

was adopted, should be given effect to in seven years.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: There was a big difference between reduction and no license vote, everybody knew that there were houses that ought to be closed, and that was his reason in putting the difference between reduction and no license. There was another point the Minister confused; he knew that neither reduction or prohibition would be carried straight away, there would have to be an education of the people for two or three years before it would take place.

Hon. M. L. Moss: That was not the experience in New Zealand.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It was exactly the experience. In the first big fight they gained practically nothing and very little more at the next. He asked leave to withdraw his amendment in favour of fixing the poll definitely for April, 1920. That was as early as we could have it under Mr. Gawler's amendment. We were keeping the spirit of the bargain if it was made 10 years.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN moved a further amendment—

That in Subclause 3 the words "After the thirty-first day of December" be struck out and "the month of April" be inserted in lieu.

Progress reported.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Supply (£207,443).
2. Permanent Reserves Rededication.
3. Land and Income Tax.

Received from the Legislative Assembly.

House adjourned at 9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 8th December, 1910.

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

QUESTION — UNCHARTED ROCK, "PERICLES" WRECK.

Mr. PIESSE (for Mr. Murphy) asked the Premier: In face of the fact that after a search extending over a week by the s.s. "Penguin," and a further search of four days by H.M.S. "Fantome," they have been unable to locate the rock upon which the "Pericles" is supposed to have struck, will he officially inform the British Board of Trade and other bodies concerned of the results of such searches?

The PREMIER replied: Yes; the information is already in course of transmission.

QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT AND MR. JUSTICE BURNSIDE.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Attorney General: 1, Has he article appearing in the *Daily News* of yesterday referring to Mr. Justice Burnside and the Arbitration Court been brought under his notice? 2, If so, what is he going to do about it?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, As regards amending the Arbi-

tration Act the matter is receiving the careful consideration of the Government.

QUESTION — METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE EMPLOYEES.

Mr. GILL (for Mr. Price) asked the Minister for Works: 1, Did the employees of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board recently submit a schedule of wages and conditions of employment to the officer in charge of the department? 2, Has such schedule been forwarded by the officer in charge to the Minister for his approval or otherwise? 3, Were a number of employees discharged by the officer in charge of the department subsequently to receiving such schedule? 4, Are there any meters lying in the meter room awaiting repairs. If so, how many? 5, Could any of the discharged employees assist in the repairing of such meters? 6, Are there any competent main layers still engaged? If so, how many? 7, Is it a fact that the whole of the dismissed employees are married men? 8, How long have they been in the employ of the department? 9, Has it been the practice when reducing hands to discharge the men last engaged? If so, why was the usual practice departed from in the present instance? 10, Is it a fact that since the men referred to have been discharged an immigrant has been given employment at the central pumping station? 11, Will the Minister cause a full inquiry into the circumstances surrounding their dismissal?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, They submitted such a schedule to the superintending engineer. 2, No. 3, Five employees were dispensed with by the superintending engineer. 4, Yes, about 100. 5, Yes, one, if his services had been required. 6, Yes, two. 7, Yes. 8, From six to 11 years. 9, It has been the custom to retain those found to be most suitable. 10, An immigrant was taken on at the central pumping station to assist in erecting a new boiler. It was not known at the time that he was an immigrant. The employment will last about a fortnight. 11, I have already arranged for an inquiry.

QUESTION—AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Premier (without notice): Where is the Auditor General's report?

The PREMIER: I do not bring it down; it is sent to the Speaker.

Mr. SCADDAN: Well, it ought to be down. What are you going to do about it?

The PREMIER: I will make inquiry to-morrow.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Report of the board of management of the Perth Public Hospital.

By the Minister for Works: Report of the Public Works Department for the year 1909-10.

BILL — FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL GAS AND COKE SUPPLY BILL.

Leave to introduce.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) moved—

For leave to introduce a Bill for "An Act relating to the acquisition by the municipality of Fremantle of the works of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company, Limited, and to transfer to and vest in the municipality of Fremantle the rights, powers, privileges, and authorities of the company; and to authorise the council of the municipality of Fremantle to borrow money for the purchase of the said works."

Question passed; leave given.

First Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Daglish) moved—

That the Bill be now read a first time.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): Before the question is put I think it would be wise on the part of the Minister to defer the first reading in view of the disclosures in to-day's paper. Members should at least be satisfied as to whether there is anything in them or not. If the Minister has not seen them perhaps it would be wise for him to read what ap-

appears in the Press this morning, because he might then think it unnecessary to proceed with the Bill.

The Premier: It does not affect the first reading.

Mr. BOLTON: It may not affect the first reading, but it will be regarded as a coincidence that the first reading should be moved in this House on the very day on which these disclosures are made and that the mayor of Fremantle, who has only been in office for about seven days, has resigned over this very Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would be ready to defer the Bill if there were any occasion to do so, but leave has already been given to introduce the Bill and I propose to take the more formal stage in moving the first reading. However, I can assure hon. members that the fullest opportunity of inquiry will be given before the second reading is proposed.

Mr. SPEAKER: There can be no debate on the first reading, but I was a little late in stopping the hon. member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a first time.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1. Bridgetown-Wilgarup Railway.
2. Dwellingup-Hotham Railway.
3. Katanning-Nampup Railway.
4. Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway Extension.

BILL—SUPPLY, £207,443.

All Stages.

The PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved—

That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 16, recommending that an appropriation be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of a Bill for "An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of £207,443 to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1911," and that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Commit-

tees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages on this day.

Motion passed.

In Committee.

Mr. Taylor in the Chair.

The PREMIER moved—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year 1910-11 a sum not exceeding £207,443.

This is a month's supply for December, equal to one-twelfth of the net estimates of expenditure now before the House. The House has already passed two Supply Bills. The first one was for £572,400 from revenue covering the first three months of the financial year less the statutory payments for which a Supply Bill is not necessary. The second Supply Bill was for £381,600, for a further two months' services. Those were both based on last year's Estimates, and amounted to five months' supply, equal to £954,000 from Consolidated Revenue. I am now asking for one-twelfth of the Estimates now before the House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How far will it carry you?

The PREMIER: To the end of this year. It will mean then that we will have passed the total of £1,161,443. The half of the Estimates which I am asking the House to now pass for the financial year is £1,244,659, so that the aggregate of these three Supply Bills from Consolidated Revenue will be £83,216 less than half of the estimate. It is necessary that we should have this supply because the salaries will fall due in the middle of the month.

Mr. Holman: Our salaries?

The PREMIER: Members' salaries will fall due at the end of the month.

Mr. Holman: What! The increase?

The PREMIER: No, the existing salaries. In order to keep to the proper form, it is necessary to have the sanction of the House. There is no need to ask for additional appropriation from

loan funds, because I have sufficient in hand to carry me over until—at least, I hope—the annual Estimates are passed. I am confining this actually to appropriation from Consolidated Revenue for one month.

Mr. SCADDAN: I do not propose to offer any objection to the passing of this motion, but I again desire to enter another protest against this continual method of dealing with public funds. Here we are again, providing supply for the sixth month of the financial year. The Estimates are before the House it is true, but the real foundation of Responsible Government rests in the control by Parliament of the disposal of public funds. Under existing conditions, however, we only control expenditure for half of the year, and Parliament has not been consulted with regard to the works which have been paid for from loan and Consolidated Revenue, works which will be completed before they will have been authorised by Parliament. That is a condition of affairs which to my way of thinking it is dangerous to adopt, and to permit it to continue as we are doing year after year. I do not know any case where we have given supply for six months until the present year. If we have done so it is a serious course to follow. I have previously entered my protest against this method of bringing down Supply Bills and giving Parliament no control over expenditure. It makes an absolute farce of the fundamental principle of Constitutional Government in our colonies, and the right of the people through their representatives in Parliament to control expenditure. Here we have no control except for half the year. I would have raised a much stronger objection to the passing of this motion in Committee had it also embraced a further supply from loan funds, because as I stated previously the Government should obtain the sanction of Parliament for the expenditure of loan funds.

The Premier: It is only for works authorised.

Mr. SCADDAN: But a commencement has been made with the construction of

new works from loan funds, and for which no money has been passed.

The Premier: Very little.

Mr. SCADDAN: We have no right to spend one penny from loan funds until Parliament has sanctioned the expenditure. This is a procedure which Parliament sooner or later will have to stop. We are losing control to-day of that principle for which Constitutional Government stands. We have to agree to this motion because the civil servants must be paid their salaries, and works in progress cannot be stopped. But for these circumstances I would have asked the House to prevent this method continuing. I trust the Government will take notice of this protest and endeavour to introduce the Estimates at an earlier stage.

Mr. JACOBY: While agreeing to some extent with the hon. member, responsibility must be taken by members themselves because we have in this session, and in many other sessions, spent too much time in debating small details of legislation, and small items on the Estimates. We have lacked a proper sense of proportion which has caused us to undertake long discussions on matters of very little importance as far as the State is concerned, and in this way at the end of the session we have been called upon to devote a few hours to passing large sums on the Loan Estimates. That occurred last year, and yet if we look back we will find that many hours have been taken up over matters of practically no importance whatever, and thus members who have wished to debate matters of financial policy, and of real interest to the State, have been forced to remain silent because no time has been allowed them to voice their opinions.

Mr. Angwin: A very poor excuse.

Mr. Scaddan: You recognise you cannot deal with the Estimates until they are introduced.

Mr. JACOBY: I recognise this, that we have already spent more time in the discussion of the Estimates than any other Parliament in the British Empire has done.

Mr. Walker: Nonsense!

Mr. JACOBY: The discussions which have taken place on the Estimates have been absolutely unjustified, and if this waste of time had not occurred the whole of the Estimates would have been through to-day. Look at the Federal Parliament, and we find that they put through the whole of the Estimates dealing with the Commonwealth in the time that it took this House to get through one small division involving the expenditure of only a few thousand pounds. I like to see a discussion on the Estimates, but I trust that in connection with our debates there will be in the future a greater sense of proportion than has been the case in the past, and then we shall have an opportunity of doing our duty to the State without any waste of time. So far the great amount of time which has been taken up over these minor details has been absolutely unjustified, and has prevented us from giving that attention to other matters which they deserve.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member for Swan has taken up the role of lecturer to the House in order to cover up his own palpable neglect during the whole of this and previous sessions. The leader of the Opposition has hit that hon. member very hard for the neglect he has shown of his duties in the House. There have been times when the hon. member has tried to pose as an authority on finance, and it hurts his feelings when he finds that there are representatives here who have the courage to attack him for his acquiescence over some of the most disreputable and despicable actions in the House, and it is no wonder that the hon. member feels——

The Attorney General: On a point of order; is the member for Brown Hill in order in referring to actions in this House as disreputable and despicable?

The CHAIRMAN: No hon. member is in order in reflecting on the House or its actions.

Mr. Scaddan: The Attorney General does that repeatedly.

Mr. Jacoby: I do not mind, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BATH: Do I understand that the Attorney General takes those remarks to apply to himself?

The CHAIRMAN: The Attorney General complained about the hon. member's use of remarks which reflected on the House.

The Attorney General: I object to the actions of this House being termed disreputable and despicable.

Mr. BATH: I desire to know whether the hon. gentleman has fitted those remarks to himself. It will enable me to be clearer in my explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: The Attorney General has complained about the use of the remarks, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw them.

Mr. BATH: I am prepared to bow to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, as soon as I know what the hon. member is complaining of, and as to whether he applies those remarks to himself.

The CHAIRMAN: The Attorney General has pointed out that the hon. member made use of remarks reflecting upon the House, and I ask the hon. member to withdraw them.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member is incorrect. I did not apply those remarks to the House. No hon. member can ask for a withdrawal unless he applies objectionable remarks to himself. If the Attorney General does that, if he fits the cap, I am prepared to withdraw the remarks in deference to your ruling.

The Attorney General: The hon. member spoke of disreputable and despicable actions in the House this session.

Mr. BATH: I did not say "in the House."

The Attorney General: Undoubtedly the hon. member said so.

Mr. BATH: In order to make sure, if I said "in this House" I will withdraw those words, and if the hon. member goes further and fits the remarks to himself as he apparently has done, I will withdraw them also.

The Attorney General: I did not apply the remarks to myself in the slightest degree; but if the hon. member intends to apply them to me I shall also ask that he be called upon to withdraw them.

Mr. BATH: I have supplied the cap and the hon. member has fitted it. After fitting it, in deference to your ruling, Mr. Chairman, I withdraw. I am delighted to know that the hon. gentleman has a conscience. I was under the impression that it was altogether non-existent. I was dealing with the hon. member for Swan, who of course has always been as it were a follower of the Attorney General, and he in his regard for the Attorney General apparently followed his example in fitting the remarks to himself.

Mr. Jacoby: I am not worrying about what you said.

Mr. BATH: The hon. gentleman has worried a great deal because he got up and tried to draw a red herring across the track by talking about the time taken up on the discussion of other subjects in order to avoid the reproach which the leader of the Opposition uttered with regard to members acquiescing in money being voted practically without the sanction of the House. Undoubtedly that is a practice which is altogether objectionable, and I am glad to know that the member for Swan was pricked—

Mr. Jacoby: Not a bit.

Mr. BATH: And that in the future we shall find that hon. member a little more ready to accept his full responsibility as a member of this House, and exercise his control over expenditure thus incurred. Now in regard to other matters which have been discussed and to which the hon. member has referred, I may point out that if that hon. member and others of his associates demanded that Ministers should accept their full responsibilities to Parliament some of these lengthy discussions might be avoided. But when in discussions in the House over questionable administrative acts and neglect of duties we find these hon. members silently acquiescing in such neglect it is only natural that more discussion should be aroused than might have sufficed if those members were attending to their duties. So far as the question of temporary Supply is concerned, to say anything in regard to it would be only reiterating what has already been said in the House, namely, that if Parliament met at a reasonable time in the year—I have heard the mem-

ber for Swan urge it when sitting on this side of the House—if we met earlier in the year and if the Estimates were brought down at a reasonable time no doubt the business of Parliament would flow on smoothly, and each matter would receive such discussion as its importance deserved. The business of the session is compressed into the latter portion of the year and a congestion of business brought about just prior to Christmas, and it is to that fact that a great deal of the trouble is due. I hope the member for Swan, instead of trying to run off into side-tracks in order to cover up his own neglect, will in future ask that we have this consideration from Ministers, when he will find his allegations of fruitless discussions no longer justified.

The PREMIER: I should be very glad indeed to have a vote of the House on every item of expenditure before it was incurred, but hon. members know that it is impossible. There must be some period of the financial year when we cannot have the item voted upon until we meet the House, and in the meantime we have to go on carrying out the works already authorised and in progress. After all, a very small amount indeed had been expended without the authority of the House, that is without a Supply Bill, and hon. members know that some years ago I adopted the method of attaching a sheet to the Loan Estimates showing the estimated expenditure for the current year in order that hon. members might know what works were being anticipated through the Supply Bills. As for the bringing down of the Loan Estimates, even the member for Guildford when a Minister did not get his Loan Estimates passed until late in December, when nearly six months' expenditure had been incurred.

Mr. Johnson: We had an election that year.

The PREMIER: And we have had a new Government this year.

Mr. Underwood: And we shall have another next year.

The PREMIER: I do not think so, but we will let that pass. It must be remembered that awaiting the return of Sir Newton Moore we had a month's delay in meeting the House, and subsequently a

fortnight's adjournment in order that I might form a new administration. Even then the Estimates were introduced within a day or two of the earliest record in the State.

Mr. Scaddan: They were two months later than in 1909.

The PREMIER: Let me also point out that there is no Parliament in the Commonwealth, nor in any part of the British Empire, which does not pass Supplies for a long way ahead. The Federal Parliament the other day actually passed Supplies to carry on even for two or three months into the new financial year after 30th June next. Why? To enable some of the Ministers and members to go home to the Coronation ceremony.

Mr. Scaddan: Are you not going?

The PREMIER: I have not thought of it yet. However, I can inform hon. members that I am just as anxious to have the sanction of Parliament for every item of expenditure as hon. members could wish me to be. They do control expenditure. So far as the Loan Estimates are concerned they have already sanctioned 99 per cent. of the work.

Mr. Scaddan: Your Estimates did not come down till the 25th October.

The PREMIER: Well, that was not so bad, considering all the delays. The Consolidated Revenue also is pretty well fixed, the great bulk of it having been earmarked for salaries. Ten or fifteen per cent. would cover all the expenditure from which Parliament might differ, so it does not amount to very much after all when it is totted up.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

On motion by the Premier, resolved, "That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year 1910-11 a sum not exceeding £207,443 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Western Australia and from moneys to credit of the General Loan Fund."

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Bill Introduced.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions a Supply Bill was introduced and passed through its remaining stages and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL — KATANNING-SHANNON'S SOAK RAILWAY.

Discharged.

Order of the Day for second reading read.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the Bill discharged.

BILL — DUMBLYUNG-MOULYIN-NING RAILWAY.

Discharged.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Another Bill having been provided to replace this he moved—

That the Order of the Day be discharged.

Mr. JOHNSON: This was an extraordinary procedure, to discharge a Bill for the construction of a railway for the purpose of bringing in another Bill. Evidently the other Bill was to change the route.

The Premier: No, it is an extension.

Mr. Johnson: An explanation should be given.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The change was due to the report of the Railway Advisory Board, which was not received when notice was given of this Bill. The Wagin-Dumblyung Railway Extension Bill, of which notice was given last Tuesday, covered the same direction with a different distance. In this instance and in the instance of the Katanning-Nampup Railway Bill the substitution was based on the report of the advisory board.

Question passed; the Bill discharged.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Permanent Reserves Rededication.
2. Land and Income Tax.

Transmitted to the Legislative Council.

**BILL—LEEDERVILLE AND COTTES-
LOE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES.**

Third Reading Postponed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS
moved—

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

Mr. FOULKES: Did the Minister know that the Minister for Mines had undertaken to have certain amendments framed?

The Minister for Works: I have sent a message to the Minister.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The member for Claremont was not in the House when the Bill passed through Committee.

Mr. FOULKES: It would be well to postpone the Bill. He moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

The Premier: Postpone the Order of the Day.

Mr. FOULKES moved—

That the Order be postponed.

Mr. SPEAKER: As the question "That the Bill be now read a third time" was not stated, the hon. member's motion was in order.

Mr. ANGWIN: This seemed an unusual course. When on a recent occasion it was desired to have amendments moved on the third reading there was considerable objection. Who had suggested these amendments?

The Minister for Mines: The member for Claremont.

Mr. ANGWIN: They must have been suggested since the Committee stage.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, that was the case. The local authorities concerned had asked for amendments and the member for Claremont had seen him concerning them. He had no objection as long as the local authorities were satisfied.

Motion passed; the Order postponed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1910-11.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 6th December, Mr. Taylor in the Chair.

Department of Mines (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—*Mines Generally*—£39,427:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): It has been the rule each session that, when dealing with the Estimates of each department, there has been something in the nature of a second reading speech from the Minister controlling the department before members generally deal with the Estimates of the department, and I propose following the policy that has been adopted here for some years in offering to the Committee some comments in regard to the industry controlled by the Mines Department. No doubt for some time past the industry has, we cannot say, been in a state of despondency, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there has been year after year a reduction in the value of our output.

Mr. Scaddan: There have been a few croakers like the Attorney General last night. That is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was not aware there was any croaking last night in regard to the industry, but the hon. member could not shut his eyes to the fact that, while one industry has been standing, the other has made wonderful growth. All would be pleased to see considerable expansion in the mining industry, but we all hope that our other industries will expand even to a greater extent than has been the case in the past few years. We have reason to be proud of the wonderful expansion of the agricultural industry, and I am sure the Minister for Lands will do all he possibly can to settle people on the land.

Mr. Scaddan: That is no justification for croaking.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are not croaking. To-day we will try to get on the other side of the fence to see what the mining industry is. It will be flourishing many years after members here cease to hold seats in this Chamber. The country has hardly been prospected as yet. Very little development work of any scope has been done outside the principle centres, but I am pleased that on some of the outlying fields there has been more attention paid recently with very excellent results. We know that since 1903 there has been a reduction in the value of the output, but on the other hand there has

been a large increase in the actual output of ore. Although the value has shown a decrease, yet year by year there has been a large increase in the quantity of stone treated. It is hardly necessary to quote the figures, but the Mines Report shows the increase in tonnage and also the yearly decrease in the value of the stone being treated. Years ago it was thought that one-ounce and two-ounce propositions were absolutely essential for profitable mining operations in this State, but we have now come to the stage when low-grade propositions can be treated with profit to those who invest money in them, and also with profit to the State. The mineral output last year was valued at £7,059,000, and the dividends paid amounted to £1,359,000, leaving a balance of approximately £5,700,000. That is to say, in connection with the mining industry of Western Australia, if we deduct the dividends paid from the actual output, it leaves a cash surplus of £5,700,000; and as the proportion of money spent outside the State on explosives, machinery and such like cannot be very large, the result is that we have through this industry about $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{3}{4}$ millions directly retained in the State, helping to build up every industry in the State. I do not think a stronger argument could be raised to urge upon any Government that might be in power the necessity for using every legitimate means to build up this industry. Besides the wages paid to the men directly employed in the industry, about 18,000, there are large numbers employed on the various wood lines and in foundries which are kept going by the industry, and employment is also given to mercantile people and agents. The value of the industry must appeal to every person, as also the fact that it provides for the people interested in agricultural, pastoral and other industries the very best of markets that can be obtained, and that is a home market. Further than that it is a great inducement to immigration. I have heard members say recently in regard to the Bullfinch find what an advertisement it is to the country. I have heard it said that undoubtedly a rich find will bring more population to the State than all the agents and lecturers we may send throughout

the various countries and no doubt there is a lot of truth in that.

Mr. Scaddan: But the Attorney General will not believe it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Attorney General does. He hopes he will be able to settle around Northampton the people who will be induced to come to Western Australia through the discovery of the Bullfinch. When the Attorney General has time to show the people what fine land we have in the Northampton district, extending right down to the Phillips River, we shall be able perhaps to keep more people here, and a great many more will make homes for themselves in Western Australia in the agricultural districts. At the present time, as members know perfectly well, there has been an exodus of people from the goldfields to take up land in the agricultural areas, and I admire that spirit. I have, when on the goldfields, pointed out the advantages of this. Men are working away from what may be a pleasant kind of life, and if they can see an opportunity of making a home for themselves in the West, we should congratulate ourselves that those who have borne the brunt in the early days have been able to get hold of something tangible, and to make a home for themselves here. The best way to assist the mining industry is by the construction of railways, and by giving water supplies in arid districts. There are many subsidiary methods: for instance, the battery system, and so on; but the best means in outback districts to assist mining development is by the construction of railways and giving water supplies. Light lines of railway should be constructed giving communication to the people, more especially in districts like Sandstone where timber is essential to the safe working of the mines. Where there is danger in connection with the hanging walls, an enormous quantity of timber has to be provided, and the construction of a railway would do ten times more good than if five times the amount that the railway has cost was expended in other directions. I do not think, as far as the Moore Administration, or the present Administration are concerned anyone can say that in the slight-

est degree we have neglected the mining industry. I have had a special map prepared showing the railways, and the various water supplies where State batteries are erected, where there are assisted batteries, various wells and dams which have been sunk: all this is shown on a special map which I think will be of great interest to goldfields members. I want also to give on this map the various tracks so that the map will be of great assistance to prospectors.

Mr. Holman: It is incomplete yet.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It only came into my hands within the last few days, and I want it to be absolutely up to date, and that it contains what I want it to show. I will mention one instance, the Randalls State battery was only run by the department for a short time and then we leased it. The return of the value of gold from that battery is shown only during the time the State was running it. We ought to show the full output of the gold since the erection of the plant. I want this map to be up to date with all the water supplies and railways marked on it, and I want to send it out at the cheapest possible price. We have followed the same lines in the book which has been printed showing all abandoned leases, and black and white maps issued by the Geological Department showing the various lines of reef which have been worked in the abandoned mines. In that way we give great assistance to the prospector. What I wish to point out in regard to railway communication is that since the Moore Administration came into power we have constructed 373 miles of railway in mining districts, that is including the Marble Bar line which at present is not quite complete. The approximate cost has been £662,625. I think I may say that the mining industry has received even more than its fair share of railway construction when we look at the agricultural lines which have been built. On water supplies a large amount of money has been expended in various districts, and I want members to understand this. Time after time you hear Opposition members say in connection with loan funds that no loan money should be expended unless it is directly

reproductive. I have to spend, if I am to carry on the policy of development which I am doing, money from loan funds for water supplies in arid districts. We have not the money from revenue for the purpose of doing this work, and I have had to spend large sums of money indeed in work which cannot be considered at all reproductive, but the result is undoubted. The finding of a water supply in an arid district must be of advantage to the State, and subsequently to the pastoral industry, when people have knowledge where water can be obtained it must be of great assistance to the State. Although this work is not directly reproductive, it might be. Such work is not reproductive in the sense of being able to return interest on the outlay. We want to carry on this work, and I hope when members are discussing Bills in the future they will recognise that by the Mines Department large sums of money are expended from loan fund on works which are of value to the State, but which do not return interest on the money expended. We have many water supplies returning good interest. In the Menzies district a large sum of money has been expended without which work would not have been carried on in that district to-day. Norseman is entirely dependent on the Government for its water supply. There we have a scheme that if it is not paying sinking fund it will pay a fair proportion of the interest. Members will see by the mining report that we have various large schemes of water supplies, and we have in some cases paid the interest and the sinking fund. At places like Menzies, Norseman, Davyhurst, Meekatharra, Leonora, and Jourdie Hills there are water supplies which are revenue producing, but outside those places all money expended on this class of work cannot be considered returning interest. We have constructed dams throughout the back country of a holding capacity of 182 million gallons. The number of wells or watering stations which we have under our control number 1,300. That shows the enormous number of wells that have been constructed throughout the back country to assist the prospector. Outside of railways and water supplies we have the battery sys-

tem. Of course arguments can be raised both for and against the system as to its ultimate value to the State, but at the present time there are 37 plants erected, the latest having been put up at Messenger's Patch, Mount Sir Samuel, and Marble Bar. These plants have produced gold to the value of no less than £3,342,000. Since the installation of the State battery system we have helped in the production of gold by providing treatment plants which have produced over three and a quarter million pounds' worth of gold. They have not only helped to open up districts such as the Black Range and Meekatharra and other places, but they have helped in keeping a community together that would have been deserted long ago. While we can keep these people in a district there is always a possibility, while people are developing, of opening up a big mine where there would be employment for hundreds of people, and which would be of immense value to the State. At the present time I am making inquiries in regard to a new plant which, according to the reports, will give us very effective work. At the present time a new district is being opened up at Egerton. This is a district far back from Peak Hill, almost outside of civilisation, and a large number of working men are there. There would be no warrant for the erection of a £5,000 battery there, but the erection of a mill of this description might be done for this place. Particulars of this mill have been sent to me by Mr. A. E. Thomas, who was formerly a member of this House, and he points out that these mills are superseding the batteries in Cornwall. A statement as to these plants has been sent to me, and I am inquiring to see whether the statements are correct. It is called the Holman Pneumatic Ore Crushing Plant. These mills can be easily removed from one district to another. I am having inquiries made, and if the engineers will not recommend them to us, at any rate I intend to get one or two to see if they will be of benefit to us, because they are constructed of a light kind of mater-

ial, and can be sent to a district cheaply. If it turns out that a district is no good, then the mill can be sent to another place. The price is low, and these plants may assist in the building up of a district. Besides State batteries we have assisted batteries and subsidised batteries. When any assistance is given by the department for a water supply, or for the purposes of a plant, we insist on certain conditions as to public crushing. Generally the conditions are that for ten days each month the owner shall crush for the public at a price to be approved of by the department. By that means we are enabled to get many assisted batteries to crush for the public, and in this way help in opening up new districts. I may incidentally mention that eight or nine months ago we gave assistance in the erection of a plant at Jacolletti, 24 miles north-east of Southern Cross, and also at Golden Gully, not many miles from Bullfinch, and now the Bullfinch district has again become popular this plant will enable the people to crush their stone, and it must be an inducement for people to go into the old locality for the purpose of prospecting. To the south of Southern Cross we gave assistance to the people in providing a water supply and by helping private people to get a crushing plant installed there. That plant has been instrumental in opening up that well-known and fairly rich country which is now being worked from Jacolletti towards Cheriton. The Marvel Loch was proved through the instrumentality of that plant, as well as the Never Never, the Great Victoria, and those mines further down. By giving this cheap assistance to these people we have undoubtedly opened up a district which has proved of exceedingly great value to the State. The same applies to Ora Banda, where no State crushing plant has been erected, but where we subsidised private enterprise, with the result that that important district, too, is being opened up. I may mention that many applications are made to the department for assistance in the erection of crushing plants, and we have always been only too willing to grant half the

necessary cost subject to the approval of the responsible officers of the department. It would often be of far greater advantage to the mine owners themselves, if, instead of having a State battery in the district, they were assisted to establish a battery on their own mine, for too often we find that the full value of a good mine is lost to the owner through the great expense of carting. For the purpose of having economical mining it is essential that so far as is possible the mine owner should be able to equip his show, not only with a water supply, but also with a small mill, and I am confident that if that policy is adopted more largely in the future we will find that more mine-owners will be able to make a success of these mines. A good deal of assistance had also been given in diamond drilling, but the principal assistance had been in the erection of State batteries, the subsidising of crushing plants, and the lending of money for the purpose of putting plants on likely mines. Recently a large number of reports have been coming into the department in connection with new discoveries, and throughout nearly the whole of Western Australia there is undoubtedly great activity in this industry. I was pleased to hear the member for Collie quoting statistics in regard to the largely increased output of coal from that district, and the great hold obtained on the bunkering trade. We were doubtful at the time of the Newcastle strike, when the demand arose for Collie coal, whether our collieries would be able to retain the bunkering trade; but although there was undoubtedly strong feeling against the coal, so soon as the public started to use it, it was placed beyond doubt that the trade was going to develop, and I am satisfied that the bunkering trade now is infinitesimal compared with what it will be in the future. Undoubtedly, Collie will maintain a large population. At Meekatharra the developments at depth have proved the richness and consistency of the lodes in that district, and the new discovery at Garden Gully indicates that we have other lodes

of remarkable richness, lodes which I am sure only require their conditions to be fully published to induce capitalists to give them attention. In regard to Mt. Egerton a report by the Government Geologist has been published, and it is not necessary for me to say much other than this, that if those prospectors in that district will continue their work and show by development that they are in earnest, the department, failing outside assistance coming to them, will be only too pleased to send along a small mill in order to help them to build up that place. From further north we have had reports of good discoveries, and from Roebourne recently we have received remarkably good specimens of copper from a place 34 miles south of that centre. The whole of that country, from Bangemall to the north of Roebourne, wants prospecting. We have seen splendid specimens of copper and silver ore, and if we give assistance to these outback places we will, I believe, be able to open up a number of remarkably good deposits of the baser metals. The railway to Marble Bar must give a lot of assistance to that district. The district has many difficulties to contend with. There is no mining timber and very little fuel, and generally the conditions of mining are so exceedingly difficult without a railway that one cannot blame the place for not having shown greater expansion up to the present; but I am satisfied that when the railway is completed, a large number of people must go into that country and develop its known wealth. It is rich in tin, and anyone travelling through the country can see the large outcrops of stanniferous lodes extending for many miles. I was advised by a mining manager some time ago that in Queensland they are doing profitable work with $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. tin ore. There is no doubt that much higher grade ore than 5 and 6 per cent. exists throughout the Pilbara country.

Mr. Holman: Are you going to send a geologist to the new tin field?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Not yet. I will refer to our intentions regarding the geologists later. Undoubtedly, tin mining in the Pilbara district must show great activity after the completion of that

line. It is well known, too, that there are many lodes containing gold, and taking things all round, I anticipate a bright future, though nothing in the way of a boom for that district, which we will see carrying a large population. In the Cue district the recent development in the Fingall shows that the lodes do carry values to great depth, but outside that instance I am sorry to say the district is not keeping up to its old standard. Mt. Magnet is showing good results, and so is Yalgoo. From Sandstone I have good reports, and other reports from Youanmie speak of a very large auriferous area there, an area extending 30 or 40 miles. I am hopeful of seeing a very large population around and south of that centre. On the Eastern Goldfields, although at Gwalia and Murrin there have been good developments there has not been that progress which one would like to see. We recently had a report of a rich development at Burtville at depth, and at the Ida H. mine at Laver-ton the prospects were also good, whilst at Laucefield the deposits seemed to be continuing down. All that is required is a little more faith in the country and these old districts will come to the fore again. During the last few days I have had a trip to the Ora Banda field. For many years work was carried on there, but until recently the results were not very satisfactory. I went down one shaft and saw a lode which, although only some 18 inches to two feet in width, was of exceedingly high value. We took three cuts, giving us a fair sample of the face, and the assay value was 36 ounces to the ton. The main feature of the fields are the enormous lodes, 50, 60, and 70 feet wide, carrying values of 8s. and 9s. per ton. It is country that is very easily worked and has plenty of timber, and the cost of crushing at the Siberia fire-head battery, to which the people cart their ore, is only 3s. 9d. per ton. Members will see that in that district the very large low-grade deposits will be profitably worked when the district is given a complete water supply, which it has not at the present time. At Siberia there have been most astonishing yields from time to time, and that district is also rich in enormous low-

grade deposits. The old Premier mine at Kunanalling also shows very good development, whilst Norseman is solid and well contained. The Kalgoorlie field seems to be holding its own, but the mine which rivets attention at the present time is that recently discovered by Mr. Doolette, the Bullfinch. The ore treated from that mine to date is 435 tons for a return of approximately £20,000. In that district 618 leases, covering an area of 13,042 acres have been applied for, and that shows the attention which has been attracted to the district by the Bullfinch discovery. The recent developments on the Corinthian and Corinthian North mines close to the Bullfinch have been highly satisfactory, and I do not think that there is the slightest doubt about the future of that district. There is a report published this morning by one of our officers, who has seen specimens brought down from a place two miles south of the old battery at Mt. Jackson and half a mile west of the main road. Very rich specimens have been found, and the gold has been traced along a line of reef of not less than 60 chains. Our inspector saw these specimens and stated that they were exceedingly rich, and that shows that the old district of Mt. Jackson has good prospects indeed. Another find has been reported from a place 10 miles north-east of Mt. Jackson. Only floaters have been obtained, but they are wonderfully rich, and the adjacent outcrop, on which no work has been done, has been found to extend for a very great length. That all goes to show the undoubted possibilities that exist in connection with that field. So far as the Mines Department is concerned I have instructed the Geological Department to devote all attention to this field at the present time. I hope shortly to have a large increase in the staff and to be able to distribute the officers about the State more. The Government Geologist, Mr. Woodward, has examined the country south to Jacobletti, and from Southern Cross to Bullfinch, and hopes to now give attention to the country to the north from Southern Cross to Sandstone. The water supply branch are making every endeavour also to open up that large

area extending from Mulline to Field's Find, and north of Southern Cross to Sandstone. The No. 1 party has just finished putting water stations in good order on the track from Siberia to Southern Cross. This party is now opening up a track and making water stations between Koolyanobbing and Maningu, through country which is now a blank on the map. The No. 2 party is making a through track and water stations between Glasses Well and Dooling. The latter place is one of our water stations on Pigeon Rock, Ularring Road. This work is through new country. The No. 3 party has just finished improving the old tanks at Baldgie, and Barcooting, west of Southern Cross-Golden Valley road. This party is now starting the construction of a tank at Golden Valley, the tank to be 50,000 gallons, roofed and lined for domestic water. The No. 4 party has just returned after constructing a track and water station between Mulline and Youanme with connecting track to the rabbit-proof fence. The length of track with water supply at intervals is 300 miles. The number of watering stations is 36, made up of 13 shallow wells, 2 bore wells, and 21 rock holes, covered. This party is now working South and South-West of Southern Cross, improving old and neglected tanks and rock-holes and making new ones where necessary between Southern Cross and Ravensthorpe. The No. 5 party is engaged in the construction of a tank (lined and roofed, 40,000 gallons) at Parker's Range. The No. 6 party is improving the catchment of Nevoria tank. The No. 7 party is working over that area between Golden Valley and Mt. Jackson, and 12 miles east and west of the road, improving existing water stations and making new ones where possible. This party is to keep in touch with the Government Geologist if that can be done. A large number of prospectors have come into the new country and we want to do all we can to keep them there. A big portion of that area is auriferous and now that a great incentive has been given to prospecting we want to give it all the attention we can. As far as the Geological Department is concerned I have received

the approval of the Government to make additions to our staff, with a view, not only of making independent surveys in new mining areas, but with the view of trying to connect up all the mining centres. There has been the desire that the Government should have a geological and prospecting party combined, and that we should send them out into the new country east of Laverton and north of Wiluna to areas which have not been prospected, with a view of seeing whether new discoveries could be made. I have refused to concur in that proposition because I believe we can do far more good by trying to connect up that country which is fairly well surrounded at the present time by the railway system, and giving the fullest possible information about it, and in this way to help to build up many of those districts which at the present time are semi-abandoned. There is no doubt that many propositions which were worked years ago will again be worked in the near future. On my last trip out I went to see the Lady Evelyn mine, which was originally taken up by an English company and then abandoned after a time. This mine is now owned by a man named Judd who has erected on it a five head mill and a steam engine and pumping plant, and of course a water shaft some distance away. He has something like 80,000 tons of ore in sight and some of it is of a very high grade. This mine was abandoned after a good deal of English capital had been spent on it and it was taken up by Mr. Judd and now promises to turn out very well. There are many other mines of a similar kind which must in time be again worked, and I propose to devote the whole of the geological staff to the country which has been prospected and which we know something of, rather than sending them out into the back country with a view to finding new auriferous districts. I think we shall get better results nearer home. The School of Mines is progressing well, and in connection with this institution there is one thing that I would like to mention and that is that they are always prepared there to conduct assays for prospectors. Last year a considerable number of free assays were made, and it

is as well that prospectors in the back country should know that the school will be only too pleased to make assays for them. I had proposed to introduce new legislation dealing with the industry, but owing to the amount of time which some of our Bills have taken up I am afraid that it will not be possible to carry out my intention this year. What I proposed doing was to submit a small measure which would give me power to inspect gold mines, and to be able to go on any mine and take away samples and to have the samples assayed and a return prepared by the Mining Engineer, and then if we thought fit, to make that information public.

Mr. Scaddan: Why do you not do so; you have been talking about it for years?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have been talking for two years about introducing a new Mining Bill, and I would like the hon. member to help me in the direction of introducing this legislation.

Mr. Scaddan: We want you to do it.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: A short measure will be sufficient.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At the present time I have power to inspect mines, but I have not the power to take samples.

Mr. Collier: You have not availed yourself of the offer to inspect the Chaffinch.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no desire to be mixed up in the Chaffinch business. I can assure hon. members though, that if I did have the power to enter on a mine and take samples, I would use the power with discretion. A scandal may arise at any time and I would not like to put myself in a position that it would not be easy to get out of.

Mr. Heitmann: The Mines Department should not inspect the Chaffinch. I think they were quite right there. I like the idea of bears and scoundrels asking for inspection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: From what I can understand about the Chaffinch there is merely a pot-hole there and at the time of my visit, a month ago, it was only three or four feet deep, and in this they may have found a leader. This

is the kind of thing, however, that I have no desire to be mixed up in. The department should have the power to inspect and enter on mining properties. There is another matter to which I desire to refer. It will be remembered that in our mining laws leases are given for a term of 21 years with the right of renewal for a further term subject to such conditions as the Government may impose at the time of the renewal. Many of the big mining companies have got leases where the development is three and four years ahead of the battery. Hon. members will know from the reports of the Great Boulder and Ivanhoe mines that that is the case there, and their leases will expire in about four years time. We want power to renew these leases five years ahead of the time of the renewal date. That power was contained in the old Act but was not put in the new Act. In New South Wales they have that power and renewal can be granted by the Minister. It would be improper to allow a surrender and the taking up of the lease under the same conditions. I think if that were done it would be doing something which Parliament would not sanction. I desire also that there should be legislation with regard to treatment plants. If hon. members gave me an assurance that these matters would be dealt with in a reasonable time I would be only too pleased to bring down a Bill for the purpose of getting these matters passed into law this year, but if there should be anything in the nature of solid opposition, there would not be much chance.

Mr. Walker: How can we tell until we know what you are going to bring in?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Hon. members do not agree with me on the question of security of tenure, and I would not ask the House at this stage to consider such a question as that. There are, however, small matters which hon. members opposite might agree with me about, and it might be possible to introduce legislation and pass it immediately to meet these requirements.

Mr. Heitmann: If I thought it was necessary I would bring it in in spite of the opposition.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I just wanted to mention those matters. As far

as mining generally in the State is concerned we can say now that it is on the up grade, and that we have a bright future before us and that the present condition of the industry will bring people here and will be responsible for the investment of a large amount of capital, which will mean the employment of a great amount of labour and generally must do good not only to the mining industry but to the whole of the State. I desire to refer briefly to the appointment of Dr. Cumpston, as a commissioner to prepare a report in connection with fibrosis in our mines. The Premier explained the other night that until Dr. Cumpston returned from the Eastern States and submitted a further report, it would be impossible to do anything in the direction of appointing the larger commission which will have to be composed of men who have mining knowledge. No delay will take place in connection with the appointment of that commission, but I hope that it will afterwards be found that the Government will be able to do something in the right direction for the purpose of looking after those persons, attacked not only with fibrosis, but with consumption. When one reads of the great work which is being done in Europe and America where workers and corporations and others have subscribed large sums of money for the purpose of looking after the sufferers, I think it behoves not only the State, but the public themselves, to do something in connection with the matter. I would like to mention that I have just received a voluminous report from Mr. Mann in connection with the effect of explosives and fumes in mines. That report will be published as speedily as possible. It will be a basis upon which the commission dealing with fibrosis will work. In this matter we are working in conjunction with the Transvaal people, and the investigations which Mr. Mann has been making will benefit the State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. Holman called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was a matter for regret that during the time the Minister for Mines had been discussing the Mines Estimates, dealing with the most important industry in the State, only three members on the Government side of the House had had the courtesy to listen to the Minister's remarks; and it was the more regrettable when we remembered that this indifference was displayed whenever anything in connection with the mining industry was being discussed. Time after time the Opposition were called upon to keep a House, only to find that after having heard the discussion, when it came to voting they were bludgeoned out by members who had not listened to the debate.

Mr. Monger: "Bludgeoned" is a worthy word.

Mr. HOLMAN: Perhaps the one exception on the Ministerial side was the member for Katanning, of whom it could be said he almost invariably followed the debates. The question of mining should not be used for party purposes, and it could not be said of the members of the Opposition that they had ever attempted to put this question to any such purpose. In respect to the mining industry all that the members of the Opposition desired was that it should be encouraged. Only recently the industry had fallen back into a condition that served to alarm many who had its interests at heart. There had been a falling-off in the gold yield from eight million pounds' worth per annum to something less than six million pounds' worth per annum, or a reduction of approximately £2,500,000 worth per annum. That represented a serious position, and we should endeavour to discover the cause of it.

Mr. Butcher: I think I know it.

Mr. HOLMAN: Like the member for Gascoyne, he had his own opinion with respect to it, and no doubt the Minister entertained an opinion also. He (Mr. Holman) was satisfied that the chief cause was the fact that we had in Western Australia thousands of acres of gold-bearing land locked up under exemptions and concentrations. When, years ago, the present Minister for Mines was administering the Mines Department bet-

ter than he did to-day, when the Minister was showing consideration for prospectors and small mining parties, then the gold production had kept on steadily increasing; but since that policy had been altered, since the mining companies could get exemption year after year without doing a day's work, the yield had steadily fallen off. Another contributing factor was to be found in the circumstance that the prospectors were not treated with the same consideration as was meted out to the owners of big mining properties. During the last six or seven years—because the Minister's policy had changed prior to the advent of the Labour Government—practically the whole administration of the outside work of the Mines Department had been placed in the hands of the Chamber of Mines. In the annual report for 1905 of that institution it had been stated that the Minister was practically carrying out the policy of the Chamber of Mines.

The Minister for Mines: Did they say I carried out their policy or their suggestion?

Mr. HOLMAN: The report had stated the Minister was carrying out both the suggestions and the policy of the Chamber of Mines. In 1905, after the advent of the Rason Ministry, the Chamber of Mines had remarked that previous to the defeat of the James Government the Minister for Mines had practically adopted their recommendations, and as far as possible put them into effect. A later report of the Chamber of Mines had stated that since the Minister had resumed the position at the head of the Mines Department he was taking up the threads where he had dropped them, and was going to push on with the carrying out of the suggestions made by the Chamber of Mines. Since that time there had been a remarkable falling-off in the gold yield; we had seen the prospectors refused monetary assistance, driven off leases, and even driven out of the State. He did not mean to say all prospectors were refused assistance. On many occasions they were treated fairly liberally and had done good work in some instances; but unfortunately the greatest

assistance was given in wrong channels to so-called prospectors, with the result that many prospectors were driven from the State. Assistance was given to some who were not worthy of consideration at all. The Minister said the policy of the present Government was to construct railways to mining districts, but the only railways pushed forward with any expedition for mining districts were the railway to Phillips River and the railway now being pushed out to Bullfinch. Both these proposals he opposed, not that he thought the districts were not entitled to railway communication, but because he believed the lines were to assist speculators who were given too much consideration altogether.

The Minister for Mines: You might have stated that when your Cabinet dealt with the Phillips River line.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was not the first time the Minister had to be contradicted on that point. The matter was dealt with by the Labour Government fully a month after he (Mr. Holman) left office. The policy of the present Government in regard to railways was not pushing enough except in regard to these two railways, which were not warranted. The Minister for Mines when advocating the Phillips River railway stated that within three or four years the population of the Phillips River district would be 24,000 people, and that the output of the district would go up by leaps and bounds. The Minister's prediction had by no means been fulfilled. It was regrettable. The opposition to the line was on account of the system adopted in promising the railway. The promise of the line and the hurry shown tended towards booming the Phillips River properties to an enormous extent.

The Minister for Mines: There was no haste.

Mr. HOLMAN: Promise was given to Mr. Kaufmann to build the line and that gentleman made use of the promise in floating his properties. The flotation was carried out practically on the promise the Government had made.

The Minister for Mines (in explanation): When the company asked if

they could construct a railway by private enterprise, he told them it was the duty of the Government to build the line and that he would recommend Cabinet to that effect, but he also stated that if the Government would not do it he would prefer, in order to have a line, that private enterprise should undertake the work. It was some weeks afterwards that the Government announced their intention to build it. The recommendation first came from the preceding Labour Minister.

Mr. HOLMAN: There was no desire to make any statement to induce people to believe that something occurred that did not occur. Mr. Kaufmann in floating his companies stated definitely the railway was promised by the Government, and that fact was used in the flotation of the properties. Mr. Rason was then Premier and the present Minister was Minister for Mines. It certainly induced people in England to invest money in the propositions, and the value of the shares was boosted up to £1,250,000. The shares were not quoted now, but the value was about £200,000, showing a reduction in the market price of one million pounds during the period. What he (Mr. Holman) had stated at the time the proposition was before the House had been proved. The fact gave him no pleasure. He would rather the Minister's predictions had proved correct, because the advent of a large population in that district must improve the prosperity of the country. The only other railway pushed on by the Government was the railway to Bullfinch. Before any report was received from that part of the State outside private reports, before there was any time to consider the matter, before we knew there was a mine in the district outside one show, this railway was pushed through to assist in the flotation of a large number of "wild cats" and properties that would prove to be useless; and before even the railway was mentioned in the House the Government were removing the sleepers and rails from the Merredin-Kununoppin section of the Dowerin-Merredin line and taking them to the Bullfinch, where a railway was not required so urgently as in the other dis-

trict. All the men were taken away from the Merredin-Kununoppin section by the Works Department and placed on the Bullfinch section. That was unfair and would do harm to scores of settlers who had made arrangements for next year's harvest. Expecting their railway to be built, they had ordered their seed wheat and manure, and would now have to undergo a heavy loss for the sake of assisting boomsters at Bullfinch. The Government talked about the great assistance they gave to the agricultural industry, but here a large number of settlers were being injured. Twenty miles of cartage to Bullfinch would not hurt for a time, but thirty miles of cartage in an agricultural district was a severe imposition upon the people now deprived of their railway. The people in this locality had cleared their land in a hurry and involved themselves in an expense thinking that they would get a return next year, but now the sleepers and fastenings and even the men were being taken from the section of the railway they expected and transferred to Bullfinch. In regard to the policy of pushing out railways to mining centres, there were places like Peak Hill, Lawlers and Wiluna, well established districts with big possibilities and low-grade lodes, that had no prospect of getting railways for many years to come. There was the Ora Banda group in the Minister's electorate more promising than the Corinthian and others in that neighbourhood. The returns from Ora Banda for many months were very promising. According to the Minister it only cost 3s. 9d. for treating the ore there, but owing to the maladministration of the Mines Department these prospectors had to cart their ore long distances to have it treated. If the Minister had not given a monopoly of the water supply there to Freedman and Johnson, and had he put up a State battery instead of assisting the battery of Freedman and Johnson, it would have been better assistance to the prospectors, and Ora Banda would have been opened up years ago. The people there had never had a chance. There were no better prospects in any other part of the State than in the belt of coun-

try through Siberia and Waverley. Why did Freedman and Johnson have this monopoly? Why did they get more assistance than others could get? Certainly there was dissatisfaction at the treatment at Government batteries, but it was nothing to the dissatisfaction at the treatment at assisted batteries. It was to be hoped that the policy of assisting batteries would be decreased and the system of Government batteries enlarged. It took some years to get a railway to Sandstone, and the same could be said of the Meekatharra railway. The production of Meekatharra and the districts surrounding more than warranted the building of a railway years before the line was built. We had to fight motions through the House; we had several deputations and we had to get the late Premier (Sir Newton Moore) to visit the district. We had to fight the matter year after year until ultimately the railway was constructed, and the Minister would admit that the construction of the railway had done a lot of good and would still do a lot of good. A railway to Lawlers would assist such places as Darlot, and farther on, and a railway to Wiluna where we had some of the biggest lodes in the State, and where the treatment of ore was very difficult, retarding the place somewhat, such a railway would do a lot of good. It was most essential to have a good supply of mining timber. After the first expense of getting machinery was overcome, then the big trouble was mining timber. In all the centres he had mentioned—about Peak Hill, Lawlers, Wiluna, and Sandstone—there was no mining timber, but at Bullfinch there was a sufficient supply of mining timber to last for years; therefore he maintained the pushing forward of the railway to Bullfinch in the way that was done was not at all warranted. As to water supply, attention had been paid in several districts to this matter, but everything had not been done that should be done. At Ora Banda there was practically no water supply and many other places were in exactly the same position; still on other occasions the Mines Department had been very quick in granting supplies. The

Minister had pointed with a degree of pride to the map he was having printed, showing the railway lines, the different roads and batteries and water supplies that he was opening up on the various goldfields of the State. That system was a very good one. When the map was published showing the water supplies and the roads it would assist the prospectors to a fair extent and save a great deal of time rendering it unnecessary for prospectors to be continually on the look-out for water. They would know, if their water supplies ran out, where to get more. So far as public batteries were concerned, as the Minister had stated, these had done a great deal for the mining industry and he was satisfied that if it were not for the State battery system, the mining industry would have been in a much more deplorable position than it was to-day.

Mr. Underwood: In a less prosperous condition.

Mr. HOLMAN: In a less prosperous position, and, he believed, in a deplorable condition. Opportunities had not been given to open up several prosperous centres. So far as the Minister's remarks on the industry being in its inception were concerned, he (Mr. Holman) agreed with them. There were vast areas in Western Australia which had not been touched. Various areas had been skimmed over, the pick being simply stuck in the ground. The prospector in the early days passed on to more alluring fields. There was a time coming when many old mines would turn out good, not to the same extent as the Bullfinch had done, but to nearly that extent. Many properties would be opened up, not as rich as the Bullfinch, but they would give an equal return with that mine in the long run. The Minister spoke of a battery to which he intended to give a trial. If we could get some system of crushing in Western Australia which would lessen the cost and give the same extraction it would be better for the industry.

The Minister for Mines: It was easily transported.

Mr. HOLMAN: The fact that this battery was easily transported was one of the reasons why it should be introduced

in this State. There were many mining centres which were being opened up, and we could transport these crushing facilities and allow the districts to be opened up in this way, or, if the district proved no good, the battery could be taken further on and the prospectors could go to other places. It would cost only a small amount to send the battery to another place if one centre did not turn out to be a success. He advocated that the State should spend more money in testing new introductions towards gold saving and cheaper working in connection with the mining industry. He trusted the department would test any new machine put forward. Take the gas producer plants. When he (Mr. Holman) first spoke about these plants in the House he was laughed at by members and ridiculed by the Press, but the Minister would admit that although he (Mr. Holman) was the first to mention these plants in the House, they were doing much towards improving the industry. If any machine could be introduced which would lessen the cost of treatment on mines it would do a great deal to assist in the development of mining. A new battery was being tested at Cue at the present time. It was to treat ore at a small cost. He was glad the Minister was assisting to give the machine a trial and he hoped it would prove a success. As to the latest discoveries, we had had some splendid centres opened up lately and, with the prospectors getting out into the country as they were now, on account of the discoveries which had been made recently, it should do a great deal of good for the State, and the Minister should encourage them all he could. There was one matter which he wished to call attention to, that was the action of the Taxation Department in regard to miners. This matter had been brought forward the other evening when the Minister had promised to look into the question and rectify any injustice if he could do so, and he was glad the Minister had promised to amend the income assessment if the matter could not be rectified otherwise. The taxation on the small mines was an injustice when these mines were doing a great deal of good to the State. The Minister also stated that

he intended to amend the Mining Act. So far as several matters were concerned the mining people would welcome many amendments which the Minister had outlined. As to the security of tenure of mining leases he would oppose that as strongly as he could. The fact that leaseholders had so much security, or rather the big mining companies, and were not called upon to do much work, and that the labour covenants were sadly neglected, was preventing the mining industry going ahead. It was pointed out that the tribute system was doing a great deal of harm because leaseholders were allowed to hold leases for years without spending a penny, and they allowed tributors to go on the leases and work them. It would be far better if the leases were made available for the miners to take up and work. The Minister also had the idea, being led to a great extent by the Chamber of Mines, because he was too prone to do as they said, that labour was preventing capital coming to the country. The policy of labour in Western Australia would encourage capital to come to the State a great deal more than at present by giving them necessary protection, and not allowing people to be robbed as in the past. As to giving the Minister means to test the value of any proposition on the market, there would be no objection to that. After the mining swindles we had had in the State, he was surprised that the Minister had not done something to bring to book some of those responsible.

The Minister for Mines: I had a clause inserted in the Criminal Code years ago.

Mr. HOLMAN: That had not been brought into operation yet. There were the Perseverance, the Boulder Deeps, and several others at Peak Hill, the Lake View Consols, and many other properties on which swindles occurred and which did a great deal of harm to the State. The fact that so much country was locked up for speculative purposes was doing harm to the industry. We had hundreds of acres of land which was never worked; they were more like pastoral leases than mining properties. These were held year after year and no work was done. It was to be hoped the Minister would prevent

so much exemption and protection being granted as had been granted during the past few years. He (Mr. Holman) mentioned when dealing with the forfeiture of leases at Wiluna and Errols that the Minister favoured the rich mining companies to the detriment of the prospectors. There was a serious matter in connection with the Chamber of Mines which had received such great assistance from the Minister. This Chamber was always too eager to endeavour to bring about a reduction of wages. It had been stated by the chairman of the Chamber of Mines that he had never on any occasion attempted to bring about or had brought about a reduction of wages. At that time he (Mr. Holman) gave the statement, through the Press, a deliberate denial, pointing out where the Chamber had been instrumental in bringing about a reduction of wages. The last instance occurred in connection with what was supposed to be the richest mine in the world. Mr. Hamilton, as soon as he was placed on the directorate of the Bullfinch caused a reduction of wages to take place amounting to 10s. a week. That gave the lie direct to his statement, and no matter how rich a property might be, Mr. Hamilton prostituted his position, after receiving such treatment from the Government of the State, to bring about a reduction of 1s. 8d. a day at that mining centre. He had never heard of such a thing in his life. As soon as the Chamber of Mines had got an opening on the Murchison in 1903 they had endeavoured to bring about a reduction of wages on the Great Fingall mine. That mine then was one of the richest in the Commonwealth, and perhaps in the world, but as soon as Mr. Hamilton had a chance through the Chamber of Mines he had attempted to bring about a reduction of wages. Yet in speaking at a meeting of the Chamber he had stated that the Chamber had never attempted to reduce wages and had never been a party to any citation before the Arbitration Court. That statement was deliberately untrue, and Mr. Hamilton knew it, and the action he had taken in bringing about a reduction of wages was a disgrace to him and to everybody concerned in it, and a disgrace to the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: Do you refer to the member for Kalgoorlie, or to myself?

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Kalgoorlie had nothing to do with the Chamber of Mines, but the Minister, who belonged to the Chamber by virtue of his office, could have taken a strong stand. Ministers had too often lent a hand to the Chamber of Mines in doing things to benefit themselves at the expense of the great bulk of the people; in fact, when amendments in the interests of the miners had been proposed from the Opposition side of the Chamber, the Minister for Mines, instead of listening to the remarks of speakers who were mining members, had been sending messages to the secretary of the Chamber of Mines who had been sitting in the gallery. It had been said that high wages worked to the detriment of the mining industry, but he maintained that the higher the wages that were paid the better the work that was done. In no case in Western Australia had an increase of wages brought about the shutting down of a mine, but there were many instances of where low wages had brought a mine to ruin. To his mind a miner was perfectly justified in doing as little work as he could if he was not paid a fair rate of wages.

The Minister for Mines: Is that not a question for the Arbitration Court?

Mr. HOLMAN: It was a question for mining representatives in the House to deal with on every possible occasion.

The Minister for Mines: It is a question for the public.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister for Mines did not study the public; he was too much engaged in studying the Chamber of Mines people, but he (Mr. Holman) studied the public and the people in the mining industry because he knew the conditions under which they worked. One of the greatest drawbacks to the industry was the incapacity of many of the so called mining engineers. Recently in a case in the Arbitration Court Mr. Klug, who was supposed to be one of the leading lights in the mining world, had been giving evidence about the practical part of mining. In answer to a question as to whether he had ever worked underground and whether he

was a practical mining man he said "No, but my father was." Yet Mr. Klug posed as a man who knew what a miner should do underground. He might have a knowledge of the theory of mining, and might be alright in his own line as a metallurgist, but before a man could be conversant with the details of that work he should be in a position to speak from practical experience. The State had had too many of those men who knew nothing about the practical side of mining.

The Minister for Mines: He is one of the men who draw thousands a year.

Mr. HOLMAN: The country was paying the Minister for Mines a thousand a year, and yet what a mess he made of things. Many of the men who were forced to take small wages at the present time were much better men than many of those who were paid big salaries.

The Minister for Mines: You would take a big salary yourself?

Mr. HOLMAN: If such a thing was forced on him, he would take it and endeavour to do his best. He maintained that when mining matters were being discussed in the House it was the duty of the Minister and members to take the advice of the mining representatives irrespective of what party they belonged to, and to do their best for the industry, instead of being led away by men who had purposes of their own to serve. The Chamber of Mines people, although they had taken 20 million pounds in dividends from the State, had not done one stroke of prospecting outside their own shows, and yet when they wanted a geological survey carried out at a cost of about £2,000 they did not do it themselves, but they went to the Minister of Mines and asked him to do it.

The Minister for Mines: They are doing that work themselves now.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was true that they had been doing survey and prospecting work during the last year or two, but they expected the Government to spend thousands of pounds for their own benefit. The way in which many of the big mining people carried on their business was a disgrace to the positions they held. Until the last year or two they had not done a

stroke of developmental work except on their own properties.

The Minister for Mines: There is some hope for them now.

Mr. HOLMAN: They were doing it now, but on every possible occasion they made the State pay. The only economy a lot of those men knew was how to bring about a reduction of wages. He asked the Minister to listen to the representatives of the working miners. He did not refer to himself, because on every occasion when he had gone to the Mines Department he had been treated with courtesy.

The Minister for Mines: What about the Labour Government's Mines Regulation Bill?

Mr. HOLMAN: There were a lot of practical men in the Government at that time.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister for Mines had risen in the Chamber on one occasion and boasted that the then Minister for Mines, who was a practical man, had given him certain information. The Government had used Mr. Hastie's remarks in pushing forward the Phillips River railway.

The Minister for Mines: Was it not Mr. Johnson.

Mr. HOLMAN: It had been Mr. Hastie, who had been quoted by the Minister for Mines for a practical opinion on the conditions of mining at Phillips River. The mining industry at the present time looked better than at any time for some years. Many promising shows were opening up. The latest discovery at Bullfinch had for the time being eclipsed many of the other discoveries, but even at this early stage of the new field many unsavoury reports were being circulated in connection with that centre. Instead of working the mining industry for the benefit of the State, and those engaged in it, the Government were being led away into boosting the "bulls" and "bears" on the Adelaide Stock Exchange. Those speculators used this State for their own ends, and did not care whether there was a mine on the field at all so long as they could make some money in trafficking in shares. There had been examples of that sort of thing during the last week or two, and no doubt

there would be others. He would like to see the Minister do everything possible to encourage the flotation of mining companies in Western Australia. Let us follow the example of Bendigo and other places which had opened up their own mines at small cost. Mention had been made of the Bullfinch railway, and he certainly agreed that the line should be built to that field, but the method in which the railway had been promised, pushed through, and started before the Bill came before Parliament was very undesirable. Already the very fact that the railway was being built was being used by Mr. Doolett as an argument why wages should be reduced. The method in which that line had been pushed through had done a great deal of harm to the agriculturists in one district by spoiling their harvest for next season, and amongst miners by giving the big companies an excuse for reducing wages.

The Minister for Works: I am assured that the agricultural line will be finished within the specified time.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was to be hoped that the railway would be finished within the specified time, and that it would be a benefit to the settlers of that portion of the State. However, they had been promised that they would get their stuff out at a date which was within the specified time. He was glad that the few remarks made in connection with that matter had been the means of getting the Minister for Works to make a pronouncement in the direction named. The present position of the mining industry in Western Australia was a matter for congratulation, but, as he had said before, the Bullfinch outshadowed all other discoveries. Several important finds had been made in his own electorate. At Gum Creek the mines were showing very fair prospects. In the New England country, the mining camp furthest East, the people were working under great disabilities. The Minister for Mines, he was glad to say, had subsidised the battery there, and had announced his intention of subsidising the carting which would also assist the prospectors. At Mount Egerton there was no doubt a great extent of country which con-

tinued right through the Gascoyne, and he hoped the time was not far distant when a railway would be pushed on from Meekatharra right through the northern country.

Mr. Underwood: Would you link up with Bangemall?

Mr. HOLMAN: Bangemall would be on the main trunk line, and then there would be a branch line to Pilbara. There was no doubt about it that mining prospects in the State at the present time were encouraging, but he would earnestly suggest to the Minister to do away with the exemption policy, and the sooner that was done the better it would be for the industry. Speaking from a practical knowledge of mining centres he could say that many of them had been pretty well ruined through exemptions. This was the worst evil that had to be contended with. With regard to the branches of the department members would be able to criticise them later on, but as far as the Geological Department was concerned it was to be regretted that the Minister had taken the whole of the staff and directed their attention to one centre.

The Minister for Mines: We are going to increase the staff.

Mr. HOLMAN: Of course it was a good thing for those interested in the Bullfinch.

The Minister for Mines: They will not necessarily be all there.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was a remarkable fact that those places which had only been discovered a few weeks should get all the attention.

The Minister for Mines: Our desire is to assist the prospectors.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the prospector could be kept there and good geological advice could be given to him the staff would be doing a very good service. The whole of the district between Peak Hill in the north and Gullewa in the south should be connected up. There was a long strip of country there, nearly 300 miles, which should receive the consideration of the Minister. If the whole staff were engaged at Bullfinch, however, it would be a bad look-out for the rest of the State, but doubtless when the staff was augmented some attention would be given to the other districts.

The question of mines water supply was one of vital importance to the industry. As the Minister had stated, water supplies were a valuable asset in any part of the State, and no one would ever cavil at expenditure in that direction, because even if mining had been carried on, and though it might not have been proved to be a success, while the water supplies existed they could always be looked upon as an asset. He would like to see a great deal more done in the future in regard to water supplies. Personally he did not have a great deal to complain about in the electorate which he represented, because practically every request he had made had been favourably considered, although in some instances there had been long delays. His last request, however, was granted in a very short time. The Machinery Department would be dealt with by practical men on the Opposition side of the House. There was cause for complaint in connection with that department. The teaching of the young in mining schools was a matter that had the support of every one, especially in the direction of imparting a practical knowledge of mining; as well as instructing in theory. In criticising the actions of the Minister he (Mr. Holman) had done so for the good of the industry and the State. Whenever criticism had been offered, the Minister could rest assured that there had been good grounds for it. As far as the industry generally was concerned it would always have the support of members on the Opposition side of the House, who hoped it would prove everything it gave promise of at the present time. The Minister had referred in glowing terms to what a splendid thing the industry was and was going to be, and how many thousands it would bring into the State, but when it came to a question of the redistribution of seats we had the long drawn Minister saying that mining districts were losing their population and that the agricultural districts had to receive extra representation because they were improving and increasing. The Minister introducing that Bill stated in effect "What is the good of giving miners representation, because the population of the gold-fields is dwindling away." That Minister

was merely echoing the remarks which were made by the member for Beverley some time ago. If the Minister for Mines was sincere in his remarks regarding the mining industry, why was he a party to the sacrificing of the mining seats for the purpose of making a certainty of the seats for his colleagues?

The Minister for Mines: We are not sacrificing the mining industry.

Mr. HOLMAN: The mining industry on the Ministerial side was in the hands of one man, the Minister for Mines, and the policy was dictated by the Chamber of Mines, a body which was not working for the State, and the people connected with it would sacrifice the State if they could serve their own ends. The policy of the Chamber of Mines was dictated by speculators in London. Their London board of directors issued instructions to them, and these instructions drifted through to the Palace hotel, or as it was commonly known, the "hatchery" or "incubator," where it was kept at the right temperature with the aid of a little drop of whisky or perhaps champagne when the occasion warranted it, and that was the liquid fuel they burned, and then the golden egg was hatched and everyone did pretty well, while the shell, the State itself, was left with nothing at all. Then when the plot was over, if the egg was added, the Minister for Mines took it over and it proved a very expensive thing for the State.

Mr. Underwood: McKenzie was one of the golden chickens hatched.

Mr. HOLMAN: That gentleman was one of those who reaped the golden harvest. He (Mr. Holman) was only too pleased to hear of men making a good thing out of a mine, provided that mine was opened up. What he strongly objected to was the attitude of the Chamber of Mines. The policy of that institution was formulated in London, it drifted through to Western Australia, went to the Minister, and then the Minister informed the House that the mining industry was safe in the hands of the Ministerial party. He would be very sorry for the mining industry and those engaged in it as long as the attitude which had been adopted for the last five or six years was carried out. The

Minister should however receive credit for the good work he had previously done for the mining industry, but of recent years he had undone that good work; yet the Minister was in the position of being able to take into consideration the advisableness of dropping his present advisors and to adopt his old policy and revert to the narrow track, as it were. The Minister might not get quite so much applause or flattery if he went back to his old friends, but he would receive what was far more valuable than the flattery, namely, the thanks of a most deserving body, the prospectors and small owners, which would surely be more valuable than the opinion of the Chamber of Mines. Hon. members on the Ministerial side should take as keen an interest in gold mines as members on the Opposition did in agriculture. The Opposition never lost an opportunity of defending an agricultural district.

The Minister for Mines: I hope they will not ask too many questions.

Mr. HOLMAN: If they were to ask too many question and were to be guided by the answers they received from the Opposition their views with regard to the administration of mining matters would be soon changed, and they would get information which would enable them to cast a more intelligent vote than they had ever done before. The Minister could rest assured that the Opposition would do their best to push forward the mining industry and they would demand that the State should give a fair deal and that every worker should be treated as a man and given a fair return for his labour.

Mr. COLLIER: It was pleasing to hear the Minister for Mines expressing optimistic sentiments in regard to the future of the mining industry, at a time too when the popular thing was to land the development of agriculture. He was afraid that many, who in the past had found it necessary to point out the value of the mining industry, had forgotten that duty and had turned too much of their attention to the development of agriculture. He did not wish to be misunderstood, because since he had been in the House he had voted for every railway Bill to serve

agricultural areas, and generally had been willing to give what assistance he could to develop that industry, recognising, as everyone should recognise, that after all it was, to use a claptrap phrase, the backbone of every country, and no doubt would be flourishing long after the mining areas had ceased to exist. At the same time he was afraid that during the last few years there had not been that sympathetic assistance granted to the mining industry that was the case in former years. We had recently heard something about the amount of money expended in mining during the last ten years. All were willing to admit that in years gone by a very considerable sum had been expended in that direction; but while that might bulk large, taking the past ten years, still during the past three or four years there had been a lamentable falling off. True, a spurt had been made recently in connection with the Bullfinch boom, but in this regard somebody in the old country had found it necessary to take exception to the cablegrams sent home by the Premier, on the score of their being too optimistic. Last night we had had the spectacle of the Attorney General endeavouring to show that the mining fields were going down, and were likely to continue going down. In was interesting to contrast that speech of the Attorney General's with the remarks of his own colleagues and the cables sent Home by the Premier. It went to show that when the desire was to promote a boom in the interests of a few people, the Premier did not hesitate to send Home most glowing reports in regard to the future of the mining industry generally, while when the interests of the Government were likely to be served by pointing to the decline of the goldfields, the Attorney General did not hesitate to rise in his place and declare mining to be a decaying industry. He had no wish to in any way oppose the construction of the Bullfinch railway, but he could not help deprecating the indecent haste with which the work had been entered upon. We had heard that certain Ministers were shareholders in the Bullfinch, and now the latest information was

that the Minister for Mines himself was among the list of the fortunate. There was no harm in that. of course; indeed, he (Mr. Collier) would like to have a few shares himself; but it was possible that this fact had been responsible for the extraordinary haste shown to assist a mine which was returning an average of 22 ounces to the ton. And, while the public funds were being expended in the assistance of the town and mine of Bullfinch, the authorities up there, who were directly benefited, were sufficiently miserable and paltry to reduce wages to 10s. 10d. per day. By way of refuting the contention of the Attorney General that the mining population showed a serious decline, he would say there were this year employed on the mines a thousand men more than the number employed last year, while the number of mining employees in 1908 had shown an increase on those employed in 1907. For several years past the number of men employed in the industry had gone on increasing, yet the Attorney General had said that the population of the goldfields was decreasing. Surely the number of men employed could be taken as a very fair index of the condition of the mining population. The prospects of the goldfields had never been better than they were to-day, and this notwithstanding that the total output had decreased. The total output was not too trustworthy a criterion of the actual condition of the industry, because a high output might be of such a nature that it would cut out in a year or two, whereas while the output had been slowly decreasing, we knew to-day that the industry was of a more permanent character than had been anticipated. Taking into consideration this and the fact that we had thousands of miles of auriferous country barely scratched, some of it not yet discovered, it was clear that for generations to come the mining industry of Western Australia would continue to flourish. One feature common to the gold mining and the agricultural districts was that both were afflicted with the curse of the monopolist, who was to-day just as evident in the goldfields districts as he was in the

agricultural areas. In goldfields districts there were thousands of acres locked up against the genuine prospector. One would have thought that round about Kalgoorlie and Boulder it would be difficult to find an acre of land closed against the legitimate worker; yet, strange as it might seem, the Oroya Links had a big area of country stretching from Kalgoorlie right down to Kamballie.

The Minister for Mines: One hundred and thirty acres.

Mr. COLLIER: They had 30 leases altogether, the area of which, he was informed, was about 200 acres. However, the point was that it was in the richest belt of country and the company did not employ one wages man.

The Minister for Mines: Why, they are crushing 7,000 a month.

Mr. COLLIER: That was not stone raised by wages men. They had an army of 500 men tributating for them.

The Minister for Mines: Up to three months ago the company was crushing 11,000 tons a month.

Mr. COLLIER: That was tributers' stone.

The Minister for Mines: They could not put that in as being their own gold returns.

Mr. COLLIER: They were enabled to hold 30 leases by the aid of 500 tributers. These people should be forced to forfeit the leases if they were not prepared to work them, and the tributers should be allowed to take up the leases themselves. Shylock had been a philanthropist compared with this company in their treatment of these tributers.

The Minister for Mines: In September last the company crushed 10,023 tons raised either by wages or contract men.

Mr. COLLIER: Possibly that was the tonnage raised by the tributers.

The Minister for Mines: Would they get the gold the tributers won, and report it as their own?

Mr. COLLIER: The Minister would find that the company got practically all the gold the men won. The tonnage might be correct, but certainly it had been raised by the tributers.

The Minister for Mines : The company raised 7,000 tons at a working cost of £10,000.

Mr. COLLIER : All that the Minister showed was that the company had crushed 10,000 tons of stone. That did not refute the statement that there were 500 tributers employed on the company's leases. He had a letter from a tributer, who wrote—

The batteries' rates for treating sands and slimes are unduly high; they deduct the first 3dwts. for cost of treatment and all values above that they pay for at the rate of 3s. per dwt. on assay. Now as an assay is the equivalent of fine gold they charge at the rate of nearly 12s. 9d. per ton for treatment of sands. They can treat these sands for say 3s. 6d. per ton at the very outside and allowing for a 75 per cent. extraction which they claim is all they get, it still leaves them 9s. 6d. per ton or 6s. per ton clear profit; now this applies to 3dwts. sands only, but if the sands happen to be rich you lose a big percentage of the face value of your gold, for, as before stated, they only pay 3s. per dwt. for all over the 3dwts. up to any values. As an illustration consider sands worth an ounce to the ton, the value of which would be nearly £4 5s. The battery would first deduct 3dwts. and pay at the rate of 3s. for the remaining 17dwts. or £2 11s. per ton, a difference of nearly 3s. 4d. per ton. After deducting the 12s. 9d. for treatment there still remains 21s. 3d. which the owners say they do not recover and are tipped over the dump. It is, however, taken for granted amongst mining men that such is not the case, and that the batteries get a far closer extraction than that. I will quote a recent crushing put through a local battery, to show how these rates affect the tributer. The parcel was 99 tons, over their bridge the sands went 5dwts. 8 grains, and the slimes 4dwts. 17 grains or an average of 5 dwts. 1 grain. The total value of the gold in these residues on a fine ounce basis was fully £105. After the battery

had deducted their 3dwts. and paid for the rest at 3s. per dwt. the tributers were paid less than £28 or a little more than a quarter of the face value. There is also dissatisfaction among the men on the moisture question. The batteries deduct 10 per cent. moisture on all oxidised or sulphide ore. They say there are 22½ gallons of water in every ton. The tributers say there is nothing like that amount and if they reduced it one half they would still have ample cover from loss in that respect. Of course that only affects the tributers when their slimes become payable or over the 3dwts. margin, as you get the total amount of your sands in the parcel by measurement and the remainder is slimes and if the battery has to pay, it is out of the slimes the moisture is deducted. With respect to the relations between tributers and companies the royalty scale is pretty stiff, running in some instances up to 30 per cent.; but where it presses doubly hard is, that they deduct their royalty on the gross output. Say a party has an output the total value of which is £200. It might take a £100 of that to pay the battery, carter and mining costs. The company take their royalty on the £200 or on money which the tributer never receives. The royalty should be on the net proceeds only. In fairness to the batteries they say they get a lot of parcels from which they do not get 3dwts. in the sands, in which case these big profits do not apply. I do not think there are many parcels, however, on which they do not get the 3dwts. as the gold is mostly fine and it seems impossible to get a close plate extraction. With respect to the £4 per oz. basis on which the battery owners pay for residues, we say is also not fair, as an assay is the equal of fine gold or nearly £4 5s. per ounce, or, if it cost a shilling an ounce to realise on the gold it still leaves a difference of 4s. per ounce on the true value, and that the tributer gets gaid. This applies with more severity with low bills.

like Moss's and the Associated Northern as they buy the whole output on assay. The Ministers would see how the tributers were at the absolute mercy of the companies at the present time.

The Minister for Mines: You might let me have a copy of that afterwards.

Mr. COLLIER: The Minister would find that the information contained in what he had read was fairly accurate.

The Minister for Mines: I do not think they are holding their properties by tributers.

Mr. COLLIER: According to the information in his possession they were holding the properties by nobody else but tributers. The return in the Chamber of Mines did not prove his statement to be incorrect. It showed that they had crushed 23,000 tons, but it did not show what gold had been recovered.

The Minister for Mines: They won £11,966, and the expenditure was £10,039.

Mr. COLLIER: Whose was the duty of seeing that the mining regulations were carried out?

The Minister for Mines: The inspectors.

Mr. COLLIER: There were regulations which, if enforced, would overcome most of the grievances.

The Minister for Mines: They are enforced, because the warden may refuse to register.

Mr. COLLIER: The Minister could accept his assurance that they were not enforced. There were many tributers working without any agreement of any kind.

The Minister for Mines: That is their own fault.

Mr. COLLIER: That was like saying that if a man did not accept the wage that the employer offered it was his own fault, but where the man had no alternative but starvation he was forced to accept it.

The Minister for Mines: If that was brought before the department we would fine them.

Mr. COLLIER: The only remedy was to compel the companies to have those agreements or forfeit their leases. Very many of the tributers were working under no agreement.

Mr. Scaddan: The department knows it, and knows how they treat their tributers.

Mr. COLLIER: At the meeting of tributers in Kalgoorlie a few weeks ago, when 250 had been present, it had been stated that most of the men present had been working under no agreement, and were absolutely at the mercy of the companies.

Mr. Scaddan: Is it not a breach of the regulations to work without agreements?

Mr. Walker: Of course it is.

Mr. COLLIER: The regulations were fairly good if they were observed.

Mr. Scaddan: It is the policy of the Minister right through to make regulations and Acts of Parliament and never administer them.

Mr. COLLIER: If the regulations were enforced, and the companies were obliged to register the agreement or forfeit their leases, there would be an end to the present state of affairs; but that was not done, and leases were being held year after year by the work of tributers. Around Kalgoorlie a few years ago tributers were few, but now there were some 500 or 600 men thus employed, and something should be done to see that those men got a fair deal, and to see that either the regulations were enforced or that the Tributers Bill now before the House became law. The Mines Report for the year showed that the same heavy toll of life and limb was being paid by those who were winning the wealth from the earth on the Golden Mile. During the year there had been 34 fatalities and 461 other accidents throughout the State, but the greatest number had occurred on the Golden Mile. On the Golden Horseshoe, where 850 men were employed, there had been two fatal accidents, eight serious and 53 minor. On the Ivanhoe, where 610 men were employed, there had been 109 accidents, which meant that 11 per cent. of the men employed on the mine had been injured during the year. The Great Boulder Perseverance employing 650 men, had had 125 accidents, or 14 per cent.; and the Hainault employing 213 men, had 37 accidents,

and so the figures continued right through the list, the accidents ranging from 6 per cent. up to 18 per cent. in the case of the South Kalgurli. That was an aspect of the mining industry that should not be overlooked when Ministers were sitting at banquet tables, talking of the great mining industry and applauding the speculators who were drawing their dividends from it. Every year there was that high percentage of accidents, and the number of children who had been left without their bread-winners, and women whose husbands had been maimed and crippled for life, was increasing year by year. Parliament should give some attention to that matter. Surely the reduction of that fearful accident roll was as important a consideration as many of the measures on which the members spent their time. Important as was the development of the State the welfare of the people, who were building up the country and who were producing its wealth, should come first. That was only one side of the question. There was also the still larger percentage of men whose lives were wrecked through employment underground. Everybody had read of the extraordinarily high percentage of men affected with what was called "miners' complaint," or early fibrosis; no less than 33 per cent. of the machine men employed underground were victims to that complaint. It had been only after years of agitation and complaining that an inquiry had been obtained; and the investigation had been mainly due, after all, to the persistency of the member for Cue, whose voice year after year had been raised in the House, often without an audience, and with the people outside and the Press sneering at him. Yet it was now proved by a competent authority that every one of the hon. member's allegations were true, and he deserved great credit because of the fact that he had persisted in his plea for inquiry in the face of the opposition of the authorities, and of the highly paid permanent officials of the Mines Department. Seeing that half the population of the State were living on the goldfields, everybody concerned

should be informed what the Government were going to do. The Minister, in referring to the question this evening, had said that it was proposed to have further inquiry by men of mining experience. It was to be hoped that the composition of that Commission would be known before the session closed, because if it had not been for the agitation and opposition shown to the proposed personnel of the other inquiry it would have been as abortive as others in the past. The State Mining Engineer would have been appointed as chairman of the Commission but for the Opposition. It would be easy to imagine what the result of his appointment would have been. We would have had the same report as that gentleman furnished when he was sent to Cue to examine into the same matter. Dr. Cumpston had shown that Mr. Montgomery was incompetent for his position, or not desirous of ascertaining the truth; because after making a casual inquiry into the matter, Mr. Montgomery had reported he was not able to find any cases of miners' complaint. Was Mr. Montgomery to be put on the Commission that was to make further inquiries? The evidence given by some of the medical men on the goldfields showed they ought to be out at the slaughter yards instead of attending to the health of the people. It was a standing disgrace to them when they declared that miners' complaint practically did not exist, and that the few cases that came under their notice had been contracted in the Eastern States. If there had been laymen on the commission of inquiry that medical evidence would have been accepted. But Dr. Cumpston did not accept it; he examined about a third of the men employed in the mines, and showed those doctors were either deliberately telling lies or were unable to detect the complaint when it came before their notice. The truth was most of these doctors always showed an interest in bolstering up the Chamber of Mines and seconding whatever Mr. Hamilton or Mr. Maughan said. They must have known of the existence of the disease; or perhaps they thought

they had to deal with the same class of commissioner as was usually to be found on such inquiries. At any rate it was pleasing there was no longer any doubt as to the existence of this disease on the goldfields, which affected about a third of the flower of the manhood of the State. No expenditure would be too great to alleviate it in some way. There was only £250 set down in connection with the inquiry for this financial year.

The Minister for Mines: That would make no difference. It must be an exhaustive inquiry.

Mr. COLLIER: It would be well to know what sort of an inquiry it would be.

The Minister for Mines: It would be necessary to see if there was any remedy, and necessary also to see what could be done to find employment for any men removed from the mines.

Mr. COLLIER: It was a big question. No one could point out a remedy and say that the Minister refused to accept it.

The Minister for Mines: It affects consumptives throughout the State.

Mr. Heitmann: But we have established its existence on the mines. The remedy is very simple.

Mr. COLLIER: The difficulty was evident, but it was not beyond the best talent and brains we had in the State.

The Minister for Mines: We shall get the best.

Mr. COLLIER: The Minister should not spare anything in the way of expenditure to try to do all possible to alleviate this disease.

The Minister for Mines: We ought to be able to get a good deal of help from the Transvaal. For the same reason Dr. Cumpston was sent East.

Mr. COLLIER: Exhaustive inquiries were carried out at Bendigo, and Dr. Cumpston had the advantage of those investigations. The select committee on the Workers' Compensation Bill had rightly pointed out that miners' complaint could be dealt with by regulation. That was fairly correct. The Minister should use the whole of the power of

his department and the knowledge of his expert advisers to alleviate this condition of things.

Mr. McDOWALL: The hon. member had dealt clearly with the charge of 1½dwts. for the treatment of sands, and the Minister should look into the matter very carefully. It was a burning question at Coolgardie, as was also the question of keeping back payment for two months after treatment, which required serious attention. The Minister seemed to have uppermost in his mind the question of fixity of tenure; but there was too much fixity of tenure, too much of holding mines for speculative purposes. Mines were worked altogether too much from the tribute standpoint. The Minister claimed that capital, labour and brains were essential for the development of the industry, and spoke of an antipathy existing against persons prepared to come here and expend capital. Any antipathy that existed was against persons who obtained a monopoly of mining property and never attempted to develop it. The member for Boulder read a letter from tributers; he (Mr. McDowall) would read a petition which was sent to the Minister for Mines in connection with the mines at Bonnievale. The post office at Bonnievale was being removed to Bullfinch. The necessity for the removal was largely in consequence of the mines being locked up. Bonnievale was once a very prosperous district; but unfortunately the population was depleted, greatly in consequence of too much consideration having been shown towards the holders of leases. The petition was dated 8th February, 1909, and gave concrete instances of where tributers held mines for mining companies to the detriment of the community in general. It was—

We the undersigned tributers of Bonnievale and residents of Coolgardie and Bonnievale desire respectfully to place before you the following detailed statement of facts in connection with the tributes recently completed at the Westralia and East Extension Gold Mine, Bonnievale. The figures attached are compiled from the books kept by the tributers in 33 shaft

(Minchin and party), and they are confirmed by the official monthly statements from the mine office to the men. They are therefore indisputable, and they speak for themselves. From 22 shaft commencing on February, 12th 1908, to January 25th, 1909, the following results were obtained, the tribute commencing with 20 men and closing with 10 men. During that period 9 parcels were crushed aggregating 3,180 lbs. producing 1,594 ounces 13 dwts. 20 grs. of an aggregate value of £5,472 19s., average per ton 9 dwts. 11 grs. During the time mentioned above the tributers paid to the mine in crushing charges £2,209 10s. 6d., and as royalty £383 8s. 1d., making a total of £2,593 18s. 7d. For this result the tribute received per man, working full time, £98 17s. 2d. during the whole period of the tribute. In addition to this actual cash deduction the tributers did the following development work the value of which is estimated at contract prices:—Driving and crosscutting, £1,312 2s. 7d., sinking a winze, £348 9s. 10d., putting up a rise, £41 6s. 5d., making a total value of £1,701 18s. 10d. for development work done, the value of which to the company still exists.

The object in reading this was to show how mines were held and worked and how unfair it was to the tributers. It went on—

Further, in D shaft from October 21st, 1907, to January 25th, 1909, Johansen and party of tributers crushed twelve parcels aggregating 1,899½ tons yielding 942 ozs. 3 dwts. 7 grs. of a value of £3,474 7s. 6d., average yield per ton 10 dwts. For this tribute party the men's figures are not available but the official statements from the mine show that for the period named an aggregate of £1,135 12s. was paid to the mine by the tributers for crushing charges and royalty. These figures indicate a total paid to the mine in the time named by both tribute parties of £3,748 0s. 7d. besides dead work done by the tributers in 22 shaft of a value of £1,701 18s. 10d. On January 15th, 1909, the following

advertisement appeared in the daily press:—

Notwithstanding this they would not give reasonable or fair terms when they were desirous of letting tributes. Further—

To Tributers—Offers are invited for taking on tribute the whole of the company's leases including the battery and plant, offers to be submitted in writing, stating royalties, term, number of men, etcetera. Full particulars may be obtained at the company's office at Bonnievale. The Westralia and East Extension Mines, Limited. In response to the advertisement a number of the signatures hereto on January 18th forwarded the following tender to the office of the mine:—“I beg to offer the following tender re your advertisement in *Kalgoorlie Miner* of January 16th for tributers. The terms I offer are as follows:—Ten per cent. on all gold obtained up to 10 dwts. per ton, and one per cent. extra for each additional dwt. per ton up to 33 and one-third dwts. per ton, the maximum percentage being 33 and one-third per cent. In return for this, I require the full use of the Company's leases, and all plant and machinery required for breaking, hauling, and treating ore therefrom. The term of tribute required is twelve months and the number of men to be employed to be not less than 30. If this tender is thought worthy of consideration the details can be filled in later on and matters discussed personally. Faithfully yours, Geo. Bradshaw, Secretary Bonnievale Tribute Syndicate.” This offer, we are informed, by the management was not considered worth forwarding to the Directors but was refused by the mine manager. The tenderers claim (1) that tributers relieve the Company of filling the labour conditions; (2) that, as shown above, they develop the mine; (3) they undertake and fulfil all risk of observance of the Mines Regulations; (4) if they get gold in payable quantities, namely more than sufficient to pay the men £3 per week, the Com-

pany take royalty; (5) if the tributers get no gold the Company take no risk, but is still a substantial gainer, as shown in (1) and (2). We respectfully submit that the facts and figures as shown indicate a state of affairs which should not be allowed to exist. We therefore ask that you will give this matter your earnest and earliest consideration, as the present position must, if accentuated, mean the complete closing of the mine, the throwing out of employment of a large number of men, and the consequent permanent injury to the community as a whole, of which the signatories hereto are members. We beg to subscribe ourselves your most obedient servants.

Notwithstanding these representations the exemption was granted, with the result that the buildings were being removed from Bonnievale in consequence of the mining industry having gone down. An effort had since been made to let the mine on tribute, and after having been idle for some months tributers had taken it up. The loss to the district in consequence of the closing up of this particular mine had been considerable. It was pleasing to hear the Minister for Mines declaring that the mining outlook was good and that the employment on the mines was actually increasing, and that altogether things were in a satisfactory condition. The Attorney General might have made a different statement on the previous evening when introducing the Redistribution of Seats Bill which took away two seats from the goldfields. As far as the latest figures were concerned it was shown that there was little or no justification for this course, because we knew as far as mining was concerned the decrease in population had only been trivial in most places, and that the slightest rush or development would entirely alter the position of affairs. Dealing with this question of the decrease of population on the goldfields some figures were given a little while ago, and it was shown that there were 1,070 more men employed in the industry last year than was the case in the previous year. The exact figures in 1908 were 17,266, and in 1909 they were 18,336. On

the Eastern Goldfields the increases were as follow:—East Coolgardie, 963; Phillips River, 30; Dundas, 62; Yilgarn, 111. With regard to Yilgarn, we all knew that the population of that centre had increased seven or eight-fold. The idea of the population of the goldfields going down at such a great rate as the Attorney General declared was not quite correct. Other increases were Broad Arrow 48, and Mount Margaret 8. The decreases were shown at North-East Coolgardie 30, Coolgardie 74; and North Coolgardie 12. It could be seen from the figures quoted that there was on the Eastern Goldfields generally a substantial increase in the number of men employed in mining, despite the efforts made in certain quarters to represent that these districts were losing their population. It would be interesting to watch events on the goldfields and to note whether, as far as population was concerned, they were going down or not. It was to be hoped that the prediction of the Minister for Mines about the future of the mining industry would be verified, and he trusted that in connection with the question of tributers the Minister would endeavour to see that proper conditions were arrived at and that exemptions were not indiscriminately granted.

Mr. BATH: It was very satisfactory to hear what the Minister for Mines had said about the bright future of the mining industry, especially after the doleful condemnation which had been heard from the Attorney General on the previous evening. At the same time it was not advantageous to Western Australia, either to the people in the State or to those who invested money in our mining propositions, to have a Minister on one evening roundly condemning the mining industry and on the next evening a member of the same Cabinet declaring that the prospects were bright and that in the future we could expect a very considerable increase of development in that industry. We had to remember that the position of our mining investments affected not only those who were locally interested in mining propositions but also those who lived in the United Kingdom, and in other countries, and who held shares in our mining com-

panies; and while he had always contended that as far as our administration was concerned we should insist on fair conditions being observed here, when those were granted we should see that a fair show was given to these people outside the State who had invested their money in our mining properties. If these people learned of the contradiction between Ministers there would not be that faith in our resources and, consequently, there would not be that investment which so many people seemed to anticipate would be the result of the boom in the Yilgarn district. In connection with this matter he desired to refer particularly to the question of the registration of mining companies and to point out that the time had arrived when we should follow the example of the Transvaal and insist on the head offices of companies being in Western Australia, in order that we might have more effective control than we had at the present time over the companies within the borders of the State. The Minister would recollect the case which had excited criticism twelve or eighteen months ago in connection with the amalgamation of Hannans Star and Boulder Leases. The resolution of amalgamation had been passed at a meeting of the shareholders in London, no time being given to the numerous shareholders in Western Australia to express opinions on the proposal. The interest of the local investors had in this case been sacrificed to outside shareholders and made play of by manipulators operating in the old country. With this sort of thing going on we could not hope for that local investment in mining propositions which members on both sides of the House desired to encourage. We wished to keep the development of our mines within the borders of the State as far as possible and to convince people in the State that there was a possibility of profitable investment in our mining industry. But if people within the State saw nothing but the prospects of their interests being sacrificed by the manipulation of people in England then we could not hope for any expansion of local investment. The establishment of head offices in Western Australia would serve to bring about

another much needed reform. Under existing circumstances local shareholders in companies, commercial or mining, operating in Western Australia, but whose head offices were in London, had to pay income tax to the British Government and also to the Government of Western Australia. This was unjust on the face of it, and it was to be hoped the Minister for Mines, together with the Attorney General, would see if the anomaly could not be remedied. The member for Boulder had drawn attention to Dr. Cumpston's report in which it was shown that the health of machine miners was being sapped. When members learned that the bulk of these men were in the prime of life, notwithstanding which they had in them the seeds of a disease which meant a lingering death, members would realise the necessity of a reform in this regard. No objection could be offered to an inquiry on this subject by the best brains; but at the same time that inquiry should not be allowed to extend over too long a time and thus postpone measures of reform. Dr. Cumpston himself had laid his finger upon the root of the evil when he referred to the prevalence of dust underground. Time after time hon. members had fought for a measure of reform which would reduce the percentage of disease by one-half, namely effective ventilation. This would serve to minimise the dust evil, which meant in turn the lessening of the prevalence of fibrosis. But, given these preventive measures for the future, we would still have with us those who had contracted the disease and for whom it was necessary that something should be done. In this direction a satisfactory reform could be introduced with the aid of the Minister for Lands; a policy of co-operative land settlement could be instituted, or settlement in groups by the setting apart of areas of land upon which numbers of these affected miners could settle, and thus have an opportunity of getting away from those conditions which would ultimately lead to their being thrown upon the resources of the State for support. The member for Boulder had been concerned about the opinions expressed by doctors on the goldfields in direct contradiction of facts. The per-

centage of men injured in our mines each year was so high that the doctors were called upon to examine large numbers of men in the course of, say, a period of five years, and if they were true to the ideals of their profession they would have actual knowledge of the existence of this disease. But the evil was bound up with another evil existing on the goldfields, namely the system of payment for medical attendance. The men employed in the mines were compelled by the companies to contribute to a fund for medical attendance, and these payments were made through the officers of the companies, the men having no say whatever in the control of the fund. The officers of the companies paid the fund over to the doctors, a number of whom derived a considerable portion of their incomes from the money thus compulsorily levied from the men. So, in a sense, many of these medical men were dependent on the mining companies. That, in his opinion, was the reason why they had suppressed all information in regard to the prevalence of early fibrosis. It was to be hoped the Minister would take steps to reform this and introduce some more equitable scheme under which our medical men in mining districts would be more independent, and have opportunities of knowing and conveying the truth in regard to the health of the men. Another matter dealt with fully by the members for Boulder and for Coolgardie was the question of unjust conditions to which tributers were compelled to submit. The regulations provided the means whereby the Minister could to a considerable extent control the contracts between the mining companies and the tributers, but these regulations were merely dead letters. One of the most serious complaints from the tributers was that there was no written agreement; whereas these regulations provided for a written agreement between the parties, an agreement which had to be filed with the warden. An energetic attempt to administer this regulation would wipe out one of the most serious complaints made by the tributers. There was also the question of terms and conditions. In many instances these tributers were fulfilling the labour covenants on the

leases. If we permitted this condition of things which enabled the leaseholders to avoid their obligations to the State we should at least protect the tributers who fulfilled these obligations by securing to them reasonable recompense for their labours. Although we stipulated that before tribute was paid the sum of £2 per week had to be earned, there were numerous cases in which tributers earned much less than that and yet had to pay the exorbitant percentages demanded. By the observance of those regulations the Minister could at once put a stop to that condition of affairs, and there would be less need for the measure which had been submitted by the member for Kanowna if there were only some attempt made to enforce the regulations; but, as had been pointed out by other members, regulations were provisions tacked on to a Bill mainly for the purpose of evading the provisions of that Bill, and if we could not have regulations observed, the time had come when there should be a drastic change in the methods of legislation, and when those matters should be provided for in the statutes themselves instead of being left to regulations. He hoped that in those matters the Minister would show activity, and by the redress of those grievances lead to a more favourable condition of mining development throughout the very wide extent of mineral country in Western Australia.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was his desire to touch briefly on the question already dealt with by the member for Boulder and the member for Brown Hill. The Minister, himself, in speaking in regard to miners' complaint, had stated that he was appointing a Royal Commission, and that he wanted to go into the matter very thoroughly. He was with the Minister in saying that the matter should be gone into very thoroughly, but he would remind the Minister that he had power now to give better conditions to the miners, and to make the conditions such that a man would not stand the same chance of getting the disease as he had at the present time.

The Minister for Mines: Do you mean in regard to ventilation?

Mr. HEITMANN: Ventilation and dust. It did not require any brilliant man

to know that dust could be prevented. Already we had regulations dealing with ventilation, but they were a dead letter so far as the inspectors were concerned. He did not know of one case where an inspector had interfered in matters of ventilation. The report of Dr. Cumpston showed that the real cause of the disease was dust, which would not be very hard to prevent.

The Minister for Mines: If you cause greater humidity it might have a worse effect than the dust.

Mr. HEITMANN: Humidity would not be as great a trouble as the dust was. He believed that one of the objections by the companies to the prevention of dust was the possibility of increased cost, but he did not care what the cost to the companies was.

The Minister for Mines: Spraying would not be expensive.

Mr. HEITMANN: Spraying would not be expensive, and, if those who were authorities on the subject were correct, humidity would not be as dangerous as dust. In other parts of the world they were overcoming the difficulty. Dr. Cumpston would find very little to assist him in Broken Hill and Bendigo in regard to the condition of mines in Western Australia; indeed, the doctor had said that so far as remedial measures were concerned he knew nothing about mines. He had been appointed to discover to what extent the evil of miners' complaint existed. He had discovered that, and it was to be regretted that the Commissioner had proved it to exist to a much greater extent than even he (Mr. Heitmann) had expected. Another thing which was concerning the Chamber of Mines in this State, and was, no doubt, also concerning the Minister, was the question of contract. There was not the slightest doubt that contract was a secondary cause in this State. Some contractors, in their desire to make a few shillings extra, or in times of competition to earn a few shillings to keep them, worked very hard. Under the best conditions, leaving out the dust question, those men must become sooner or later unable to follow that employment. The lower a man's vitality became, the less resisting

power he had, and if he had to work to the limit of his powers every day, he had very little chance of resisting the dust. Therefore, that question of contract was one of the things which the proposed Commission would have to inquire into. He was sure that the mines could be worked as well by day labour as under contract; but whether that could be done or not, the fact that the contract system was affecting the health of the miners was sufficient cause for him to oppose it. If the company gave them the equivalent of day labour it would not be so bad, although he would still be concerned, but they did not do that. They stated that the reason why they employed men on contract was that they wanted to get the work done quickly, but the real reason was that they wanted to get 35s. for £1. He hoped that the Minister would take into consideration the enforcement of the existing provisions in regard to ventilation, and the coping with the dust evil. What members should consider was the health of the workers in all industries. It was simply astounding at times to see the want of thought amongst legislators and others in regard to the question. An accident in the street, or on the show grounds, sent a thrill of horror and sympathy through the community, but such a thing was nothing compared with the number of deaths which took place in connection with the mining industry and were unnoticed by the public at large. In Day Dawn almost every week fresh cases of miners' complaint could be seen. Of course the disease was only in its early stages, but it was only a matter of time when those men would be forced to give up their employment, only a little later to die. If only from a business point of view, the matter should be taken into consideration. If a member of the House were to meet with an accident, or to be killed, the House would be adjourned, and sorrow would be expressed for weeks afterwards; but hundreds of miners were dying off every year and no notice was taken; they were only workmen, only the under-dogs. For six years he had been appealing to members of the Chamber to do something for the miners, and until 12 months ago, when Dr. Cumpston had been

appointed, the Government had done nothing. Members on the Government side had taken very little notice of what he had had to say. If men were to only visit the fields they must be struck with the great number of men who appeared strong in frame, but who, on closer investigation, were found to be undermined in health. He was not content that all was being done that could be done, and, whether he was in the House or out of it, he was going to see that the miners, as well as other workers in the country, got a fair deal. If it was a question of closing up every mine in the State, or losing the life of one miner, he would say that every mine should be closed up. If to the cost of winning the gold in loss of life and limb was to be added scores and scores of the best lives in the State, and years upon years of misery on the part of the wives and families, he would say that the industry was altogether too costly, and the mines would have to go. He sometimes thought that the time would come when mining, at all events at great depths, would be a thing of the past, and that public opinion would, sooner or later, demand that conditions such as those which existed in the open air must exist in the deep mines in this country. He trusted that the Minister would, at the earliest opportunity, appoint the Commission and let them get to work. Although Dr. Cumpston might find in the Eastern States something of interest to him as an expert who had taken lungs for his speciality, he did not think that he would be able to do much in the way of suggesting remedial measures.

The Minister for Mines: But he will be able to collaborate with those who are specialising with regard to the matter in the East.

Mr. HEITMANN: The question had got beyond Dr. Cumpston. That gentleman had been asked to undertake the full investigation, but he had admitted that so far as the remedy was concerned he was not in a position to do anything.

The Minister for Mines: But I want to keep him; I do not want to let him go.

Mr. HEITMANN: Dr. Cumpston should be kept, even if it cost the State

£3,000 or £4,000 a year; but it was to be feared that the policy of the Government would drive him out of the country, just as it had driven out Dr. Cleland and other valued officers. Why the inquiry should be deferred pending Dr. Cumpston's return, seeing that the question was purely remedial, he could not understand. So far as the remedy was concerned there were many men in the State who could get at the bottom of that evil, but he was inclined to think that the stumbling block was the opposition that had been shown in the past by the mouthpiece of the mining industry, the Chamber of Mines. He had often stated that we had on the mines in the country men who endeavoured to give the best possible conditions to the miners, but most of them were only instruments of big companies. Their principal concern was the paying of profits, and he did not blame them for that, but there were also amongst the mining managers some of the most callous men in the world. When Dr. Cumpston was about to visit Day Dawn the manager of the mine there actually went to a man who was dying and asked him to deny that he had contracted the disease in the Fingall mine, though that man had worked for 16 years in the mine and had never worked in any other mine in the State. He (Mr. Heitmann) took no consideration for companies or managers. His only consideration was for his fellow men. For them he had fought, and for them he would fight despite all opposition, and he confidently looked forward to the time when miners' phthisis, fibrosis, and miners' disease in its various forms would be a thing of the past.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was pleasing the Minister had at last recognised there was some seriousness about the question of miners' complaint and pleasing also to see that the continual efforts of the member for Cue were having some effect. The hon. member considered deep mining would eventually cease. He was hardly correct. It should be possible to have such conditions in deep mining that men would be able to follow the occupation of mining and still live.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Not at eight hours a day.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then we can make it six.

Mr. Heitmann: It will not pay.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It should be possible to work at considerable depths with proper ventilation, and a proper system of working; but if it could not be done without the sacrifice of life it should cease. There would be some mines of sufficient value at a depth to enable the industry to be carried on at greater depths than now reached, and under conditions that would not be dangerous to the health and life of miners. The big death roll was caused to a great extent by the lack of proper ventilation and means for allaying dust; but if the mines could not be properly ventilated, and if the dust could not be allowed so as not to kill the workers, then the industry must close down; for any industry that caused the death of Australians must go. Dr. Cumpston was not a mining expert. He told us that men were killed through working in the mines, and admitted it was dust on the lungs that caused it, but could not say how that could be prevented. Therefore it was the duty of Parliament to obtain the services of the best mining experts, men who would pay more attention to the lives of the miners than to obtaining dividends for shareholders, to investigate the possibility of working these mines without the dust, or by allaying it. It was said we might lose Dr. Cumpston through not paying him sufficient salary. It would be a disaster. But on many other occasions we had driven men out of the public service, and there were others who would very likely get out at any early date. To keep these men we must get rid of the incubi, the heads of the departments, and give the talent lower down a chance. When we found talent we should pay a reasonable salary. If the talent was exceptional we should pay exceptional salaries. Dr. Cumpston was not given the salary paid to a medical man at Port Hedland. The officer was at least worthy the salary given to the limelight lecturer who went to London looking for immigrants with a knowledge of ringbarking. The Government should make a serious effort to prevent

deaths from occurring through miners' complaint, and also through consumption. We were told consumption was absolutely preventable.

Mr. Heitmann: Not only preventable, but curable.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We lost a large number of our best citizens through it. It was better to hold our citizens in life than to spend money in endeavouring to bring others to the country. The member for Murchison complained of the exemptions in the Murchison district, but the Murchison was a baby in this respect when compared with Pilbara. The exemptions there were eternal. The British Exploration Company seemed to run on with exemptions like the brook for ever.

The Minister for Mines: They are dead and gone for ever.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Their ghost was still there, and still getting exemptions. Every decent mine in Pilbara was locked up in this way. Close upon three years ago the Minister assured us that when the railway was started from Port Hedland the persons holding mines under exemption would be compelled to work them, but though the railway was almost completed the mines were not yet being worked. It was easy to keep the mines without working them. If the warden recommended forfeiture the Minister overrode the warden's recommendation and imposed a fine of a few pounds only. The Minister had some time to consider the matter, somewhere about three years, and he should endeavour now to have those mines worked, and if they were not worked he should bring about their forfeiture. There were one or two other matters he would like to refer to, one particularly being with regard to the Chaffinch mine on the Bullfinch belt. The directors of the Chaffinch wired to the Minister and asked him to appoint a Government officer to examine that mine and report, not in the interests of the shareholders particularly but of the State. There had been expressions that evening as to the advisability of the Government interfering between the bulls and the bears, and if it was only a question of bulls and bears, that was to say garotters of two descriptions, he would not deem it

his duty to make any remarks on the question, but between the bulls and bears there was the great general public who had been investing in many of those mines at Bullfinch, and particularly in the Chaffinch. The bulls and bears did not matter, but the general public, the confiding and unsophisticated citizens, should have a fair run for their money. Mr. Arthur, dramatically or melodramatically, went to the Chaffinch mine and doled out stone containing ounces and ounces of gold and took with him a bevy of Pressmen to report his great effort, and it was then that the general public came in and bought shares in the mine. They were not bulls and bears, the bulls were trying not to beat the bears but to push the shares on to the general public, and we had found since that the manager had stated that there was no lode whatever there, or if there was a lode it still had to be discovered. When we struck a circumstance like that it was the duty of the Government of the State to step in and make the fullest possible inquiry. If a report came down that there were spurious coins in circulation the Government would spend many pounds in warning the public not to take those coins, but when it was a question of a spurious gold mine, or a mullock mine—he was not making any definite statement as to which this was—the Government seemed to think that it was not their duty to protect the public. While the Government were prepared to protect the public against garroters, burglars, confidence trick men, the uncle from Fiji and the golden brick, it was their duty to protect the public against the bushrangers at the stock exchange and the mine floating premises. The Minister said that he had no power. If the Minister had no power he could have usurped it and Parliament would have upheld him in doing so. The Minister declared that he wanted to keep out of the row, but any man who wanted to keep out of a row should keep out of politics, much less the position of Minister. Any man who accepted the office of Minister should be prepared to get into rows and get out of them, and it was absolutely the duty of the Minister with regard to the Chaffinch mine to make the fullest possible inquiry. It was to be

hoped that Minister would reconsider his position and recognise that notwithstanding his reluctance to get into rows, that when he came to Parliament he created somewhat of a disturbance, that there had been a disturbance ever since, and there would be bound to be rows as long as he remained in Parliament, and one row more or less did not matter.

The Minister for Mines: I have instructed the inspector of mines to be about there.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Minister wired to Adelaide to say that he had no men available. It was the duty of the Minister to secure the services of a man or two if necessary. After all, the Minister's reply that if false information were supplied a prosecution could be instituted was not satisfactory, because he had refused to inquire as to whether there had been false information given, and if he would not inquire as to whether this false information had been given it was not likely that he was going to prosecute. With regard to mining generally in Western Australia, there was no doubt about it that the prospects were brighter now than they had been during the last 10 years, but it did seem peculiar that on the previous evening the Attorney General should come forward and tell the world that the mining industry of Western Australia was a decaying one and that the workers on the mines were decreasing and that mining was practically done. We had heard this statement in Australia for many years. No doubt our forefathers had heard the same thing in regard to other mining centres, yet the fact remained that the mining industry in Australia was still of the utmost importance. He was convinced that long after the demise of the Wilson Ministry there would be a mining industry in Western Australia. Had it not been for the mining industry where would Western Australia be to-day? He trusted the industry would not be made secondary to that of agriculture. He gave place to no man in his estimate of the importance of the agricultural industry; still the mining industry was of equal importance, and it seemed ungrateful that

the Government should attempt to belittle that industry as they had done in the Redistribution of Seats Bill. There had been no agriculture in Western Australia until the gold miners came and discovered it.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): It was his intention to say a few words in regard to the industry with which so many of his constituents were associated, and with which he himself had been associated for the last 15 years. The Minister himself had pointed out the millions of pounds which the industry had been instrumental in having expended in the State, and the fact that it employed a larger number of persons than any other industry in Western Australia. Only a little while ago there had been a tendency on the part of Ministers to forget the industry altogether, and to believe that any effort to resuscitate it would be of no avail. The recent discoveries in several districts, however, had drawn fresh attention to the industry with the result that it was coming to be recognised that, so far from the industry being a decaying one, it was rapidly forging ahead, and that to-day it was in a healthier condition than ever before in the history of the State. In the Mount Magnet electorate there was being produced to-day five times as much gold as had been won at any time before, and he was convinced that with due encouragement the industry would progress still faster. The Minister had pointed out that all the other industries in the State depended largely upon the mining industry. It was to be regretted that despite this conviction the Minister allowed the industry to be disfranchised in the proposed Redistribution of Seats Bill, in that two seats were to be taken from the gold producing districts and added to those of the agricultural districts. It went to show either that the Minister's words were mere verbal expressions or that the Minister had no sympathy whatever with the industry which he professed to be anxious to encourage. There were certain ways by which the industry could be encouraged. One of the best ways was the construction of railways. That

had already been agreed upon, and so far as he was concerned his electorate had been assisted very materially, for the railway recently constructed to Sandstone had done a great deal towards the development of the mining industry there. The industry was in a far healthier state than it had been since the foundation of that district, and the possibility was that the advantages conferred by the railway would enable mines to be developed, which could not have been developed a few years back. That district had already produced over three-quarters of a million pounds worth of gold, and the adjoining district of Youanme was going to substantially add to the gold production within the next few years. He understood that 60 head of stamps were to be erected there, and that when they were falling on stone the gold production should be not less than 100,000 ounces per year. If the mining industry was to be encouraged by railways there were one or two districts which had not been given the consideration to which they were entitled. Repeatedly promises had been made by the members of the Government in regard to a railway to Lawlers, but the promises seemed to have been forgotten as soon as the Ministers left the district. The Minister for Mines, the honorary Minister (Mr. McKenzie), and the Colonial Secretary, had promised the construction of that line.

The Minister for Mines: I have not promised the construction of that line.

Mr. TROY: The Minister had most definitely promised that the railway was to be built from Leonora.

The Minister for Mines: I said, that taking all things into consideration, the railway should go from that point.

Mr. TROY: The railway should be built because it would do a great deal for the district. His quarrel with the Government was that they had not constructed the railway, and if they did construct it from Leonora, his quarrel would be in regard to the route, because he had always contended that the line should go from Sandstone. In regard to the development of mining, he agreed that much had been done in the provision of water

supply, but that matter never seemed to be attended to until a big discovery was made, and the necessity of providing the water supply was forced on the attention of the Mines Department. For years he had urged on the Minister the necessity for providing water in the vicinity of Youanme and the Lake Barlee country, but his representations had never been attended to. Then had come a good season, when the prospectors had gone out and found Youanme, and immediately a water supply had been given to the district. He was glad to say that that country stretching from Southern Cross to Mount Jackson, and from Mt. Jackson to Youanme, was now being opened up by means of bores and wells. What the possibilities were he did not know, but the country was auriferous, and water could be got by boring, and he hoped that the bores and wells that were to be established would enable the prospectors to make depots, and from there go out and test the country. They might some day prove a mineral area extending from Youanme right through to Southern Cross. In regard to batteries, without the public battery system we could never have had some of the flourishing goldfields that we had to-day. Of late years all the new fields that had come into prominence and had helped to build up the mining industry, had owned their origin to the State batteries. He had only to mention Meekatharra, Black Range, and Youanme, where £50,000 had been spent by several companies in buying properties. Those fields had their commencement in a few prospectors, and later the testing of the prospectors' stone by public batteries. The system had already produced over three million pounds worth of gold, and one of the brightest features of that was that all of that sum had remained in Western Australia. There had been a slight loss on the system, but that was a mere bagatelle compared with the gain which the system had been to the State. It had provided a livelihood for thousands of people, and a market for the farmers and pastoralists, and was attracting capital from outside the State for other industries. When the new superintendent

of public batteries had been appointed it had been prophesied that he would do marvellous things in the reduction of costs, which would go back to the prospectors through reduced charges. Unfortunately, no reduction of costs had taken place, and that officer had been no more successful, if as successful, than his predecessor, Mr. White. On the other hand, he had been responsible for raising the charges of public batteries to higher rates than in previous years, and for penalising prospectors by enforcing conditions which had not been in the interests of the industry. He had closed down batteries for months, and had forced prospectors to leave their mines and feed the batteries in order to get decent consideration. Some time ago the Minister had promised that slimes would be treated in various localities; he had made that promise in regard to Boogardie and Sandstone, but the undertaking had never been adhered to.

The Minister for Mines: We found the treatment too expensive.

Mr. TROY: The slimes belonged to the prospectors; and they were to be treated by the Government, and the prospectors paid from the gold won less the cost of treatment. Were the prospectors at Black Range going to receive payment for their slimes?

The Minister for Mines: They have all received payment up to the date mentioned.

Mr. TROY: Some of them had not been paid.

The Minister for Mines: We have not treated a lot of the slimes yet.

Mr. TROY: The slimes of the people to whom he referred had been treated. If the Minister would say that the demands of these people would be met it would be satisfactory.

The Minister for Mines: We will pay the lot after treatment.

Mr. TROY: There was a considerable amount of money held in these slimes, and if the prospectors could get the money they would spend it in other localities. The recent happenings at Bullfinch the majority were at a loss to understand. Mines were boomed one day and

marvellous discoveries were reported, but the next day those discoveries were denied, and people outside the very seat of operations were unable to ascertain the true condition of affairs. Investors in South Australia wired to the Minister for Mines asking for an official investigation into the Chaffinch mine. When it was reported that wonderfully rich ore was broken out in the presence of a number of pressmen it made one sceptical, because usually managers keep the fact of valuable discoveries to themselves. The Minister might have made the investigation asked for and sent one of the geologists or an inspector of mines to the mine.

Mr. Harper: It would not be fair to any Government official because it was impossible for him to say whether the mine would turn out a good one or not.

Mr. TROY: The officer could say whether there was anything in what was already opened up. Leaders were generally rich, but a leader did not make a mine. At any rate the geologist could have safeguarded the interests of investors, and the good reputation of the industry. If this was a swindle, and one feared it might be, it would do incalculable harm to the State; because later on when anything good was found people would say, "No, we were bitten before." The Minister should consider the advisability of securing power to make these inquiries in the interests, not of the bulls or the bears, but of the investors, those people who had saved a few pounds and wished to invest in mines. Although the tendency was to deprecate the mining industry and to direct attention to another industry, the importance of the mining industry should not be forgotten. There would be greater developments in the future than had taken place in the past. With such a vast extent of country we had not sufficient prospectors to prospect it adequately. The good finds in recent years illustrated the fact that the country had not been properly prospected in the past, because these finds were all in localities which prospectors passed over in previous years.

Mr. HARPER: It would be useless to traverse all the ground gone over by all the various speakers, but there were one or two subjects concerning the mining industry on which he would like to speak. The member for Brown Hill referred to the dividend tax and the British income tax. It certainly was not fair that Western Australian holders of shares in English mining companies operating here should pay the two taxes. The member for Murchison talked of the action of the Government assisting the booming of shares, but the booming of shares affected the people of Western Australia very little. It took nothing out of the Treasury if shares were boomed.

Mr. Collier: If shares were unduly boomed and speculators were taken down, did it not retard investment here by people at Home.

Mr. HARPER: One might think so, but it did not affect the position very much. It was the duty of the investor or speculator to find out for himself whether the investment was legitimate or not. Hon. members might argue that it was advisable for the Government to similarly interfere in connection with a business concern. There was no doubt about it that it was the duty of the people to find out whether the matter was worthy of their attention, and that applied to every concern, business or otherwise, right through life. Some responsibility certainly devolved upon the people. If the State were to protect everyone from loss it would amount to one man being required to look after another man, so that everybody in the country would be looking after everybody else. He at one time had some shares in the Phillips River company, but he did not lose anything over those because when they went up he sold, and thus he claimed that he was aware of the value of the mine.

Mr. TROY: Did you have any shares in the Golden Pole?

Mr. HARPER: Yes, and he was pleased to admit it, and he would like to have another Golden Pole. With regard to the railway to Phillips River, that railway had been quite justified and even much more so than the railway to Norseman, but if he had had any say in its

construction it would have been built not from Hopetoun but from Broomehill, and in that way a fine area of agricultural country would have been opened up. That connection from Broomehill, however, would eventually be made. A great deal had been said about Mr. Hamilton and the reduction of miners' wages at Bullfinch. It was not fair to blame Mr. Hamilton for that reduction, because when a company took over a mine from a prospector or the vendors the conditions became entirely different. Mr. Hamilton had nothing whatever to do with the reduction.

Mr. Collier: Is he not a local director?

Mr. HARPER: Yes; but the instructions to Mr. Hamilton came from England, and it had to be remembered that there was an arbitration award in the district.

Mr. Collier: Not there.

Mr. HARPER: In close proximity, at any rate, and it was in the interests of the low-grade mines that the reduction of the wages took place. With regard to the inspection of mines by the Government, it was an important and very difficult task to ask the Government to carry out.

Mr. Collier: It is risky.

Mr. HARPER: In a day or two it was possible for important developments to take place and the aspect of the mine would be changed altogether.

Mr. Collier: They could give a golden certificate and then the mine might turn out a duffer.

Mr. HARPER: That was so, and they might report unfavourably on it and a day or two afterwards it might turn out well. Whichever way it went it would not be fair to the speculator. The member for Mt. Magnet had referred to the mining communities providing a big market for the agricultural districts. Agriculture, however, did not altogether depend on the mining industry. For instance, last year there was one million pounds' worth of wheat exported, and it was to the export trade that Western Australia would have to look. With regard to the batteries, there was a good deal that could be said, but as the hour was late he would curtail his remarks.

Hon. members should take a lenient view of the public battery system in Western Australia. If, however, the batteries could all be kept going the costs would be considerably reduced. Slimes plants were rather costly to construct, and treatment in small quantities must entail great expense. He had gone through these positions himself and could, therefore, take a sympathetic view. As for the disease fibrosis, or miner's complaint, he would recommend that the men working with rock-drills in deep mines should occasionally seek a change of occupation. The dust particles had a very bad effect on the lungs, and the only practicable remedy was a change of occupation, if not permanent, at least for a lengthy period. It was our duty to help these men to secure that remedy.

Item, State Mining Engineer, £800.

Mr. COLLIER: There was no desire to make any complaint against this officer, who was sufficiently capable in his own particular line; but the officer was kept far too much in the office. If we were to get full value from that officer his time should be spent out among the mining properties, and in the field. As a matter of fact most of Mr. Montgomery's time was spent in the office.

The Minister for Mines: He met with a bad accident two and a half years ago, but he will now have to go outside again.

Mr. COLLIER: There could be no doubt that the officer was fully qualified in his own specific line, but he should be employed outside.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Certainly this officer was not required in the office doing a clerk's work for £800.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The State Mining Engineer was one of the most highly qualified engineers in Australia. Over two years ago the officer had met with a bad accident at Meekatharra, in consequence of which he had not been out so much in the field as, perhaps, he should have been. However, if Mr. Montgomery was to remain in the service he would now have to go out in the field again.

Mr. Heitmann: I sincerely hope he will not remain in the service.

The 'MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member had a wrong impression of the value of this officer, who was a mining engineer and geologist of the highest qualifications.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If we required a geologist Mr. Gibb Maitland, the Government Geologist, was infinitely superior to the State Mining Engineer. He (Mr. Underwood) had great respect for the State Mining Engineer personally, but if that officer was to be State Mining Engineer he should not spend his time in the Perth office where there was no scope for his talents. Whether geologist or engineer he should be in the field. A salary of £750 was paid to Gibb Maitland, who was sent out into the back country and was practically a mining explorer, whilst Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, received £800 a year and spent the whole of his time in the rabbit warren in Hay-street. He did not say that the State Mining Engineer was not a most capable man, but the duties he was carrying out were not worth having for the salary he was paid. If they were worth that, then those who were carrying out more important duties, such as the Government Geologist discharged, should be paid higher. The Government Geologist and his assistants had ten times more work than the State Mining Engineer. He had no objection to the salary, and, in fact, he had always held that a good man should receive considerably more than the Government Geologist was at present receiving, but he felt that the salary of the State Mining Engineer was too high for the duties he was performing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The principal duties of the State Mining Engineer were to control the laws and regulations dealing with the inspection of mines, to visit the inspectors, and to see that the inspections were being carried out. He was also chief adviser in regard to the expenditure of the Mines Development vote. One of the chief reasons for the appointment of that officer was that he should not only act as technical adviser to the Minister, but that he should also travel around the districts and advise the prospector in regard to the development of his shows.

Mr. HEITMANN: Have you ever read of a report of his that has benefited the prospector?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The State Mining Engineer had certainly written some remarkably good reports; in fact there was no man in Australia who could write a better mining report. It was his intention to amalgamate the inspection of mines with the inspection of machinery, which would result in large economy in the work in outside districts, whilst the administrative work would have the advantage of being under one head in future.

Item, Inspectors of Mines (9), £3,588.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: It was to be hoped that the Minister would do away with the dual position of inspector of mines and inspector of railway coal at Collie. That step was necessary to allow of a proper supervision of the mines. It had been stated during the evening that on the Eastern Goldfields the accidents in mines were equal to one for every 20 men employed, but at Collie the accidents represented one in every eight men employed, which was absolutely the highest average in the world. Would the minister consider the advisability of giving the mining inspector the one job, so that the mines might be thoroughly inspected?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There was a good deal in what the hon. member had said, although until recently one man had been well able to do both jobs. With the increase of business, however, there might be a need to have one officer to look after the mines and one to look after the railway work. The matter would receive immediate consideration.

Mr. HEITMANN: What was the salary of the inspector for mines on the Murchison and of Inspector Greenard who, it had been stated, was leaving the department?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. Greenard was receiving £350 according to the classification. Mr. Lander's salary was £400 and it was being reduced to £350, the basis of the classification.

Mr. HEITMANN: What were Mr. Greenard's qualifications as a mining engineer?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was understood they were quite satis-

factory. He had always contended that a higher salary should be paid to the inspectors of mines, but the Public Service Commissioner had fixed their salaries at £350.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Explosives and Analytical*, £4,605:

Mr. Collier: The Minister had stated there was an exhaustive report in preparation by the Government Analyst on explosives. When would that report be made available?

The Minister for Mines: As soon as possible. It would be a very valuable report.

Mr. COLLIER: Apparently it would, because the officer seemed to have gone into the work with the desire to meet the difficulties.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Geological Survey*, £6,619—agreed to.

Vote—*Inspection of Machinery*, £5,811:

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In accordance with the promise given by the leader of the Opposition to make a statement on this vote, he would say it was his intention to amalgamate the Inspection of Machinery Department with the inspection of mines.

Mr. Heitmann: Then, what would be the position of the Chief Inspector of Machinery?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not gone into details yet.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Before the Minister came before the Committee with a proposition of this description we should certainly have details. Was the State Mining Engineer to be made Chief Inspector of Machinery?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Before any change was made it would be necessary to have a small Bill passed to enable inspectors of mines to do the work of inspectors of machinery, and also to enable inspectors of machinery to do the work of inspectors of mines. This was, of course, merely for remote districts.

Mr. Underwood: Would the State Mining Engineer be chief of the amalgamated departments.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, thing definite was yet arrived at. There

were many difficulties in the way, but he thought the amalgamation could be brought about. A Bill would be brought down to enable it to be done.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Mines Water Supply*, £16,202—agreed to.

Vote—*Mining School*, £5,880:

Mr. A. A. WILSON: It would be advisable to extend the school to the South-Western division of the State, namely, Collic and Greenbushes. It was about time the Government took in hand the question of education in connection with coal mining. In the old country it was possible for boys to obtain scholarships in this direction.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The policy of the Government was to have one mining school in the State, but he agreed that the director of the mining school should also be made director of technical education. By establishing technical and evening classes where technical instruction would be under the control of the director who was controlling the mining school, it would be possible to get better results than by establishing small mining schools. At the places that the hon. member referred to it would be advisable to establish technical schools. There should be only one mining school for the whole State.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: There was no education whatever as far as coal mining was concerned and it should be remembered that coal mining was going to become a big factor in Western Australia and we should educate our boys so that they might take positions as inspectors or managers. It should be the duty of the Government to try and establish a school in the south-West, say at Collic, and it could be attended at that place by students from Greenbushes.

The Minister for Mines: The suggestion which the hon. member had made would be carefully looked into.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*State Batteries*, £82,875—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—MOUNT LAWLEY RE-SERVES.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.55 p.m.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES—1910-11.

In Committee of Supply.

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

Railway Department (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—*Railways*, £1,154,652 :

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory) said : It gives me more pleasure than usual to ask the Committee to approve the Estimates under consideration for the Minister for Railways, because I think we can this year point to a far more prosperous period in connection with our railway system than has been the case for some years past. Hon. members who have perused the report of the Commissioner of Railways, and also taken into consideration the statements made by the Treasurer in the course of the Budget speech will recognise that in the general prosperity of the State the railways have had their fair share. In the railway system we have the chief asset of the State, an asset upon which the great proportion of our Loan Fund has been expended. One recognises that trade is increasing, and our railway system is able to show a very fair return on the capital expended. I do not want to wade too deeply into figures, but I would like to point out that, whereas four years ago, in 1906-7 we had 1,764 miles of railways open, we estimate that at the end of the financial year 1910-11 we will have 2,344 miles open for traffic ; and whereas our capital expenditure in 1906-7 was £10,300,938, it is estimated that at the end of this financial year it will be £11,700,000. The interest on the outlay, comparing the same periods, was £358,734 in 1906-7 while it is estimated that at the end of the current financial year it will be £400,000. Our earnings in 1906-7 were £1,537,333. In 1907-8 the earnings showed a slight decrease, having been £1,501,925. Last year they amounted to £1,637,334 and this year we estimate they will reach a record for Western Australia, in the sum of approximately £1,756,000—and I may state this is a most conservative estimate. We do not like making the estimate

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY GOODS SHEDS, BUNBURY.

Hon. Sir N. J. MOORE (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways : Whether he will make inquiries with a view of taking steps to relieve the serious block which it is complained exists at the Bunbury goodsheds.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied : I understand there has been some little trouble owing to the erection of new sheds, and I will make inquiries forthwith with a view of seeing what can be done.

BILL—BUNBURY MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC LIGHTING.

Introduced by Hon. Sir N. J. Moore and read a first time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. GORDON, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to Mr. Hayward (Wellington) on the ground of ill-health.