, as I do, a constituency which embraces a considerable portion of the goldfields of the State, I feel that some remarks are due from me on the general discussion of these Estimates. The speeches so far have been characterised by a general note of lamentation regarding the prospects of the mining industry, and more especially the decline in gold production. Certainly the falling-off is bad enough. It is one that causes the gravest concern, because it has been so rapid

during the last two years. Our gold production has decreased in two years by approximately one million pounds' value. So rapid a ratio of decrease has not previously been known in the history of Western Australian gold-mining, or at all events not since the industry has been an important one in this State. What we have to do now is not to lament, but to suggest, so far as we possibly can, means by which the decline can be arrested, and also to suggest means by which the industry can be rendered more productive. Unless the Government have the money to spend—of which I am doubtful—I do not know whether much assistance can be afforded by this Committee. But, insofar as the resources at the disposal of the Government are concerned, one thing is clear; the industry which has placed this State on the road to prosperity, the industry which to-day is still the most important possessed by Western Australia, is as much entitled to consideration at the hands of this Committee as is any other industry; and the mining members are going to insist that it shall not be utterly neglected. For my part, I am not going to be satisfied with any paltry dole which the Government may set apart in the Loan Estimates by way of assisting the mining industry. The Minister for Mines has said that an amount of £8,000 has been foreshadowed.

The Minister for Mines: Fourteen thousand pounds.

Mr. TROY: The leader of the Opposition said about £8,000. I do not know what the amount is, but I wish to state that we expect there shall be much more generous consideration extended to the industry than would be accorded by a vote of that character. The Government have devoted more than £8,000 to the erection of bacon factories, actually. But to an industry so great as gold-mining, and so advantageous to other industries, affording, for instance, a cash market to the agricultural areas, we shall ask the Committee to extend a much larger measure of consideration than has been foreshadowed in the speeches delivered here to-night. While the war continues, and whilst mining requisites are difficult to secure, and when secured have to be paid for at exorbitant rates, there will be great obstacles to the successful development of the industry. Another great obstacle will persist so long as those engaged in mining are compelled, even in normal times, to pay excessive prices for explosives, chemicals, and other requirements, all of which have to be introduced from abroad. These are obstacles which this Parliament will find it very difficult to overcome. I refer, of course, to the fact that there are certain conditions affecting the industry which are beyond the control of members of this Parliament, and entirely beyond the control of our Minister for Mines. So far as the harmful effect of these matters on the industry is concerned, we will hold neither the Minister for Mines nor the Government responsible. However, some financial assistance must be rendered to gold-mining, because in the past financial assistance has been the means of opening up many mines and dis-

covering new fields. Particularly is financial assistance needed in the early stages of a field—financial assistance towards the provision of batteries and water supplies. Those two factors are absolutely essential; and here I must complain that during the last year or two I have experienced the utmost difficulty in inducing the Water Supply Department to consider favourably propositions from prospectors in the back country who desired assistance in this respect in order to enable them to open up new fields. I have found the attitude of the department most unsympathetic, and even hostile.

The Minister for Mines: There have been some changes in that department lately.

Mr. TROY: One change is very desirable, because the gentleman in charge of the department, though he may have been an excellent accountant, as indeed I know he was, had no conception whatever of the requirements of an industry which expects something more than to be considered on a strictly cash basis. When I have interviewed that gentleman in this regard, he has always asked me, "How many men are on the field, and what can they afford to pay?" Apparently he never realised, or he lacked the knowledge, that every goldfield must have a beginning. I have had most unsatisfactory treatment from the Water Supply Department for the past two years or so. In that department there seems to be an entire want of any knowledge of what is due to the mining industry, and especially of what is needed in the early stages of a gold field. I am glad to learn from the Minister that it is the intention of the Government, when introducing the new taxation measures, to relieve the mining industry of some of the unfair taxation which has been levied in the past.

The Minister for Mines: You mean, in relation to development work?

Mr. TROY: Yes. I was glad to have that statement from the Minister, because it indicates a step in the right direction. The unfair taxation to which I allude has been the cause of much heartburning, and I am indeed pleased that the Government are about to do away with it. In my opinion, the Minister might consider whether the Government can at this time afford a reduction in the lease rents. The amount now being received by the Mines Department in the shape of rents may not be very great; but it will be a far better thing for the State to lose some of the revenue from lease rents than to have the mines remain unworked. It would be of greater advantage to the country if we could say to the prospector, "You can have the lease free, but you must work it." That is a direction in which the industry could well be encouraged; and if the Treasurer can do without the money—not a very large item just now—I suggest that that course be adopted. When the Railway Estimates are before us, I intend to take the opportunity of discussing the policy of the department in regard to the railway rates as they affect the various industries. Probably one of the worst blows dealt to the mining industry during the past years,

was the increase in the railway freights imposed by the Wilson Government. A number of mines had to close down because they were unable to pay the impost. That is a matter which should be remedied at the first opportunity. To compel people who are living in the most remote parts of the State to pay high freights is a grossly unfair proposition at any time, but it is even more unfair when it imposes a crushing burden on an industry which requires assistance and which is more handicapped than any other by war conditions. I propose to deal more fully with this question when the Railway Estimates are introduced. On the Loan Estimates also we shall be able to see to what extent the Government are prepared to carry out the promises made to the goldfields. I do not suggest that hon. members in this House are out of sympathy with the gold-mining industry; there should be no antagonism towards it. When the Labour Government took office the whole of the resources of the State were placed at the disposal of the agricultural industry, and I have always justified that action. Now the time has come when the gold-mining industry needs help and we expect that those hon. members who represent the other industries will consider the position and extend assistance to it. Regarding the inspection of mines I want to voice a local complaint. The policy of the State is to appoint workmen's inspectors in all localities so that there may be, as far as possible, an effective inspection of mines. On the Murchison a workmen's inspector was appointed to reside at Meekatharra. He has caused no embarrassment to the Mines Department; his work has been most helpful. Applications have been made for this inspector to visit other localities in order that the miners may put before certain grievances which they want inquired into. The Minister, however, has not seen his way to accede to the request. I am sure the Minister's excuse can only be that of expense. A visit of this inspector to Youanme, where there are 400 men employed, and which place is only 75 miles distant from Mt. Magnet, would not involve great expenditure. Even so, why should a mining population of 400 be deprived of the services of an officer whom Parliament considers absolutely necessary to the industry? If the House adopts a certain policy and the Minister refuses to carry it out on the score of expense, what is the use of passing such legislation? I assure the Minister that all that is required is an occasional visit to Youanme, a visit say once a quarter.

The Minister for Mines: Youanme is not in that inspector's district.

Mr. TROY: The boundaries can be rearranged. The Minister knows that a check inspector enjoys the confidence of the miners, and he is told things which the men would not think of telling a Government inspector. The latter associates mostly with the officers of the mine and when the miners see that, they will not make a complaint to him which may involve expense in being rectified. The Minister will understand what I mean because he himself has had brought under his notice instances such as that to which I have referred.

Before I conclude I want to ask the Minister for information regarding the oil concessions which have been given in the South-West and in the Plantagenet district. I understand that the previous Minister for Mines gave concessions to certain individuals over areas comprising about five million acres, and I understand these concessions are being continued by the present Minister.

Mr. Munsie: For five million acres!

Mr. TROY: Yes, so far as I know. This is a serious matter and the House ought to be in possession of the fullest information regarding it. We are entitled to know, and I hope the Minister in replying will give us the fullest information at his disposal. I understand the member for Boulder when Minister for Mines granted certain concessions, but the greater number were given during the occupancy of the office by the present Attorney General, and given under conditions, I understand, which may not be of advantage to the State. Now is the time therefore for the House to know under what conditions the concessions were granted. We desire to see coal and oil fields opened up, but we do not want to give away to anybody the right to hold these leases probably indefinitely, and moreover we do not want to see anyone getting large areas if the conditions under which these areas have been obtained are not advantageous to the State.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [1.25 a.m.]: I have listened with much attention to the debate this evening, and I desire to speak briefly, more particularly on the subject dealt with by the member for Mt. Magnet. When the Minister for Mines introduced his Estimates he made no reference to the question of oil. I am quite sure that was an oversight because we must appreciate the possibilities that lie in the development of such a valuable asset as oil. I believe there are favourable indications of oil in the South-West and I think I can assure the House that the Vacuum Oil Company purpose putting down a bore to a depth of 3,000 feet in the vicinity of Busselton. This should be an indication to the Minister that there must be something in this asset, and it is to be hoped that the conditions contained in the lease will be rigidly enforced. It is not generally known what the conditions are.

The Minister for Mines: They are no leases.

Mr. PICKERING: Evidently it is not known what these particular charters are. Perhaps they are prospecting areas which have been granted to the various syndicates. In view of the pessimism in regard to the gold-mining industry expressed by several members this evening, we might look forward with a spirit of optimism to the discovery of a valuable asset like oil. I shall be glad to know whether the Minister for Mines has anything in view in the direction of giving an incentive to the discovery of oil. There is no need to labour the question; it is obviously in the interests of the State and worthy of support of hon. members. The member for Mt. Magnet can rest assured that he has the sympathy and support of the party to which I

have the honour to belong. I believe, too, that the Government will do their utmost to assist the mining industry to the fullest extent. But in regard to my own party, it is part of our platform that we should support all primary industries. I was very much struck by the remarks of the leader of the Opposition when he spoke of the aspect of repatriation as applied to the mining industry. It is within the memory of the Committee that I asked for a select committee to go into this question. It was because I realised that there are so many aspects of repatriation affecting the interests of the State that I took that action. It is evident that interest in this question requires awakening. If we want to absorb the men coming back to our shores, we should endeavour to find places for them in our primary industries. The mining industry so widely assists all other primary industries that there can be no doubt the Country party would be only too pleased to foster it in every way, seeing that it provides for us a ready cash market for our produce. I can assure hon. members opposite that, no matter in what direction the Government propose to assist the mining industry, it will have the cordial support of the Country party.

Mr. MUNSE (Hannans) [1.33 a.m.]: I do not know that I can offer any new suggestions, but there are one or two I would like to stress. We have not heard much of the mining in the North-West. If only they had in the North-West the firewood timber that we have on the Eastern Goldfields, in my opinion within three years there would be more people employed in mining in the North-West than we have on the Eastern Goldfields. If it were possible to find coal or oil in the North-West it would soon give a big flip to the mining industry up there. In the North-West there is to be found every base metal ever yet discovered in any part of the world. I am pleased to hear of the progress being made in the Revensthorpe district in regard to copper. I urge on the Minister the necessity for doing something to check the royalty system which obtains in that district. A great impetus would be given to copper mining at Phillips River if this royalty drawback could be got rid of. As a matter of fact, an ironstone quarry was opened for the purpose of getting flux for the smelters, and royalty has to be paid on every ton of stone taken out of that quarry. Royalty has to be paid also on every ton of firewood carted into the smelters. This royalty has been a great handicap upon the working parties in that district. They have to pay royalty on everything in connection with copper mining. When in the Roebourne district, I learned of many copper shows of high percentage standing idle in the North-West. The only reasons for not working those shows were closely related to the cost of cartage to the seaport and the freight down the coast. For the last two years the Government have been stoutly advocating economy. I have had a long experience on the practical side of mining in this State, and, without wishing to be disrespectful to the State Mining Engineer, I believe that his

salary of £804 per annum could be saved without the State being one penny worse off; that is to say, if that officer proposes to continue along existing lines.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

The Attorney General: You do not agree with the member for Murchison.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not. I want to draw attention to the way in which that official is classified. He is classified as Mining Engineer and Chief Inspector. I contend that if he is to do any good as chief inspector, his place is where he has some inspecting to do. On an average, for the last five or six years, I suppose, that officer has put in nine months out of every 12 in his office, doing work that a £4 clerk could easily do. All over the goldfields one can hear people asking questions concerning the State Mining Engineer. On one occasion recently he left Perth, arrived at Kalgoorlie in the morning, and caught the night train back. How much knowledge could he, as State Mining Engineer, have gained of the position on the Golden Mile by reaching Kalgoorlie in the morning and leaving again in the afternoon?

The Attorney General: He has a marvellous knowledge of every mine in the country.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am prepared to admit that he has a theoretical knowledge, but I have yet to learn of any useful practical suggestion he has ever put forward in any of his mining reports.

The Minister for Mines: It would take many months to recite them all.

Mr. MUNSIE: Well, I am surprised to hear it. A useful suggestion is very different from a mere suggestion of no particular value. We have been told by the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) of the accident in which Flannigan was killed. It is held by a considerable section of men working underground that that catastrophe was caused through an explosion of gas. Personally, I do not agree with that suggestion. But no doubt there is gas there. There are certain places in the Great Boulder mine to-day where the gas can actually be lighted, and although there is not sufficient of it to cause an explosion, the mere fact that the gas is there, and that an explosion took place suggests that the State Mining Engineer should have been quickly on the spot to make thorough investigations. The matter is of sufficient importance, not only to warrant the State Mining Engineer interesting himself in it, but also to warrant bringing over an engineer from one of the other States to aid him in his investigations. The Minister has informed the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe that he now has the State Mining Engineer's report on the subject. The Minister should look very carefully into that report, and the reasons for the delay that has taken place. The miners up there are deeply concerned in this matter. They even invited Mr. Grenard, the inspector, to attend a meeting and discuss the question with them. Many meetings have been held since, yet months have elapsed and we have had no report from the State Mining Engineer. If that official has made many valuable suggestions, they have been kept fairly dark. If he has to make prac-

tical suggestions his place is, not in the office in Perth, for there is no mining going on in Perth; his proper place of abode should be where some mining is going on. I know it has been held that he is the head of the mining staff, and consequently requires to be in Perth, as the most central place from which to direct that staff. But it is a pretty expensive method of directing the staff to pay the Chief Mining Engineer £804 per annum, when he should be doing engineering work in connection with mining, with a view to replacing some of the mines that are being worked out. I agree with the suggestions made in regard to assisting prospectors. I will add another suggestion. I do not want it to be thought that I put forward this suggestion in preference to any other suggestion for the direct assistance of the prospector. My suggestion is this: the Government would find it profitable to subsidise up to pound for pound, the money some of the mining companies put aside to be used in prospecting work. We find from the "Statistical Abstract" for the last quarter of the year 1917 that the total amount paid in dividends by gold mining companies up to the 31st December of that year was £26,712,524. I ask any hon. member how much of that enormous sum of money these companies have spent in an endeavour to find new mines in the State. Some of the companies have been fairly good. The Great Boulder, for instance, went to the expense of sending some men out prospecting on one or two occasions. I believe we might even go to the extent of legislating in the direction of saying that a certain percentage of all dividends from gold mining companies should be set aside to be expended on new leases in Western Australia.

The Attorney General: That was one of the proposals dealt with at the mining conference.

Mr. MUNSIE: I want to impress that upon the Minister. There was a company on the Golden Mile which for about seven years, at a time when it was at the height of its prosperity, paid greater dividends than any other mine in the State, with the exception, perhaps, of the Lake View mine. During that time the company built up, and thus got away from payment under the Dividend Duties Act, a reserve of just on a quarter of a million of money, but the company took almost the whole of that reserve to West Africa and Western Australia did not get one shilling of it. I am referring to the Associated Northern mine. In those circumstances it would be a good thing to compel companies to spend a certain percentage of their dividends upon the development of other shovs by introducing legislation for this purpose, even if the Government had to subsidise the amount so raised to the extent of pound for pound while the industry is in its present condition. With regard to the conditions of the underground men, whilst I realise the benefit which has accrued from the appointment of workmen's inspectors I urge upon the Government the necessity for taking into consideration the filling of the place recently vacated by Inspector Price, who has resigned from the Eastern Goldfields. That inspector was appointed to take Mr.

Hutchison's place in regard to the important question of ventilation. I hope the Government will, in filling that position, give consideration to some man who is well up in ventilation. The main point as affecting the health of the miners hinges around the question of ventilation, for even without water it is possible to minimise the dust to a great extent. If the Minister receives a request, as he probably will, from some company against the use of too much water, because some inspector is endeavouring to force it to use an excessive quantity of water, I hope he will go carefully into the matter. We have on the goldfields an inspector who has done everything possible in this direction; not that he has advocated the use of too much water himself, but he has had the greatest difficulty in inducing the companies to use that quantity of water which he thinks is necessary to prevent the dust trouble. There was a heated argument earlier in the proceedings with regard to the complaint of miners in having to go to the Sanatorium. I was surprised to hear the emphatic statement of the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood) that any person suffering from miners' phthisis would find his proper place at Wooroloo.

The Minister for Mines: There was a little misunderstanding. He said that was the place for them to go to in the first instance, so as to have an opportunity of getting cured. The member for Murchison really agreed with him. He said if they were convalescent it was better for them to live in the open air than to be shut up in a close place.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not agree with that statement. If any man is sent to the principal medical officer at the Wooroloo sanatorium suffering from miners' phthisis, without being tubercular, he at once sends him out of the place. That is not the sort of place for a man so afflicted to be in.

The Attorney General: He is more likely to become tubercular there.

Mr. MUNSIE: Probably that is so. I cannot understand the argument of the Honorary Minister. The proper place for a man suffering from this complaint is not at the Sanatorium, but out of the deep mines. If those men who are suffering from incipient miners' phthisis, and are not tubercular, ask for assistance from the Government to enable them to work on some shallower mine it is the duty of the Government to do what they can to help them.

The Minister for Mines: The Honorary Minister had quite a different set of men in mind.

Mr. MUNSIE: He wanted them to go to the Sanatorium until they were cured. If the doctor in charge found that a man was suffering only from miners' phthisis, and was not tubercular, he would send him out of the institution at once. I know of the case of a man who was suffering from miners' phthisis, but was not tubercular, who was kept in that institution for six weeks, but who, when it was discovered that he was not tubercular, was sent out of the Sanatorium and is alive and well to-day. I wish to urge upon the Government to do all they

possibly can to help these people to find new shows, if possible.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [1.56 a.m.]: After the illuminating speeches that have been made this evening by members representing goldfields constituencies, I feel somewhat in the position of the man who stood on the wharf at Sydney, and spat on the quay at Perth, and then went home to England and wrote about the earth. As I have had at least 10 days' experience of the goldfields, and have had correspondence and conversation with prospectors, I feel that I am entitled to wonder whether the geologists connected with the Mines Department are not concentrating too much of their attention in Perth. No one recognises more than I do the need for fostering the gold mining industry, and the advantage it has been and will be to the State. In discussing the Estimates of the Mines Department there are many things which to a layman like myself offer many difficulties, but when we come to discuss the men who are acting in a judicial capacity on the goldfields there is a little more to be said. I understand that the wardens on the goldfields exercise duties similar to those exercised by resident magistrates in other district, and should undoubtedly show impartiality in their work. For them to exercise partiality in any shape or form would undoubtedly be a very serious crime against the morals of the community. But we have had evidence of that in the attempt to crucify Constable Campbell at Wickpin. If, in the case of an ordinary constable a charge of partiality can be regarded as such a serious offence, how much more so is it an offence for a man who is acting in the capacity of a warden on the goldfields? Unfortunately, I am not in a position to speak on the action of a warden in a case which is still sub judice; but the matter is one which should give the Minister in charge of this most important department considerable thought, one which he should ponder deeply, in view of the partiality which has been shown by at least one warden during the past few months of special stress in this portion of the Commonwealth. I trust goldfields members will not consider that in discussing these Mines Estimates I am poaching upon their preserve. There is, however, one feature of the Estimates which somewhat closely touches the important district enjoying the honour of having me for its representative in this Chamber. I refer to the Explosives and Analytical Vote. The vote presents to the earnest student a rather peculiar feature. I refer to the strange circumstances of precipitancy in which the various men who have had charge of the magazine at Woodman's Point during the last few years have quitted that position. At this early hour of the morning I do not desire to detain the Committee any longer than is absolutely necessary; but I must bring under the notice of hon. members a matter closely affecting the district I represent—the rapid removal, from the position of magazine keeper, of various men. Some 10 years ago the post was held by a gentleman of the

name of Robert Carrick, a naval pensioner and a man who had been a warrant officer in His Majesty's Navy. He was in receipt of the maximum pension attaching to the rank of warrant officer, and his discharge gave him an exemplary character. The position of magazine keeper at Woodman's Point he contrived to hold for about three years, when, for some reason or other, he vanished in peculiarly sudden fashion. The next occupant of the position was a gentleman of the name of Garnet Fisher, who had been a quartermaster-sergeant in the Royal Irish Rifles, and whose discharge likewise gave him an exemplary character. I presume it may be taken for granted that none but a man of absolutely irreproachable character would be appointed to this most important position of magazine keeper, who has huge quantities of explosives under his care, which explosives he has to guard from all sorts of dangers and attacks, in order to prevent the very important district of Fremantle from experiencing something in the nature of an earthquake through their detonation. Mr. Fisher held the position for about two years, after which he, too, disappeared most precipitately. Neither of these gentlemen happens to be numbered among my electors, but the close proximity of the magazine to the blue-ribbon constituency of Fremantle impels me to touch on this subject as a matter of duty. On the 21st September, 1911, the position of magazine keeper was conferred on Captain H. B. Chalmer, a gentleman who had served with some distinction in the Imperial Army through the South African war—a gentleman who must have shown some measure of ability in order to secure promotion to the highly honourable rank of captain in the Imperial Army during that momentous conflict. It is true he was appointed as a mere temporary official in the service of this State, but I would draw the Committee's attention to the fact that his appointment dates as far back as 1911. I have yet to learn that during the intervening period—and Captain Chalmer himself, whom hon. members will acknowledge to be a party closely interested in this matter, has yet to learn—that any serious allegations was made against his capacity for safeguarding the explosives of the Mines Department. However, on the 31st January, 1917, five years and a half after the date of his appointment, he received a singular letter, which I now propose to read for the edification of the Committee—

I have to inform you that the Hon. the Minister has decided to dispense with your services as magazine keeper at Fremantle, and you will on receipt of this letter hand over all keys, stocks, etc., to Mr. F. H. Maslin, who has been authorised to take over control. It has been decided to give you two months' salary in lieu of notice, and, in addition, pay equivalent to the leave due to you for last year, and that moiety of leave for this year which will be accrued at the expiration of that term, namely, at the rate of one day per month, making altogether two weeks and three

days, and amounting to two months', two weeks', and three days' pay in all. Reasonable time will be accorded you for vacating the magazine quarters, but I should be glad if you could make them available in a week's time from receipt of this notice. (Signed) E. A. Mann, Chief Inspector of Explosives.

That is the letter which was addressed to a man who for 5½ years had held the position of magazine keeper without any really serious complaint being laid against him as regards his service in that important position. No reason is given; no excuse is offered; no accusation is made against the man. Simply and briefly, after 5½ years of his life have been given to the Mines Department in return for a salary of £182 per annum, with quarters, he is desired to hand over the keys to another man who is to take over the position. Very naturally, Captain Chalmer, of the British Imperial Army, was not altogether satisfied with the brief and peremptory letter addressed to him by Mr. E. A. Mann, Chief Inspector of Explosives. He wanted to know, why? You and I, Mr. Chairman, if after even three brief years' service to the country in this House we were required to relinquish our positions, would want to know the reason why. We would ask our electors, why? But this gentleman had given 5½ years of the best of his existence to the service of the Western Australian Government, and after that lapse of time he received a peremptory communication requiring him to hand over the keys of office to a Mr. Maslin, who was to be his successor. Moreover, let me point out to hon. members that with a refinement of cruelty, recalling those Caesars of declining Rome who had habituated themselves to gloat over the long-drawn death agonies of adroitly tortured slaves, Mr. Mann personally handed this letter of dismissal to Captain Chalmer at about 10 o'clock of a Monday morning. On the 8th February, 1917, Captain Chalmer addressed the following letter of protest, and of demand for reasons, to Mr. Mann—

In reply to your memo. dated the 31st January, and handed to me on Monday, the 5th, by you personally, I beg to inform you that I am completely at a loss to understand what I have done to deserve such drastic treatment. I can honestly say I always endeavoured to carry out all the instructions received in the spirit in which they were given. I have had no satisfactory reason given for my dismissal from the Government service which in itself constitutes a very serious slur on my character, and may have a great prejudicial effect on my subsequent career. Such being the case, I shall esteem it a favour if you will communicate to me in writing your reasons for my dismissal with the view of my requesting the Minister for Mines to grant me a public inquiry.

That is a reasonable request which should have been granted even to the humblest member of the community who happens to be separated from the means whereby he has been

earning his living. What sort of a reply is sent by the Chief Inspector of Explosives? This autocratic individual who exercises domination in an extremely drastic way over so many who happen to be unfortunate enough to be in his department wrote this letter—

Dear Sir: I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th inst., and in reply to inform you that I have nothing to add to my communication of the 31st January. I shall be glad if you can inform me when the quarters now in your occupation will be vacated.

Mr. Smith: A disgraceful reply from a superior officer to anyone below him.

Mr. JONES: I agree with the hon. member that it was a disgraceful letter for anyone occupying an important position to send to one who was a subordinate officer.

Mr. Smith: He has not the brains to write any other reply.

Mr. JONES: I submit that no man, no despot, could have framed a reply which contained so little information, and which could give less satisfaction to an aggrieved individual. Not even the late Czar Nicholas or even Mr. Nicholas of Fremantle could have composed such a reply. If it takes the head of a department five and a half years to discover that the services of an officer are not of value, there is something wrong with the efficiency of the head of that department. Much correspondence has passed since that date between the unfortunate Captain Chalmers, the Civil Service Association, and the despot Mr. Mann. Communications have been sent to the Premier, not to the gentleman holding the position at the present time but to one of his predecessors, but no reply beyond the ordinary acknowledgment has been received. It was my privilege to interview the Minister for Mines in regard to this matter. Captain Chalmers had been dismissed without any reasons being given. Had Captain Chalmers been dismissed after perhaps five or six months of duty he might not have been entitled to ask for reasons for his dismissal, but when a man who has been an officer in the Imperial army applies for other positions which may help him to sustain his wife and family, the average person will ask what kind of a testimonial he can supply. Captain Chalmers was faced with the difficulty of being unable to supply a testimonial. The letters which had been sent to the Premier had not brought forth any reply, the application to the Chief Inspector of Explosives had been ignored, and Chalmers was without even an ordinary certificate of discharge from the Government service. I saw the Minister for Mines on this matter and he was sufficiently seized with the reasonableness of the claims of the discharged man that he agreed to give him a certificate. Had the Minister acted on the promptings of his own heart I am satisfied that that certificate would have settled all the trouble, but unfortunately, even in the Eden of the Mines Department, there exists the proverbial and historic snake, and the trail of that snake was over the certificate of discharge which the Minister very kindly gave to Captain Chalmers. Although the certificate in itself was

a fair one, there appeared at the foot of it an extraordinary paragraph to the effect that Chalmers was discharged on account of incompetence, unsuitability, or some such remarkable statement. I submit that a reasonable tribunal—and this House is one of the most reasonable tribunals before which a man could bring his case—would allow that a man, after five and a half years of service must have shown some merit, some competence, otherwise he would have been dismissed before. The testimonial which was given to this unfortunate man Chalmers, is hardly one which the Minister's own sense of justice would have allowed him to give had he not been in some measure influenced by the head of the particular department concerned. When we take into consideration the fact that every man who has held the post occupied by Chalmers has disappeared from his job, has gone away almost as quickly as if he had been blown up by the dynamite which he was taking care of, it must occur to the reasoning individual that there is something wrong, not however with the men who have been discharged, but with the head of the department, the Chief Inspector of Explosives, the despotic individual who declines to give any explanation of his action as though to heaven alone he were responsible for his action. I submit that the treatment meted out to Captain Chalmers, who has shown his patriotism and devotion to the cause of Empire, has not been in the best interests of the State, and if the Minister had only granted an inquiry or appointed a board or a select committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding his sudden dismissal from the position of magazine keeper, this very autocratic man, the Chief Inspector of Explosives, would not have come out of the inquiry in a very good light. I am satisfied that the Minister only needs the suggestion, to look into this matter without any very heavy regard for any opinion which Mr. Mann might have. I am sufficiently convinced of the justice of the claim, and of the just mind of the Minister, to know that the suggestion I have put forward in regard to this unfortunate man will lead to some steps being taken to give him a measure of fair play, which will enable him to face the world without an apparent stain on his character, and thereby be in a position to earn an adequate competence for his wife and family.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. C. A. Hudson—Yilgarn—in reply) [2.32 a.m.]: It is not many months since first I took up the position of Minister for Mines, and these are the first Estimates I have presented to Parliament. They have been received with such kind consideration that I cannot feel otherwise than gratified. The leader of the Opposition led off with a speech full of interest, and those who have come after him have done all they could to assist me with suggestions for the advancement of the industry and the welfare of those engaged in it. I do not propose to traverse all the statements made by hon. members, nor to mention particularly the complaints, if such they were, made against the department. They were scarcely complaints. I regard them rather as requests, and, judging by the manner in which they were put before me, I think I am

justified in this. Let me say that they will receive due consideration. First, there was the statement made by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) in relation to the State Mining Engineer and his exclusive employment in the office in Perth. I want to give an assurance that that is not so. As an instance, during the past two months he has been with me through the lead mines in the Northampton district, he has attended to the troubles which arose at Collie owing to the collapse of the Co-operative mine, and, at the request of the mining people of Westonia, he spent all last week in an examination of the mines there, with a view to recommending some means of overcoming the water difficulty. If those instances are to be taken as a criterion of what that gentleman does, I think the member for Hannans will refrain from making such statements as he has made in relation to that officer; because those statements may be described as unjust, and I do not think the hon. member would knowingly make an unjust statement in regard to any officer.

Mr. Munsie: I do not think any of the matters you have mentioned are of paramount importance in comparison with what took place on the Eastern Goldfields.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Another matter brought before me was contained in the statement made by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) in relation to so-called concessions. There seems to be some misconception in the minds of hon. members as to the so-called concessions given to a number of syndicates and private individuals to prospect for oil and coal in the southern parts of the State. Looking at the map, it certainly seems that a large area has been given. But we have to recollect that there is a very great desire on the part of the people of the State, of the Government, and of all concerned, for the discovery of oil in Western Australia. These concessions were granted with great limitations. They were granted at first for only 12 months, and were renewed for a further 12 months. When I came into office last June or July, the matter came before me for renewal, and representations were made that during the previous year not sufficient money was available, and that not sufficient opportunity had been given to the concessionaires to carry out their objects. I further extended the period for another 12 months, on the payment of a small fee, and I made the concessions to terminate at the end of this financial year. The terms upon which this right was granted were that the holders of the concessions had the opportunity of prospecting for oil and coal on the areas they were granted. They were to do certain work during the term for which the concessions were granted, and there was a reservation that if they discovered oil or coal there was to be a grant of land given to them sufficient for the carrying on of such operations as might be necessary for the further development of their discovery, on such terms as the Minister might determine. This covered the whole ground and put it in the power of the Minister to protect the interests of the people in that connection. I might add that

my object in making those concessions co-terminus at the end of June was so that I might examine them all and find out which of them had been genuinely prospected for oil or coal. I have been informed recently that some of the concessionaires are not genuinely working upon their concessions, are merely holding them with a view to being able to get some grant out of the Government if those who do work have the good fortune to discover oil or coal. Some of them, it would seem, have not done a tap. In June next those who have not done anything will have to put up a very strong argument if they are to secure renewal.

Mr. Troy: What arguments can they put up if they have done nothing?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those who have done nothing will not get their concessions renewed unless they can show me that their financial affairs have been so arranged that they are in a position to go straight on with the work. If they can do that, I will not be so harsh as to say that because they have not been working for the last 12 months, their leases shall not be renewed. But the case they are to put up will have to be strong, because I have heard of one man who, in the course of his workings, sought to go over the boundary of his concession on to that of another man who was doing nothing at all; but he who was doing nothing attempted to extort some benefit from the man who desired to cross his boundary. However, the whole case will be gone into. Nothing more can happen in regard to the concessions under review, and when the time arrives the subject will be handled with such care as will encourage the genuine prospectors and deal in a proper manner with those who have tried to exploit them. Another matter of concern is that brought up by the members for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutev) and for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) and the leader of the Opposition, namely, the alarm that has been created in the minds of the miners of Kalgoorlie in relation to the occurrence which took place when Flannigan was killed. That subject, I admit, has been in the department for considerably longer than I should have liked, but I have instructed that the matter receive very earnest and careful consideration. As I have already informed some hon. members, the instruction given to the State Mining Engineer was to bring up an exhaustive report. It has been represented to me that it was desirable to bring in an outsider, an inspector from Broken Hill, or somebody from another State. I waited until I got the report from Mr. Montgomery. I propose to-morrow to read that report carefully, to determine whether it is necessary to go any further. If I think it is not so necessary, I am prepared to confer with the miners' union and with the members for Hannans and Brownhill-Ivanhoe, and see whether they are satisfied with the report by the State Mining Engineer. If they are not, I think the subject is sufficiently important, not only to the men themselves but to the industry, that we should have an inquiry by an independent authority. I have every confidence in the State Mining Engineer, but

if it will allay the doubts in the minds of those on the Golden Mile, I shall have no hesitation in appointing somebody to make a thorough inquiry.

Mr. Munsie: If he has mentioned the possibility of danger in the Horseshoe shaft, I hope you will give consideration to it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member desires it, I will let him see the report at the earliest possible moment. I thank the Committee for the manner in which they have received the mining Estimates.

General debate concluded; vote and items discussed as follow:—

Item, Secretary for Mines and Inspector of Mining Surveys, £650.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister informed us to-night that the filling of the post of Under Secretary for Mines was now in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner. I should like to know whether the Minister has taken into consideration the various requests from the goldfields in regard to the appointment to the position of a man with practical knowledge of mining, as well as of secretarial work.

Mr. TROY: I have read of the agitation on the Eastern Goldfields amongst certain people in regard to the necessity for appointing to the position of Under Secretary for Mines someone other than an officer of the department. I do not know how far that agitation extends. I am inclined to believe it is confined to a few. There may be amongst outsiders the opinion that somebody outside the department would make a more sympathetic administrator in the office than the gentleman who now holds the position of acting under secretary, and who might in due course step into the shoes of Mr. King. On a previous occasion Mr. Gregory installed in the position of manager of State Batteries Mr. Dunstan, a gentleman from outside. That gentleman was the most unsympathetic and unsatisfactory administrator the department ever had. I hold no brief for Mr. Calanchini, but he is an entirely honourable man and always has a sympathetic ear as far as the goldfields are concerned. That has been my experience for 14 years. He is courtesy personified, active, intelligent, and is sympathetic in all goldfields matters. He would give just as good a deal, and a fair deal, as any warden from the goldfields. I do not think any of the wardens would be more sympathetic. It is a rule when officers come to the City to drop into a groove, and when they do that they are done. But if there is one set of officials in the Government service more than another where this does not obtain it is among the officials of the Mines Department. The sympathies of the officials in other departments do not go beyond the City.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no better officer in the State than Mr. Calanchini.

Mr. TROY: The officials of the Mines Department have served the goldfields well, and they understand the wants of the goldfields. If there is a better man than Mr. Calanchini by all means let us have him. But I felt that I should make the remarks I have in justification of that officer. He is the essence of

courtesy; he is a man of ability and character, and always has a sympathetic interest in the mining industry.

Mr. FOLEY: It is no use complaining after an appointment has been made, and I think those who have an intimate knowledge of an officer should express their opinions before an appointment is made. Members should give the Minister an idea of the esteem in which his officers are held. I support what the member for Mt. Magnet has said in reference to Mr. Calanchini. Mr. Calanchini has held the positions of warden and mining registrar, and he knows the intimate workings and intricacies of the Mines Department, and knows what the work of the officers of the department is. It will take a long time to obtain an officer of the administrative ability of Mr. Calanchini. As the member for Mt. Magnet has said, he is courtesy personified, and one of the few men in the Government departments to whom one can go with a degree of certainty that the work will be done as quickly as possible.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I appreciate the observations of the members for Leonora and Mt. Magnet, and I was going to say, those are my sentiments. But that is not the question that I have been asked to answer. I am asked whether I have given due regard to the representations made to me from Kalgoorlie as to the appointment of a practical man from that district as under secretary. I say, yes, I have given due regard to those representations, and I am not going to place much reliance on the result of a public meeting that is held for the purpose of urging the appointment of a man to the position. If meetings of that kind were held throughout the State for the purpose of nominating candidates for positions in the service, the situation would become intolerable. I shall give no more than due regard to such resolutions.

Item, Inspecting Surveyor and Chief Draftsman, £432.

Mr. LUTEY: There is not much surveying being done at the present time; I should like to know what are the duties of this officer?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The inspecting surveyor and chief draftsman has up till recently had a good deal of work to do, and the position was justified. It is now proposed to abolish, under certain circumstances, the office of assistant to the under secretary and chief correspondence clerk, and combine that position with inspecting surveyor and chief draftsman, safeguarding, of course, the work which must be efficiently performed.

Item, Wardens; one at £636, one at £576, one at £552, one at £432, one at £282—£2,883.

Mr. LUTEY: As far as this item is concerned, I feel somewhat gagged and cannot express myself as I would like to, seeing that a case to which I have referred is sub judice. I should like to draw attention to some of the actions of the warden, especially the Rowley case, in which a man received a sentence of two months on the most flimsy evidence, evidence of spite, because of a personal row between a man named Boyland and his brother who had gone to the Front. There was an argument, and it was said that the brother of Boyland would not be accepted for

the Front, or that it would be a sad thing if we had to rely on him to win the war. It was also said that he would never see the Front. He never did see the Front. Those who heard the argument were favourable towards Rowley, and yet the warden sentenced him to two months. It was a savage sentence. I might go further, but, as the case is sub judice, I will not.

Mr. JONES: I move an amendment—

“That the item £636 be reduced by £10.”

I want to test the feeling of the Committee in regard to this biassed man, Walter. I have had some experience of cannibals, and there is a rule that a cannibal does not eat the flesh of the man that he himself has killed. Unfortunately, among some of the men who are members of the judiciary of Western Australia at the present time there are officers in whom the decency of the cannibal does not exist. This man showed bias, spleen and spite, which it is impossible, one would think, to be combined in one human carcass. He will spit out venom on men who disagree with his narrow views. I submit that justice should be blind, without any personal feelings as to cases which may come under review. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe has introduced to the notice of the Committee the case of the man Rowley who was sent to gaol for two months without the option of a fine. The ex-Czar of Russia, the old Roman Emperors, the old barbarian kings, going back into the dark ages of 2,000 years ago, would not do such a thing. I have no desire to encroach on the province of any hon. member, but I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that we have here in a position an officer who is able to incarcerate a man for a period of time, when this officer should be dispensing justice to the citizens. He is a man who is destitute of even the decency of the cannibals of the South Sea Islands, who, from pure vindictiveness, because he is bound to one particular class of the community, can only see through the eyes of that particular class. He has torn the bandage off the eyes of blind justice and has put in place of that bandage only the filthy rag of his own partiality. In the interests of justice, it is the duty of the Committee to register some protest against the biassed and filthy partiality of this man Walter, who presumes to sit in judgment and dispense impartiality, that great boon the Britisher is supposed to have inherited.

3 o'clock a.m.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) has moved for a reduction of the item “Wardens, £2,883.” He says that justice should be blind.

Mr. Troy: It was on the first item.

Mr. MULLANY: That will do me. I do not suppose it would suit the hon. member. He is a very just man at times. I maintain that no warden is being paid too much.

Mr. Jones: Not if he is impartial.

Mr. MULLANY: No warden is being paid too much. If justice is going to be blind it should provide for the payment to those officials of a salary, to which the importance of the office entitles them.

Hon. P. Collier: There are some wardens who ought to be in the gutter.

Mr. MULLANY: That is all very well. If hon. members are going to complain against a certain individual, a certain worm, let them make a direct charge against him.

Hon. P. Collier: Not a worm.

Mr. Jones: We are trying to scotch the snake.

Mr. MULLANY: I want to maintain the importance of the positions of the wardens on the fields. If any particular individual, I care not who he may be, has done something wrong and is not fit to occupy his position, let him be removed. Hon. members should not come here and say in a general way that wardens are not worth the salary they are receiving. If the member for Fremantle, or the member for Mt. Magnet in his sneering way, wishes to intimate that a warden is not fit for the position he holds let him lay a charge to that effect.

Hon. P. Collier: Is not justice blind to-day?

Mr. MULLANY: It is blind at all times, but the justice which has been brought into this Chamber to-night by the member for Fremantle is certainly not blind.

Hon. P. Collier: And Walter is most blind to all to justice.

Mr. Troy: He is a waster.

Mr. MULLANY: I oppose the amendment because I believe that the amount paid to our wardens, provided they are fit for the position, is not too great.

Mr. Jones: I will allow that.

Mr. MULLANY: If the hon. member has a case against one individual he should not attack the position and the salary attached thereto, because the position is one of the most important in the State. For an hon. member, as biassed as the member for Fremantle is, to get up to-night and—

Mr. Jones: I am biassed, as biassed as Walter.

Mr. MULLANY: I do not know the man. Let the hon. member do the thing in a proper manner.

Mr. Jones: Can you get justice in the State to-day?

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member is not logical. No sane and even-minded man would take any notice of what he says. In one breath he says that justice should be blind, and in the next he admits that he is biassed against one man.

Mr. Lutey: We are protesting in the name of justice.

Mr. MULLANY: How can the hon. member take up that attitude? The case is at present sub judice, and yet we have an hon. member, sent here by his constituents, holding a responsible position in the State, taking up this extraordinary attitude. What can the State expect?

Hon. P. Collier: You stand behind the greatest and most biassed Tories in the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MULLANY: I stand where I think it is right to stand.

Hon. P. Collier: You are standing behind the greatest Tories of injustice in the State. You do not know what you are talking about. Sit down!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MULLANY: You talk about justice in your party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. MULLANY: I am quite prepared to do so. The member for Fremantle admits that he is biased, and the Committee should take no notice of him.

Mr. Jones: I do not say I am biased against one particular individual.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not concerned about any individual.

Mr. Jones: You are.

Mr. MULLANY: The position of warden is well worthy of the salary that is being paid by the State. If any one individual has transgressed, and is not worthy of the position, he should be put out and a man who is worthy to fill the position should be put in his place. I trust the amendment will not be agreed to.

Mr. TROY: The hon. member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) hypocritically pretends that the intention of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) is to reduce the salary received by wardens on the goldfields.

Mr. Mullany: He moved to do so.

Mr. TROY: The hon. member knows in his heart that he is entirely misleading the Committee. That is not the action of a man; it is the action of a little black snake.

Mr. Mullany: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. TROY: Why is the hon. member on his feet?

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr. Mullany: I take exception to the remark of the member for Mt. Magnet, and ask him to withdraw it. He said my action was that of a snake, and not that of a man.

Mr. TROY: I shall not withdraw the remark, because I did not say that he was a snake. I said that his action was that of a snake.

Mr. Mullany: I take exception to the remark of the member for Mt. Magnet, and ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. TROY: I am entitled to be heard, and your decision, Sir, must be respected.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member takes exception to the remark.

Mr. TROY: I am not suggesting any personal reference to the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. member did not refer to the member for Menzies?

Mr. TROY: I said that this hypocritical pretence was not the action of a man. If the hon. member thinks that the cap fits, what can I say?

Mr. Mullany: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Mt. Magnet declares that he made no reference to the hon. member, and therefore the member for Mt. Magnet has the floor.

Mr. Mullany: So long as it is understood that the hon. member did not refer to me, it is all right.

Mr. TROY: The member for Fremantle distinctly stated that he moved this amendment because of the biased and partial attitude of a certain magistrate on the goldfields. He did not once assert that the magistrates were overpaid. He moved for the reduction, because in his opinion the magistrate at Kalgoorlie had acted in an unfair and partial manner, and this is the time and the place when such an amendment should be moved.

Mr. Mullany: I am quite aware of that.

Mr. TROY: The hon. member is the most unfortunate man in the country.

Mr. Mullany: I would not exchange my position with yours.

Mr. TROY: He is on the verge of despair.

Mr. Mullany: I have a right to my own convictions.

Mr. TROY: The hon. member never had any convictions worth a rap. He is servile.

Mr. Mullany: Liar!

The CHAIRMAN: This cannot be allowed to go on. I ask the hon. member to withdraw that epithet.

Mr. TROY: Stand up and withdraw.

Mr. Mullany: I withdraw the statement, but would like to say—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must withdraw unreservedly.

Mr. Mullany: Then I ask the member for Mt. Magnet to withdraw the statement that I was a rat.

Mr. TROY: I did not make such a statement.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member said such a thing. I did not hear him.

Mr. Mullany: I heard him.

Mr. TROY: On my word of honour as a man I did not call the hon. member a rat.

Mr. Mullany: You are not a man. You know you called me that.

Mr. TROY: Who rules this Committee, I should like to know?

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to address the Chair. The member for Mt. Magnet has assured me that he did not use the word. Will the hon. member cease interrupting?

Mr. Mullany: When the Chairman gives a ruling, I will bow to it. I must express my opinion, however. You liar!

Mr. TROY: What does the hon. member say? I did not call him a rat.

Mr. Mullany: You did.

Mr. TROY: I did not.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has distinctly stated that he did not use the word attributed to him. I accept his statement, and ask the member for Menzies to refrain from interjecting.

Mr. Mullany: Very well, Sir, I will bow to your ruling, but I am entitled to my convictions.

Mr. TROY: I said that the hon. member never had any convictions worth a rap. Of course, if his conscience is causing him to suffer twinges—

Mr. Mullany: You never had one.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Mullany: Order, when it suits you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Mullany: I beg your pardon, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I desire to conduct the business of this Chamber in an impartial manner. If the hon. member continues to interrupt I will have to report him to Mr. Speaker. He does not want me to do that, surely.

Mr. Mullany: I beg your pardon, Sir. I was referring to someone else.

Mr. TROY: I will not take any further notice of the hon. member. The member for Fremantle is perfectly justified in moving for a reduction of this vote, and in making any protest he desires in connection with any warden in the country. It is neither fair nor reasonable for an hon. member to rise and pretend that he is indignant, because another hon. member wishes to reduce the salary of one of these officials. I do not know anything about the Rowley case, or about Mr. Walter's action as a magistrate. I certainly have not much regard for the man personally, because I know that he is partial.

Mr. Pickering: May I ask the member for Mt. Magnet a question through the Chair?

The Chairman: No. The member for Mt. Magnet has the floor at present. The member for Sussex can speak later.

Mr. TROY: I have absolute facts to show that he is unreliable. I know that when the late Warden Troy was appointed to Kalgoorlie—and he was one of the best magistrates in the State, and a most honourable gentleman, and of the finest integrity—that man, under the guise of friendship, put the knife into Warden Troy's back. I have heard poor old Warden Troy say that Warden Walter's own wife gave the show away. A man capable of such tactics I have a contempt for and despise.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 3.15 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 26th March, 1918.

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

[For "Question on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

ELECTION RETURN—METROPOLITAN PROVINCE.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a writ issued for the election of a member for the Metropolitan Province showing that John Nicholson had been elected.

The Hon. John Nicholson took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES, EASTER GREETINGS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.40]: I desire to submit to the House a motion without notice. A similar motion is being submitted in another place, the intention being that it shall be transmitted as an expression from the whole of the Parliament of Western Australia. The motion reads—

"That in this hour of trial and anxiety, we the members of the Legislative Council of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, forward Easter greetings to our soldiers overseas, expressing our admiration of their unconquerable valour and endurance, in conjunction with that of the soldiers of the Empire and the Allies, our complete confidence in the ultimate success of the cause of freedom and righteousness, and our hopes for their early and triumphant return to their Australian homes."

Question put and passed, members standing.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: The single purpose of this Bill is to amend Subsection 4 of Section 30 of the Land Act Amendment Act 1917. The Bill is the direct outcome of the motion submitted in this House by Sir Edward Wittenoom and carried without dissent. The motion was supported by Mr. Drew and other members, and the Bill has since then been submitted and has passed through another place. Section 30 of the Act of 1917 conferred on pastoral lessees the right to apply within 12 months from the 28th March, 1917, for leave to surrender their leases and renew them under the conditions of the Act of 1917 enabling them to obtain extensions until 1948 but in regard to that renewal they were to apply for only one million acres. Sir Edward Wittenoom in submitting the motion to which I have referred explained to the House the great difficulty under which pastoralists at present not resident in Western Australia were labouring by having to make provision for the distribution of their holdings and his resolution suggested that they should be given until 12 months after the termination of the war in which to make this distribution. The Act at present provides that on the approval of the application double rent is payable pending appraisement, as the result of valuation, but if the lessee is not satisfied with the increased rent on such appraisement, he has the right to refuse the renewal and to revert to the original lease, in which case the excess rent paid is, as from the approval of the application, refunded. The object of the amending Bill is to extend the time for converting leases, under the provisions extending the lease to 1948, until 12 months after the termination of the war, but for this conces-