

a number of years. I do not know that I need say more about the Bill, except that—

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is a hardy annual.

The PREMIER: Yes. Parliament is not likely to meet next year before the 30th June, so that we ask for the continuance at this stage. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 13th September, 1932.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, ENGINES AND COAL.

Damage, Freights, Supplies, etc.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the Commissioner of Railways received any reports from loco. engine-drivers regarding damage caused to the tubes and/or fire bars of locomotives? If so, will the Minister lay on the Table of the House a copy of such reports? 2, Is it the intention of the Commissioner to discontinue the use of coals causing such damage to engines? 3, As the price of coal has been reduced by the Commissioner of Railways at Collie in comparison with the reduction in wages, has the freight on coal over the railways been similarly reduced? If not, why not? 4, From which mines in New South Wales did the Railway Department receive the latest large consignment of coal? 5, What was the price paid in New

South Wales by the Commissioner of Railways? 6, What were the freight and other charges paid per ton? 7, What was the cost f.o.r., Fremantle? 8, Will the Chief Secretary lay on the Table of the House a report showing the results of the monthly analytical tests taken by the railways of the coal used from each of the mines supplying coal at Collie since December, 1931; also the tests of Newcastle coal supplied to the department during the same period?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, The question of freight on coal will be gone into when the actual reduction in price is known. 4, "Maitland Main," "Bellbird," and "Cessnock." 5, 6 and 7, The coal was bought f.o.r., Fremantle, at a cost of 31s. 10d. per ton. 8, The whole of this information is not available.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Nathan, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. A. Clydesdale (Metropolitan-Suburban) on the ground of ill-health.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Hon. J. M. Drew and Railway Advisory Board's Report.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I wish to make a personal explanation. In my speech on the Address-in-reply, when referring to the Advisory Board's report on the question of a railway from Yuna to the Balla-Dartmoor district, I stated that the report had appeared in the Press and that the only information I had gleaned about it was from that source, although a member of another place had been notified. I made that statement because in the newspaper paragraph, the member referred to was credited with having been supplied with the information. The member in question has since given me an explanation of the position. It appears he had asked questions in another place as to whether the report of the Advisory Board had been received and whether the Government would make it available. The reply was "Yes" to both questions. When I spoke on the Address-in-reply, I had no knowledge that the papers had been made available by that means, and the member has informed me that he himself was not

aware of the fact until a couple of days later that they had been made available in that way. He then despatched an extract to the Geraldton newspaper. There was nothing improper in that or in anything that he did. While I regret my remarks, which were not justified in the circumstances, I am pleased that my former impression, that there had been discourtesy shown to all members for the Central Province, has been removed. In justice to all parties, I make this explanation.

MOTION—MINES REGULATION ACT.

To Disallow Regulations.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.37]: I gave notice of motion to move for the disallowance of certain additions and amendments to regulations under the Mines Regulation Act, but since giving notice, I have had an opportunity of going further into the matter, and desire to move the motion in a form differing from that appearing on the Notice Paper. There are three separate regulations. One is numbered 1529/17, which relates to matters in connection with the use of detonators. Another is numbered 1010/30, which relates to various matters, including the transport of carbide, blasting dust and ventilation. The third is numbered 1596/31, which relates to the ventilation of mines. These regulations are quite separate and independent of each other, and are not all, therefore, part and parcel of the same regulations. I believe the last mentioned regulation to be quite acceptable, but I wish to have the other two regulations disallowed. I desire to amend my motion by inserting a reference to the two regulations to which I take exception and ask leave, therefore, to move the motion in the following form:—

That the additions and amendments to regulations under "The Mines Regulation Act, 1906," numbered respectively 1529/17 and 1010/30, published in the *Government Gazette* on the 27th May, 1932, and laid on the Table of the House on the 16th August, 1932, be and are hereby disallowed.

The **PRESIDENT**: I understand that the hon. member desires to limit the scope of his motion to two regulations only.

HON. J. NICHOLSON: That is so.

The **PRESIDENT**: Has the hon. member the leave of the House to move his motion in the amended form?

HON. J. CORNELL: While in no way desirous of appearing to be against the granting of leave, I certainly protest against the manner in which Mr. Nicholson is endeavouring to ask for that leave. The custom of the House has been for Ministers to table regulations many and varied, and for members to move for their disallowance, if desired, in the form in which Mr. Nicholson's motion appears on the Notice Paper. Last week Mr. Nicholson asked me in a friendly way if it would be possible to depart from the practice of the House, inasmuch as he did not desire to move for the disallowance of a certain regulation. Having read the regulations, and having found that there were three distinct regulations, I said it was a question upon which the House might decide in his favour, but that it was for him, in seeking to depart from the custom of the House, to put the matter in proper form. He has not come prepared to do that; he has not asked for leave in a specific manner that members can intelligently follow. If leave be granted as requested, a precedent will be created.

The **PRESIDENT**: Order! It is very undesirable that the question of granting leave should be discussed. I have never known it to be discussed before, but I did not interrupt the hon. member earlier because he appeared to be making an explanation. The Standing Orders are very explicit on the point. After notice of motion has been given, the terms thereof may not be materially altered. When Mr. Nicholson sought to alter the terms of his motion, I understood the alteration was to limit the scope of the original motion, which is a fact. He desires to confine the disallowance to two regulations, rather than to embrace the lot. A limitation of that kind is really not material and consequently I have allowed him to proceed. It will be for the House to say whether the hon. member shall have leave to amend his motion from the original form. If one member objects, the hon. member may not amend the motion. Is it the wish of the House that the hon. member be granted leave to amend his motion?

Leave granted.

HON. J. NICHOLSON: Regarding Mr. Cornell's protest, I did not understand the matter in the way he has presented it.

HON. J. CORNELL: I do not know now which regulation you wish to have disallowed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I explained to Mr. Cornell that I proposed to limit the motion, and I understood that I would be quite in order in moving as I have done at this sitting. Therefore I was rather astounded at his protest.

Hon. J. Cornell: On a personal explanation, I understood that Mr. Nicholson would come prepared with the proper amendment, which could be circulated amongst members.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was a very small amendment, seeking as it did to minimise the matter, and it appeared to be altogether too trivial to deal with as Mr. Cornell suggests. In moving the motion as amended, I hope members will not think that I have any desire to lessen what may be regarded as necessary protection to men engaged in various occupations in the mines. Regulations are necessary in certain cases, but probably they are unnecessary in other cases. One reason for moving for the disallowance of these regulations is that mining, amongst other industries, has regulations formulated for it, and is well provided with protective measures, not only by regulations but by Acts of Parliament. The position of an industry, it will be admitted, is very much like that of an individual when it comes to legislation. Both an individual and an industry might receive far too much attention in the way of Acts and regulations. The result of introducing numerous regulations is sometimes detrimental to the industry that we wish to help. It is often said that individuals can be taxed out of existence, and I think industries can be legislated out of existence. The mining industry has experienced many ups and downs and it can be advanced as a good and sound reason that the new regulations are not calculated to foster the development of the industry. I hope to show that some of the regulations at least are a direct invasion of the powers of Parliament itself; in fact they provide a very good example of what was frequently denounced by a former member of this House. He often objected to embodying in measures power to a Minister or to the Executive to frame regulations under an Act. He regarded such regulations as nothing more or less than a delegation to the Executive of the powers of Parliament. I acknowledge there are instances in which such limited powers might wisely be given, but the wide authority that we have been prone to insert in Bills for a long time is

calculated to undermine the authority of Parliament.

Hon. J. Cornell: The authority has existed since 1904.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I admit it has existed since the Act was passed, but I shall be able to point out later that it was an unwise provision, and I hope it will not be introduced in other measures. We understand that regulations usually originate with some officer of the Government, by whom they are passed on to the Minister, and from the Minister to the Executive Council. As a result of an Executive Council minute, they receive the authorisation of the Governor or the Lieut.-Governor in Council. The regulations are tabled in Parliament and, if they are not objected to within a certain time, they become as effective as any section of the Act under which they have been made. The fact that one of our members was so vehement in his denunciation of legislation by regulation recalls that about two years ago the Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Hewart, wrote a series of essays which were published under the title "The New Despotism." He voiced very strongly the danger that threatened Parliament if it continued the delegation of authority by means of rules and regulations. The book is well worth reading; I am sure that members would be interested in a perusal of its pages. This matter also came up for discussion at the Service Congress held in the Eastern States a month or six weeks ago. It was there referred to in equally strong terms by one of the professors, Professor H. Alcock, in the course of a lecture. I hope members will give the matter the serious consideration that I think it deserves. Behind regulations might be the best possible intentions; I am not denouncing them for that.

Hon. J. Cornell: Whom do they injure?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They injure most of all the very man we want to support and that is the man who is engaged in a small mine. The man who is out seeking to discover those shows which may lead to further wealth in this country—

Hon. C. B. Williams: Will this hurt him?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Certain of these regulations will act as a detriment to the man on the small mine. They will involve additional cost and that is always a handicap to the man who is struggling—a very great handicap indeed. And it gives emphasis to

the opinion I expressed previously, namely that it will have the effect of gradually legislating out of existence the men we want to keep going.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Nonsense!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is true that the big mines may be able to afford what is proposed. Actually the big mines, I believe, do carry out the various proposals sought here. The two regulations to which I am objecting are 1529/17 and 1010/30. The former reads as follows:—

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 33 of "The Mines Regulation Act, 1906," His Excellency the Administrator in Executive Council has been pleased to amend paragraph (g) of Section 32, General Rule (3) of the said Act by cancelling the words "detonators and" first occurring in paragraph 2 and the words "detonators and" in paragraph 3, and by cancelling the word "fuse" in paragraph 3 and inserting the word "fuses" in lieu thereof, also by cancelling paragraph (h) of Section 32 of General Rule (3) and to substitute the following words to read:—

(h) Detonators shall not be sent below ground in the workings of a mine unless attached to fuse in the form of "rods." All fuses to be used for firing charges of explosive shall be prepared in daylight, under cover, by being cut into required lengths with a sharp instrument, and detonators shall be placed on the fuse and crimped thereto by an approved tool. The distribution of capped fuses shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions under Section 32, paragraph (g), of General Rule (3).

These particular regulations might appear to be quite reasonable, but what is proposed is fully provided for in the regulations which have already been passed. The regulations which appear to be in force at present are these—

No explosives shall be taken into any working face in quantity exceeding what would be required for use during one shift in such face. No explosives shall be taken into such face except in securely covered cases or canisters of size and construction approved by the inspector. Detonators and fuses which have detonators attached to them shall not be carried into such face except in a securely covered receptacle of size and construction approved by the inspector, separate from the case or canister used for other explosives. No workman or party of workmen shall have in use at any one time in any place more than one such receptacle for detonators and capped fuse and one such case or canister for other explosives.

That provides all that is necessary at the present time, but it is desired to enlarge the scope of these matters.

Hon. J. Cornell: To prepare the fuse on the surface instead of underground.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Precisely. I believe that is done in the larger mines, and the result would be that this would be carried in its application to the smaller mines, for we all know that once regulations are passed and become law, invariably it becomes the custom to require the same thing to be done in small mines equally with the large mines. No doubt the inspector would be able to exercise a certain discretion, but frequently that is not done, and the new regulations dealing with the fixing and adjustment of the fuses or rods would necessarily involve keeping a man on the surface.

Hon. C. B. Williams: On a small mine?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Even on a small mine.

Hon. J. Cornell: He would have a good job.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: And it would add to the cost, which is what we want to try to minimise. If we can reduce costs, it will be good not only for the mining industry but also for the State at large. It can be admitted that in the smaller mines probably great care is taken.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What do you call the smaller mines?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Those that may be employing four, six or eight, or even a few more, men. The work that would be carried out by a few men would naturally be much less than that done in the large mines. As a rule, also, the small mine owner exercises a great deal of care in regard to the storage of his explosives; but apart from that, what I want to show is that this particular regulation is ultra vires. It purports to be made under Section 33 of the Act. Section 33 states, "If in the opinion of the inspector the observance of the general rules or any of them is not reasonably practicable in any particular mine, the Governor may, by notice in the "Government Gazette," suspend, alter or vary such rules in respect of such mine." The opinion of the inspector has to precede any action, but before any of the general rules which are set out and made part of the Act can be varied and enforced—it is one of the general rules embodied in the Act itself it is sought to vary—it is necessary to specify the particular mine.

Hon. J. Cornell: Surely the hon. member is not setting himself up as a court of law?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not seeking to do anything of the sort, but if we are asked to pass such regulations, and we do so without raising our objection to them, regulations which are palpably ultra vires, we shall be doing something that is wrong.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not our business.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I submit it is our business. If we see something wrong in a Bill or in any regulation, it is our duty to try to correct it. We are a House of review, and I hope the hon. member will recognise that he has a right to exercise in that direction. In the Act itself there are actually regulations or general rules embodied in one of the sections; in fact the whole of the regulations embodied here, and which are sought to be introduced under Section 33, are variations to general rules included in Section 32. These are headed "General Rules." These general rules are not regulations, such as may be formulated under Section 63. Similar regulations no doubt might be passed under the usual power given at the end of the Act. Now an effort is being made practically by the Executive to amend an Act of Parliament, and my contention is that that can only be done by Parliament itself. As I have already said, this is an invasion of the powers of Parliament, and therefore it is wrong and should not be recognised by us.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Does that apply only to these regulations?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is stated to be done "in exercise of power conferred by Section 33 of the Mines Regulation Act, 1906," and that power sets out that where in any particular mine an inspector thinks that certain of the general rules, which are part of the Act itself, cannot be carried into effect, then the Governor in Council may by notice suspend, alter or vary such rules. But he must make it refer to a particular mine. Those regulations apply to every mine. It follows exactly what was done on a previous occasion. The mines are supposed to be working under this. I do not know that it is valid, and I suggest that the Minister have it looked into.

Hon. J. Cornell: If it be not valid, the mining companies have their remedy.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But if I see anything wrong I consider it my duty to point it out. I think Mr. Cornell would feel aggrieved if I did not point out these things. I am not doing this with the object of casti-

gating the Government. It is a mistake that can quite easily be made, and I am merely pointing it out that it can be remedied. Power should not be taken to amend a section in an Act. If we recognise this instance, we are recognising a power in the Executive to alter an Act of Parliament and insert a new section in that Act. This regulation is virtually enacting a new section in the body of the Act.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is not only in respect of mining regulations that it is done.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so.

Hon. J. Cornell: But the hon. member wants the House to interpret the law, as well as pass it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not ask the House to interpret anything. I merely wish to point out what appears to me to be a mistake. I do not want to see the House led into approving a course of action which might recoil on our heads.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Quite right.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We here have certain rights to uphold. We should maintain our rights as a Parliament and not allow our powers to be arrogated by the Executive. Under Section 63 of the Act it is provided that the Governor may make regulations for a large number of purposes. The other regulation to which I am objecting is made under Section 63, and so is in a different category. The first one, relating to the detonators, is actually an amendment of a section in the Act. If there is to be any amendment, I am going to adhere to the point that it is our duty as Parliament to do that amending, and that it is not for the Executive. The other regulation to which I am objecting is No. 1010/30 and was made in accordance with Section 63 of the Act, which gives power to make regulations and is a totally different section from Section 33. Under that section certain provisions are made as to the transport of carbide. It reads as follows:—

Transport of Carbide.

46. No person shall carry or cause or permit to be carried any calcium carbide underground, except in lamps provided or approved by the manager, or in a watertight receptacle of a type approved by the district inspector of mines and to be approved by the manager. No person shall store or leave calcium carbide underground on coming off shift. Spent carbide shall be placed in properly covered receptacles and taken to the surface as often as may be necessary.

Time for Blasting.

47. The manager shall cause the times of working shifts and of blasting operations in every section of the mine to be so arranged that workmen shall not be exposed to fumes and dust from blasting. Blasting shall be allowed only at noon, 4 p.m., 8 p.m., and midnight, except for removing obstructions in ore-passes, or box holes for the purpose of making the hanging safe or for blasting misfired holes in development faces, and then only with the permission in each case of the manager or underground manager. Blasting during crib time shall be permitted only after workmen have been removed to the intake side of all places where blasting is to be done and where the resultant smoke and dust do not affect them in the section where they congregate during crib time. When sinking shafts, and in other special work, blasting may be done at other times than those prescribed, provided written permission has been obtained to do so from the district inspector of mines.

Dust and Ventilation.

48. (1) All development ends and winzes where machine drills are used, shall not be advanced more than 20 feet from the through air current unless a blower approved by the district inspector of mines, delivering induced air through pipes to within a few feet from the face, and with sufficient velocity and volume to remove the dust, is installed. Any working place where dust is formed shall be provided with a blower if, in the opinion of the district inspector of mines, it is considered necessary. Any person who wilfully damages or misuses a blower or pipes shall be liable to a penalty as for a breach of this regulation.

(2) The manager of a mine shall appoint dust and ventilation officers when required to do so by the district inspector of mines, whose duty it shall be to examine and report on:—

- (a) all matters relating to the mine's water supply, its quality, distribution, and use;
- (b) the condition of the necessary appliances for using water at each working place elsewhere;
- (c) the dust sampling of the mine, more particularly as regards development ends;
- (d) the conditions of the mine relating to ventilation and health, more particularly as regards the amount of air supplied during the interval after blasting and before entry and during the working shift, in all development ends and working places in which there is no through ventilation current.

The manager shall notify the district inspector of mines in writing of the name of the person or persons so appointed from time to time. The condition of the mine as found by such person shall, at the completion of each day, be entered by him in the record book. Such entries shall be examined and countersigned by the manager or underground manager at least once a week.

Those are the second lot of regulations which I am moving to disallow. In regard to the use of calcium powder in lamps, those lamps are taking the place of the old miners' candles. The lamp in use at present, I understand, is capable of burning for four hours, and it is necessary that the miner should have sufficient of the calcium powder to last for a shift of eight hours. So he takes half the quantity in the lamp and the other half he carries in a tin. Thus he has four ounces in the lamp and four ounces in the tin, which together give him sufficient light for eight hours.

Hon. J. Cornell: What does he do with the stuff he throws out?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is dealt with and provided for; besides, what has been used is merely lime and of no account. Here the district inspector is again called upon to exercise jurisdiction. So many regulations are embodied at the end of the Act, that I do not know how the authorities are able to get a full knowledge of them all. It must be very difficult for the mining authorities to keep in touch with every regulation.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you suggest they are honest enough to do it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, I think they play their part very well. The time of blasting is such a restriction on the working of a mine as to be a deterrent to the progress necessary in mining operations. It is here required that the mine manager shall get an inspector to come and give permission as to the times of working other than as stated. I am informed that, particularly in blasting in winzes and in shaft sinking, work is going on practically continuously and that a regulation such as this would delay the work very seriously indeed. That is good neither for the men employed, nor for the development of the mine. And, as the management could not always rely upon getting an inspector—the Government would require an army of inspectors to meet all requests—the result would be greater delay under this regulation.

Resolved that motions be continued.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The last clause deals with dust and ventilation. I have no objection to the new regulation affecting ventilation as contained in new regulation 1596/31. Amongst the regulations in force, however, are many which safeguard the situation very fully. It is only adding to

the burden of those connected with the industry to enlarge on the number of regulations already in existence, especially when these are of a fully protective character. One of the main points is the provision in the regulation which says—

All development ends and winzes, where machine drills are used, shall not be advanced more than 20 feet from the through air current unless a blower approved by the district inspector of mines, delivering induced air through pipes to within a few feet from the face, and with sufficient velocity and volume to remove the dust, is installed.

I am informed that if the distance of 20 feet is adhered to it will be very difficult to operate a mine. This will constitute a very serious restriction upon development. At present there is practically no dust where the modern type of machinery is used for boring purposes. Water is forced through a hollow steel tube, and this lays the dust. The regulations state that blowers shall be installed. I am told that some of the Ventura blowers measure nearly 6 feet in length. If that 6 feet were deducted from the 20 feet there would only be 14 feet left in the passage. It would also be necessary at every blasting period to dismantle the blower. In some cases the mines may fail to do this, and the blower would be shattered to pieces when the explosion occurred.

Hon. C. B. Williams: According to your argument the companies employ very incompetent people.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If mines were not using the proper type of modern machinery for laying the dust, they would be violating regulations already in force. There is no need to place these new restrictions upon the mines in view of the powers which already exist.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the men who were shovelling?

Hon. C. B. Williams: They would not get the dust.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: My remarks about small mines apply also to this particular regulation. Whilst it may be possible in some of the larger mines to do this, it may be difficult in the smaller mines. If there were not already sufficient safeguards in the regulations, there might be something to say for these new ones, but I do not think there is anything to justify them.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Evidently the Mines Department think otherwise.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I submit the motion and hope it will be agreed to.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.35]: When regulations dealing with the mining industry have been disallowed in this House they have been regulations promulgated for the most part by a Labour Government. That is not so in this case. Mr. Nicholson has not endeavoured to point out that the regulations he proposes shall be disallowed were recommended by the Mines Department, and have for their sole object the protection of the lives and limbs of the workers. He was hardly fair when he asked the House to disallow them on the ground that they were ultra vires the Act. I refer particularly to that which deals with the preparation of detonators and fuses on the surface instead of underground. When this House disallows regulations, it does so on their merits or demerits, or upon the effect they are likely to have upon the individual or institution concerned. Mr. Nicholson's reasoning is that when we disallow a regulation on the ground that it is ultra vires, we must set ourselves up as interpreters as well as passers of legislation. I refuse to play such a part. If a regulation is ultra vires, the institution or individual to whom it applies has recourse to law and the decision will rest with the Supreme Court.

Hon. J. Nicholson: This is an invasion of our powers.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think otherwise.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is our function to review the law.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Our function is to consider legislation that comes before us, to frame it and put it into the best shape according to our ability. It then passes out of the hands of Parliament and goes to the Governor for assent.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You have quite missed the point.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Act then becomes law. It is not our prerogative after that stage to say whether this, that or the other is ultra vires.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is the prerogative of Parliament to repeal its own Acts when deemed necessary.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Nicholson should not ask laymen to disagree with regulations because in his opinion they are ultra vires.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There is a big difference between Parliament and the executive.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The remedy lies with those who are affected by the regulation. On this ground I hope the House will not consider Mr. Nicholson's argument. The regu-

lations say that instead of explosives and fuses being taken underground in two separate receptacles, and the charges prepared underground, as is the case to-day, they shall be prepared above ground and in daylight. What can be the object of that? It is not desired to injure the industry. The only object is to provide for less danger to the lives and limbs of the workers than would be the case under the old method. That is the advice of those who administer the Act and who are best qualified to know the position. Will the House depart from the procedure of charges being prepared underground, or decide that the most dangerous part of the work shall be done on the surface, and the fuses connected with the fracter underground at a later stage?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Would it make for safety if on an afternoon shift this work was done on the surface?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member should know a good deal about the industry. I hardly think he is prepared to set himself up as an authority on the danger or lack of danger connected with a certain mining process, in opposition to the views of those who are paid to do the job.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is not an answer to my question.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think the hon. member would give way to the man who does the job, and accept his decision, which is that this is the safer course to follow. This particular regulation is long overdue, more especially now that mines are working on a basis of mass production. It is only desired to give greater protection to the workers.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the small mines?

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is possible for them to make enough charges in an hour to last for a month.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If a shaft is being sunk in a small mine, the same process can be followed. The fuse can be prepared on the surface and the whole thing connected up underground. When a mine is being opened up, the charges are either prepared on the surface or down below.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You say they have to be prepared in daylight.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The fuses and detonators have to be prepared in daylight. Boring with a machine drill is not a willy-nilly process. One has really a standard of boring.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are speaking of the big mines?

Hon. J. CORNELL: And of the small mines too. The average man knows what depth of hole he is going to bore, and prepares his fuses accordingly.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The men do not do that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They should do it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: If they do it, they have altered in the last 30 or 40 years. I have had some practical experience.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member knows that the owner of a small mine works it himself.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But he may have half-a-dozen men working for him.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And frequently he may not.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why should he be brought under this?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Nicholson might have been helpful and suggested that where a given number of men were employed—

Hon. J. Nicholson: That cannot be done when moving to disallow a regulation. What is the use of talking like that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member goes out of his way to try to get the regulations disallowed, without making any helpful suggestion whatever.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That cannot be done when moving to disallow.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we disallow these regulations, the Minister concerned must necessarily turn to the discussion which resulted in the disallowance of the regulations for some helpful suggestion as to what this House is really after. Mr. Nicholson has given the Minister no helpful suggestion whatsoever. The suggestion of Mr. Miles, that the matter should be restricted to mines employing not less than a certain number of men, is helpful; but that suggestion did not come from Mr. Nicholson. If we will not go all the way, we should indicate to what extent we are prepared to go. As regards carbide, the regulation is again prompted by a desire for the better protection of the men working in the industry; probably, as in many industries, to save men from themselves. Mr. Nicholson pointed out that a miner has a lamp with carbide for four hours and a container with another four hours' supply, and that he throws away the first charge when consumed and then inserts the

container supply into the lamp. In reply to an interjection of mine, Mr. Nicholson said that the residue thrown away would be a disinfectant.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is really only lye.

Hon. J. CORNELL: A man before putting the new charge into the lamp might not take the precaution to burn the whole of the old charge. That is what the regulation is designed to stop.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The regulation has nothing to do with the residue.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am only using the hon. member's argument.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You asked me about it. I do not know what is done with it. Stick to the regulation.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am afraid this debate is degenerating into a mere conversation. The hon. member will have ample opportunity to reply to any argument with which he does not agree.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The regulation exists merely to prevent the throwing-out of lye. The man must throw it into a receptacle.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Does he always throw it into a receptacle?

Hon. J. Nicholson: Undoubtedly.

Hon. J. CORNELL: One sees notices in the streets, "Do not spit on the pavement." Does everyone observe that instruction?

Hon. J. Nicholson: A person who does not observe it should be punished.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The object of the regulation is not to protect mining companies, but to protect men from themselves.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Where does the regulation provide that the old carbide only shall be thrown away?

Hon. J. Nicholson: It says nothing about that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In my advocacy of better conditions for the man working underground, so far as silicosis and miners' phthisis are concerned, I have always claimed, as I think Mr. Williams will bear me out, that the greatest menace to a man underground, where silica is prevalent, is indiscriminate blasting. Eleven years ago, as the result of inquiries I made in Johannesburg with regard to blasting underground, I was given definitely to understand that the two factors most responsible for the minimisation of dust in suspension were the definite times of blasting and the abolition of what is known as the night shift;

and once a week there was a full 24 hours when no man worked underground. Authorities have pointed out that a minute particle of dust takes hours to precipitate itself 7 feet. This interval of 24 hours without blasting allows the dust to settle. Discrimination in blasting at times when men are not at work stops unnecessary dust from getting into suspension, whereas indiscriminate blasting must always produce a certain amount of dust in suspension, dust in a most injurious form. The regulation aims at the prevention of that. Mr. Nicholson states that this regulation would apply to small mines. I do not think Mr. Miles will go as far as that. For my part I venture to say that the application of this regulation to small mines would be infinitesimal. It must of necessity, however, have a wide application to the larger mines. It is impossible to disallow part of a regulation. If the House disallows a part, it disallows the whole. I would impress upon hon. members the desirability of thoroughly inquiring into such a regulation as this. Indiscriminate blasting will help to produce such a load of miners' phthisis as this State cannot possibly carry. People point with pride—and I agree with them, in a sense—to the recent wonderful development in our mining industry; but I wish to point out that that has its incidence. Whilst our industry is expanding, we are almost where we were as regards the prevention of the dust trouble and the compensation of the victims. We have almost reached the position of having a financial load that the State cannot carry. The last point I wish to deal with is dust and ventilation. Mr. Nicholson pointed out that this regulation has been prompted by the corresponding South African regulation. I never hide my light under a bushel. I have stated over and over again that one of the fatal mistakes in connection with miners' phthisis legislation in this State was to apply it to every part of a mine. It is not so at Johannesburg. Phthisis mines there are scheduled, and the legislation probably only applies underground. Here we include the whole mine. The regulation should clearly specify a given number of men employed in one mine. That is the case in South Africa, where, if more than a certain number of men are employed in a phthisis mine, it has to have a special dust and ventilation inspector, who collaborates with the Government inspector. However, I will not be a party to the disallowance of these regu-

lations. I might be prepared to disallow these regulations if Mr. Baxter, as Leader of the House, cannot obtain a definite assurance from the Minister for Mines with regard to the points I have indicated. Injurious dust is not met with in the small mines but in the larger and more developed mines. I apologise for taking up so much of the time of the House, but I hope hon. members will not disagree with these regulations. I hope the House will reserve its judgment until it has had the advantage of hearing the Leader on the subject. For the present I am totally against disallowance of these regulations.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [6.0]: I oppose the motion. After all, Mr. Nicholson's principals in this matter have asked him to move along these lines, but they have done so with their tongues in their cheeks. I am not so much concerned about the carbide regulation. It concerns the new lamp introduced for work underground, which is now used by the men where formerly it was used by the bosses alone. The carbide light is better, more economical and much safer, particularly when men are working in bad ground. I worked with an acetylene lamp in the mines at Bendigo, and that lamp stood about 18 inches high. It was awkward and if it was knocked over, the smell was terrible, and the consequent fire was somewhat difficult to put out. I do not know that I suffered any harmful effects. However, I am not worried about that regulation, but I am concerned about the regulation regarding the fuse caps. I can assure Mr. Nicholson he will find hundreds of miners who will agree with him that that regulation should be disallowed. They would agree with him not for the reasons he has set out, but because every miner thinks that he is the one man in the world that can make up primers. He objects to primers being made up for him by one man whom he does not know. His views are influenced by the fact that his life may be endangered as a result of work done by someone he does not know. I have been on one of the biggest group of mines in Australia, where the primers are made up by one man for all the men working underground. That is on the Lake View and Star group of mines where an old man makes up the primers for 500 or 600 machine men out of the 1,200 employed on the mine. Not only does he make up all the

primers, but he does all the tampers as well. If we view the matter from the standpoint of economy, it will be clear to members that if there are 350 men working on a mine and they want to fire out, each of them might have to walk a considerable distance from the workings to the place where they could make up the primers and tampers. Think what a waste of time there would be under that system. It would be ridiculous. Of course it is economical to have one man doing the work for all the rest.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They are doing that on the big mines now.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, but, as I have pointed out, not with the approval of the men. The companies are doing that now, and it must be a good move from the standpoint of economy. If all the men underground had to make up their own primers and tampers, it would take each of them quite half an hour and the resultant loss of time would be very great indeed. Under the existing conditions, every worker knows almost to the hour when he will fire, and if the regulations are allowed to remain in force, he will have to fire at the proper time. His primers and tampers will be ready for him, and he will take them to the stope where he may be working. No time is lost under those conditions. As a matter of fact, it is a ridiculous waste of the time of the House on Mr. Nicholson's part to tell us what is now in operation on the mines. That system was brought about not by any regulations framed by the Mines Department or laws passed by the present Government, but as the result of the common sense of the mining companies themselves. How this House can be asked to pass a motion such as that before us, I cannot understand. The position, in view of what is happening on the mines to-day, is absolutely ridiculous. What is wrong, of course, is that so many of our mine managers on the Golden Mile are quite out of date or were so until an American came and revolutionised mining operations there. I am sorry to make that statement from the point of view of our own people, but that is the truth. The new methods have been installed with beneficial results to the mining companies, and, in some instances, to the men themselves. As to the smaller mines that have been referred to, what would Mr. Nicholson regard as a small mine? Would he say it was a mine with 10 men working underground?

Hon. E. H. Harris: What would you call a small mine?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not know of any small mine in Western Australia. Members representing the Murchison district may know of some. I know of many prospectors' shows, but they are not mines. The regulations under discussion would not apply to them.

Hon. H. Seddon: Yes, they would.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then let us assume that they do. Let us consider the one that I specially refer to. How many shots a week or a month would be fired in what the hon. member regards as a small mine? It would all depend upon what stage of development had been reached. It would all depend upon the country. A man might, if he were working in the shaft, fire two, or three, or four holes. If he were working on another part, he might not fire a shot for two days. It would all depend upon the character of the country being dealt with. If he were in soft country, he might put in a number of shots. I doubt whether Mr. Nicholson knows how primers are made up. The Mines Regulation Act sets out specifically what has to be done, and exactly how the cap is to be pressed. Despite the regulations, most of the miners do the pressing of the cap with their teeth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Now?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They did that 40 years ago.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: In that respect only is Mr. Miles's mining knowledge up to date. The regulations do not suggest that the miners should bite the caps with their teeth, but specify exactly how it must be done. The men do not observe that regulation, and I have not heard of any man's head being blown off. I confess that when I see a man biting a fuse cap, I emulate the Sheffield Shield runners and get as far away from him as I can.

Hon. E. H. Harris: There is no regulation that will prevent him from doing so.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No regulation in the world will compel a man not to do what he thinks he will do.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then why have such regulations?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Because we should provide for the guidance of the men, if they choose to follow the provisions. Of course, in daylight a man can see whether the cap is empty, but down below with a

lamp only, how can he tell? Therefore the regulations should say what should be done. If the regulation applies to the small mines it should be clear to anyone having knowledge of the industry that the management have the primers made up before the men leave the surface. If a man were working in wet ground, he could not possibly make up his primers below. There would be no place where he could keep his materials dry, and so they are made up before he goes underground. The Lake View and Star management have provided appliances for dealing with the primers and tampers and the operations are carried out by an elderly man. So far as I know, there has not been any mistake or accident since that system was adopted. Certainly it is an innovation, but still I am surprised at the American manager allowing this matter to come forward. As to the ventilation in drives, the regulation amounts to another matter of economy. Mr. Nicholson stated that there is no dust arising from up-to-date drilling machines, but that is far from correct. Many men consider that the wet machines are worse than the old appliances, because now the dust hangs in the air in water bubbles. Apart from that phase, however, economical working operations must mean more profits, and the better the ventilation, the longer a miner can work underground and the more profitable must be the results of his labour. That is another instance of hypocrisy in connection with this matter. It is almost impossible to go down mines where the levels are not provided with the means of ventilation referred to. It is ridiculous, therefore, to ask Parliament to disallow the regulations, seeing that they merely provide for what the mining companies, in their own interests, are actually observing now. Their efforts have made for better and safer working. I have already said that I do not know of any small mines. I know of mines run by prospectors, but those men will carry on their operations as they choose, irrespective of these regulations. Inspectors of mines do not embarrass or harass mine owners. They do not attend to their work sufficiently to harass them at all. They are all about 60 years of age; they look after themselves and keep away from the mines as much as possible.

Hon. J. Cornell: Quite right.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The men working in what Mr. Nicholson would

regard as the small mines, will not be penalised, for they are not penalised now. I was on the South Kalgurli mine a week or two ago. I saw a cage loaded up with steel and drills, and then a couple of men entered and went down the shaft. The regulations provide that no man shall travel in a cage with drills or plant. If anything went wrong, the men would be killed, and much damage would be done to the shaft. I do not blame the mine managers for that sort of thing going on, but I blame the men for doing it. That goes on every day in the mines. It is useless suggesting that the mine managers are harassed because of these regulations.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 7.30 p.m.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Eighth Day.

Debate resumed from the 8th September.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [7.30]: I wish to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your unopposed election as a representative of South Province, and further compliment you on your unopposed return as President of the Council. The people of the goldfields paid you a high compliment in not seeking an opponent to contest the seat against you. They were satisfied with the good work you had done in the past. They were also very pleased when the Council elected you as President. I trust that you will be long spared to represent the province and also to occupy the honourable position you have held during the past few years. Perhaps you will find it in your heart to be a little more lenient to us younger speakers when we seek a little more latitude than we get from the Chair. I compliment the new members on their return, no matter what their political views may be, and trust they will fulfil their duties as honourably as most of us try to do. I am sorry for those who lost their seats in the recent election, but that is the fortune of war for anyone who seeks political honours or a position that goes by public plebiscite. One member, in speaking, twitted me with representing a sheltered industry, meaning the gold mining industry. That is true to a certain extent, but the con-

stituency I represent is also nearly 50 per cent. agricultural. There is no particular complaint against the Government for having neglected the gold mining industry, that is from the point of view of the big companies. I could find fault with the Government for having cut out subsidies to the prospectors, sustenance, and help in the shape of tools and outfits to enable them to go out and find gold. The price of gold is high and does not warrant the industry receiving any great assistance from the Government at the moment, especially when one realises that so many other industries are scratching very hard to make ends meet. The prospector, however, is not in the happy position of being able to get £7 an ounce for gold. He has first to find ore of sufficient value to enable him to get backing from the storekeeper or from some outsider who favours that class of investment. While such men are out prospecting and are not receiving the dole or any remuneration, the Government should continue the assistance they once gave. Then when the prospectors found anything in the way of value, the assistance could be discontinued. I do not intend to discuss the merits or demerits of the gold bonus. The Federal Government originally thought fit to grant a bonus of £1 per ounce on the production in excess of that of the previous year. The amount was afterwards reduced to 10s. and now I believe the bonus is to be cut out entirely.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Till the price gets back to £5.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes. I find no fault with that, although some goldfields people do. I think the industry is well able to stand on its own feet, in view of the price being obtained for the product. While the price of gold continues so high, I do not intend to enter any protest, except that the Federal Government have repudiated the undertaking they gave. After all, the bonus would neither make nor break the mines. Last year it amounted to 2s. 8d. per ounce on all the gold produced, and that would make very little difference to the industry. If the price of gold fell to £4 10s. or £4 4s. an ounce I would expect the Federal Government to come to the assistance of the industry by restoring the £1 bonus. At the moment the gold mining industry is of the utmost importance to the State and Commonwealth, and it behoves the Government of the day to foster it and encourage the production of the greatest possible amount

of gold. There is a promising field at Ora Banda which has been crying aloud for years for a water supply. It is idle to blame the present Government, any more than previous Governments, for not having provided a water supply, but the problem of unemployment is so serious and there are so many men on the goldfields looking for work that the provision of a water supply for Ora Banda would be useful and reproductive work. Ora Banda lies in a large auriferous belt.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the exact locality? Is it west of the Menzies road?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, north-west of Kalgoorlie, 42 miles by road and about 18 miles from Broad Arrow.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It would be near the 42-mile dam.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The 42-mile dam is relied upon for water. There are some hundreds of men at Ora Banda and there are some promising shows in the prospecting stage, but for years the district has been held up owing to the inadequate water supply. The battery has crushed for some months and then it has had to wait for a fall of rain. Sometimes the rain was delayed for months. Ora Banda seems to be in a dry belt. Though rain falls at Kalgoorlie. Ora Banda seems to be missed by the rain storms. Sometimes nine months have elapsed without rain falling there. At a time when the price of gold is so high and when its production would be so helpful to the country, the outlay for a water supply would be fully warranted. For years departmental officials have been making inspections. I understand that the cost of linking Ora Banda to the nearest point on the Kalgoorlie pipe line—somewhere near Kurrawang—would be £16,000. For that expenditure a permanent supply could be made available, and only a very little time would elapse before the outlay was returned in the shape of increased production and increased work for unemployed. I understand that all necessary surveys have been made. From what I have read in the Press, I believe it is intended to endeavour to supply the town from some old mine. That would mean bore water, which would be fit only for the mill. It would not be satisfactory for cyaniding purposes. While the Government have so many men on part-time and sustenance work in the South-West, they might well utilise some of them on this undertaking. No company

would care to invest money in leases at a place where there is no adequate supply of water, and that accounts for many of the shows in the district being still in the prospecting stage. I trust the Government will do something very soon. It is useless for them to call for further reports on the subject. During the debate, members have inferred that the whole of the State's troubles would be remedied if only costs could be reduced. One of the bugbears, in the minds of such people, is the Arbitration Court. To abolish the Arbitration Court would mean reverting to the system of bargaining between employers and employees, and that would mean the survival of the fittest. The man who clung to the boss most would get most; the man who could spin the best tale would get on best, though the best might be only what the boss chose to give him. Consider the gold mining industry and what the workers could expect from the bosses. The men work under an arbitration agreement, which stipulates that their wages shall not be reduced for 12 months. I believe the agreement expires in October, and that the basic wage is £4 6s. a week. To get the £4 6s., the workers in the industry made certain concessions. At least I claim that they did so, and so do some of the workers. They gave the companies the right to grant holidays in rotation. Last night there were men on the train coming down for holidays which were due last Christmas. The workers also gave way on conditions underground. Previously men were not allowed to work more than six hours per day if the temperature, according to the wet bulb, exceeded 76 degrees. To give way on that was a great concession. Dozens of machine men and workers generally were working the six-hour shift underground because of the rotten conditions. The price of gold has increased something like £3 per ounce and the employers have not offered one penny extra to the miners. When that happens in a prosperous industry like gold mining, what would be the position of the workers in other than a sheltered industry if the Arbitration Court were abolished? I say, "Thank God the Arbitration Court is still in existence." There is the position. House rents have advanced as much as 300 per cent. People who had been paying 7s. 6d. a week are now paying three times that amount, and on top of that are responsible for the sanitary rates.

Only last Sunday a man told me that his rent had been increased from 7s. 6d. to 15s. per week, plus sanitary rates. The cost of living on the goldfields is higher than it is in Perth, and it must be remembered that workers in the mining industry are a long way from the capital. At the present time owners of property are taking advantage of the prosperity due to the success that is attending gold mining, and are not hesitating to make the employees in the industry pay more than their share. It has to be remembered also that a number of miners have been thrown out of employment because of miners' diseases, and some hundreds of them are still resident on the goldfields. Many men have taken the places of those that have ceased to work, and naturally that has resulted in a shortage of houses. I put that up as an illustration to prove what the workers in the industry have had to experience. I wish to say a few words about the tributing section of the mining community. In most cases, tributers are better off than are the ordinary miners. A man takes on a tribute and he becomes the owner of a mine within a mine. Some years ago the Parliament of this State amended the Mining Act so that in the event of gold increasing in price above the then standard value of £4 4s. 10d. an ounce, the tributer was to receive 50 per cent. of the enhanced value. Not so the miner. It was only the tributer who was to get this advantage, the tributer who was breaking ground under the terms of an agreement entered into. The tributer cannot be paid less than £3 10s. per week before the company take their royalty, and above that the provision is that he is to receive 50 per cent. of the enhanced price of gold. There is a case at the present time before the Privy Council dealing with the position of the tributer and the enhanced value of gold, and therefore it might be as well not to say too much about the matter at this stage. The Privy Council will determine whether the tributer has or has not the right to receive 50 per cent. of the increased value of gold. I wish to stress a point to show how really benevolent the mining companies are. The law of the land sets out that they must pay to the tributer 50 per cent. of the increased price of gold, but the companies refuse to pay anything on the extra money received by way of exchange. With regard to a miner who works on wages, a mining inspector is empowered as an in-

dustrial inspector to prosecute a mine manager for any breach that may be committed. Then should it not be the duty of the Minister for Mines to prosecute companies who refuse to pay tributers what is their just due, instead of allowing the tributers to pay the costs of fighting their own case to see who is right or wrong? There was a case recently in which a party of tributers sued the Australia Gold Mines for a share of the enhanced price of gold. The Tributing Act lays it down that before a tribute is registered, the warden must be satisfied that the tribute is equitable. If he does not consider it equitable, he must not register it. Strange to say, in the Australia Gold Mines case, the agreement between Elliott and others and that company was registered as equitable. The ore was first treated on the Australia company's property and it is provided in the Act that the treatment plant shall be entitled to 50 per cent. of any enhanced price, and that the tributers shall receive the other 50 per cent. The Perseverance came in and took their share and handed the balance to the tributers. Then the Associated Company claimed their share. Of course, we know that there cannot be a three 50 per cent. division, and so the tributers had to be satisfied with 25 per cent. The warden who heard the case was the man who registered the agreement as being equitable. I should like to read to the House a part of the warden's judgment in this case. I do not know whether the Minister has taken any action to censure the warden for registering something as equitable which could not have been equitable, because he gave a decision to the effect that the Australia Company was entitled to 25 per cent., the tributers to 25 per cent., and the Perseverance Company, which has the treatment plant, to 50 per cent., notwithstanding the fact that the Act states that the tributer shall receive 50 per cent. This is what the magistrate said—

Tribute Agreement.

Clause 5i provides that the tributers agree to direct the manager of such battery or treatment plant to hand all proceeds from the material sent for treatment to the manager of the company. If, therefore, all proceeds can be held to include premium, this provision appears to conflict with Section 152b of the Mining Act, and it would seem that in agreeing to do this, the tributers were to that extent agreeing to contract themselves out of the provisions of Section 152b of the Mining Act.

The magistrate declared that the tributers had agreed to contract themselves out of the

provisions of the Act. But he is there to see that they do nothing of the sort. He registered the tribute agreement as equitable and the Mines Department also should have seen that it was equitable. When the tributers made application for their share of the enhanced value they found they were not able to get it, and they have been put to the expense of fighting the case. I trust the Minister will go into this matter. It would be better if the tributers came to an agreement with the mine owners because their position is not on all fours with that of a wages proposition; it is different altogether. A tributer may work for 12 months or two years and his is the only occupation where he may have to work without any remuneration at all. In the two years he may not earn one penny piece, and there is no law to say that during the whole of that time he shall be paid anything by anybody. Under the tributing Act, before a company can claim any royalty the tributer must earn £3 10s. a week. Another matter to which I wish to draw attention is that of workers on the goldfields, other than miners, who are suffering very much by reason of the prosperity of the industry. The miners themselves are still receiving a wage calculated on the basic wage, while other workers, for instance, the railway employees, are paid a good deal below the basic rate. It is not fair that because they are employed on the railway system that the conditions applying in Perth should be made to apply to them in that part of the State where everything in comparison with the prices ruling in Perth is so very much higher. I am surprised that the unions have not made a fuss about this matter. It is certainly not fair that the workers on the goldfields should have to live on the basic wage of £3 17s., when we know that the prices of commodities are so much higher there than they are in Perth.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Did not the mining companies give their employees a higher rate than that awarded by the court?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. When the reduction in the basic wage took place I was acting secretary of the A.W.U. at Boulder, and in conversation with the secretary of the Chamber of Mines I was told that the companies had put into operation the reduction on that day. Later he confirmed it by letter. What stopped that reduction from being continued was not the benevolent action of the mining companies, it was the fighting at-

titude adopted by the miners at Wiluna. The workers there said, "You are not going to reduce our wages; we are so far away from Perth that you must not do it." The men declared that they would stop work, and the result was that Mr. Vail received a cable instructing him not to reduce the basic wage of the men employed at Wiluna. Of course it was known what would have happened if the wages had been reduced. Had the men at Wiluna pulled out, the whole industry would have been affected. Later an agreement was come to for a period of 12 months. Three cases had been conducted before the present president of the Arbitration Court, and on two occasions the men were told they were wasting their time unless they could prove that the industry could pay another shilling. We had a go, and that was what happened. We found that the president was telling us the truth. Then we approached the late Government and requested that an inquiry be made into the mining industry generally, to see whether it could not afford to pay higher wages. Those of us who were thoroughly conversant with the industry knew that the industry should not have been in so deplorable a condition, which we felt was due to inefficient management. That has since been proved by the introduction of efficient management from America. The firm of J. L. Weir & Co. were appointed to audit the books of the company. They were nine or ten months on the job. Only one man, Mr. Troy in another place, has seen the report. Mr. Troy was representing the men at the time. Those who knew something advised the men to accept the £4 6s. per week as the basic wage. Personally I disagreed because, as I have said, the president of the Arbitration Court told us it was of no use applying for increased wages, for the industry could not afford it. But what position would he have been in had they applied to him when gold became worth £3 per oz. more than it had been previously? But unfortunately the leaders advised the men to accept £4 6s., which I very much regret.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You would have fought them?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I would indeed. For five years those men were kept on a very low rate of pay as compared with other wages, because the president of the court had said the industry could not pay and so he

could not grant them an increase in wages. But gold has gone up nearly 75 per cent., so it would be only logical to ask him to give us an increase now. My word I would have a go, indeed I would! The miners will be very foolish if they do not have a go next month, when their award expires. However, that rests with them, not with me. My advice is that they have a go to get some of that increase of £3 per oz., so as to make up for the time when they were being paid miserable wages. Now I want to deal with the tubercular men who have been turned out of the mining industry. The position has been very unsatisfactory since the present Government took office. Prior to that, any man turned down as suffering from tuberculosis was immediately prohibited from any further work on the mines; and whilst he was away from work awaiting examination by Dr. Mitchell, he was paid the ruling rate of wage until he was certified fit for light work or, alternatively, to be pensioned off. That was one of the best ideas that could have been put into operation, because it helped clear the mines of those suffering from the disease, and helped those still following the occupation to last much longer without contracting tuberculosis. But latterly we have found a very different state of things, and this I say with all due respect to the Minister for Mines, who has told us that his brothers died from miners' phthisis. I know that is correct. Those now working in the industry are practically compelled to stay on the mines, despite their diseased condition. A man named Coffey was notified 12 months ago that he had tuberculosis. Yet he carried on till within a week of his death working on the mine. He died quite recently, and but for a wide-awake person in Boulder, he would have died without having been officially prohibited from working on the mines. Then where would his widow have stood? The Act states that unless a man is prohibited from working on the mines, neither he nor his widow can get any compensation. That man, although suffering from tuberculosis, was allowed to continue at work month after month.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some were put out on the miners' settlement and then allowed to go back to the mines again.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is so. These affected men are allowed to work, not underground but on the surface, although the Act states that from the moment a man

is certified as suffering from tuberculosis he shall not be allowed to continue on the mine.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Where did Coffey work on the mine?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: He was a braced man, I believe. There was another man who should have been taken out four years ago. I could never understand how the late Minister for Mines left him there. People wonder why so many men are still being turned down on account of tuberculosis. It is because lots of affected men are allowed to continue at work, and so spread the disease. A large number of men in the industry are three parts along the track to death through dust on the lungs. I trust that this phase of the question will be inquired into by the Government, for it does not cost them much more money to withdraw the affected men. Take the case of a man in Kalgoolie who lost an eye. He was for 18 months recovering from the accident. Eventually the doctor passed him as fit to work. The man went up for his laboratory ticket, but it was found that during his convalescence he had contracted tuberculosis, and so he was not allowed to return to work. After 12 months of argument, the Mines Department, recognising their liability, paid the man's wife £1 per week, the sum to which she was entitled. But a little while afterwards they learnt that this lady had saved £200 or £300, whereupon they immediately claimed the return of every shilling she had received from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. The Act never contemplated that. What would happen to that woman tomorrow if her husband were to die—as he must do before long? Probably the Government would still claim that the widow was not entitled to compensation, because she had saved £200 or £300. If that man had been turned down under the Workers' Compensation Act, his wife or widow would have received the full compensation of £750.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Yes, it destroys thrift.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I know of other cases that the Government have not inquired into. I cannot see why they should differentiate against a man whose wife has saved a few hundreds. To-day if those people had to build a home in Kalgoolie it would cost £350 to £600. The whole point is that the Act never contemplated that anybody turned down under tuberculosis should be examined as to his means. As I say, if he had been turned down under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act, he would

have got what was due to him, no matter what savings he might have had. I sincerely trust the Government will restore that money to that woman. According to the regulations, when her husband dies she will be entitled to £2 per week for life, and I trust that she will get it. Now I want to point to the meanness of the Government. I think the Chief Secretary has an interest in this, for it concerns his department. When the Government found that the end of their financial year had arrived, they resorted to mean and contemptible tricks in an endeavour to reduce their deficit.

Hon. J. Cornell: To keep within their promise.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, to keep their promise they reduced people who were receiving at the rate of 7s. per week for each child under a given age.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is only 7s. at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am referring to the children of widowed people, State children. When the end of the financial year came, instead of those widows getting their cheques for groceries and bread and meat, they found they were reduced from 28s. per week to 14s. per week, and that they no longer got it in cash, but only in the form of an order on the butcher or the baker.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government did not have the cash to pay them.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, they had. They always have the cash to pay when they want it. But to save money in the last month of the financial year, they took a forced loan from the business people of Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. Cornell: They learnt that from Lang.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: They may have learnt it from the A.W.U., for we once did it on the goldfields. That is what the Government did to make the June figures look nice; instead of sending their little cheques for 28s. to those widows, they told them to go to the clerk of courts and get an order, not for 28s., but for 14s. on the grocer or the butcher. So the Government did not have to pay out any money during that month. I deplore that attitude. They have now cut down those goldfields widows rearing children, to the Perth rates of sustenance. I said in the case of the miners and the workers on the railways that that is not fair.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It has nothing to do with the Chief Secretary's department.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Well, I am glad to hear that, but certainly it was done in his department. Despite the fact that rents have risen by from 50 per cent. to 300 per cent. the department are reducing sustenance granted to widows with children, reducing it to the Perth level. That is not fair, nor is it equitable. Even a school child knows that the shop assistants have not had their wages reduced to £3 17s. a week, and the storekeeper is charging accordingly. I trust this position will be put right, and that the widows with children will receive the sustenance they used to enjoy.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the cost of the houses referred to by the Minister?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I now wish to deal with the facilities given for the crushing of ore. We have, in the district, a rejuvenated plant on the old Ironsides North mine. I understand the Government are paying between £21 and £30 a week rental for this plant, the rental to continue for 10 years, varying with the tonnage put through, and the Government have the option of purchase for £5,000 at the end of that time. I understand the Minister for Mines has referred to this matter in another place. Is this all the business ability he can show? If that is the best that can be done by the officials of the Mines Department, they should not be allowed permanently to occupy their positions. It should be possible to dispense with their services at a moment's notice. Some of these officials are drawing big salaries, but are not worth the wage of an ordinary labourer. If their abilities are not greater than they have demonstrated in connection with this old plant, they are of no use to the State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I understand the battery was not worth £2,000.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Mr. Reside, who is a candidate for Parliament, and is a company promoter, stated publicly in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" that the battery was offered to him for £1,500, lock, stock and barrel. This statement has never been denied. The Government have either got to put it in order or to keep it in order. It has been breaking down every hour of the day, and has practically been renewed in every part. This work has not been done at the expense of Mr. de Bernales, but at the expense of the Government.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the Government mean the taxpayers.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The whole thing is the laughing stock of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Everybody knows the public have been fleeced. Not an officer of the Mines Department ventured to report adversely upon the plant. If the Government wanted to erect batteries, they could have had hundreds of heads of stamps that are now lying idle, and are in far better condition than this particular plant.

Hon. J. Cornell: And only three-quarters of a mile away.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: They could have been put into commission straightaway.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the siding at which there is a battery?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am sick and tired of the whole business. It is scandalous that the Government should be paying £1,500 a year for a battery which could have been bought for £1,500. We hear a lot of talk about tin hares and fruit machines, but if ever an inquiry was necessary it is in connection with the cleaning up of the Mines Department.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Let us move for the appointment of a Royal Commission.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not want any commission. We are too close to election times. I positively assert that someone has made money out of the transaction. Somebody must have done so.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: From whom was it bought?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: From Mr. de Bernales. The whole thing could have been bought for £1,500, and yet the Government are paying out that much in annual rental. It is the height of graft.

Hon. J. Cornell: We know what it was originally put up for.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Government money is being used completely to recondition the plant, and build it up for Mr. de Bernales. The same thing happened on the Lancefield mine. The manager, Mr. Ridgway, wanted the men to work for 3s. a day less than the usual wages and to keep the plant in order. At the end of one year the reconditioned plant would have come back to him. The men refused to do this, and the mine was closed down. Mr. Frank Stark was originally the owner of the old plant I referred to. Probably Mr. de Bernales did not pay more than £300 for it. It was lying a derelict for anyone to cart away.

Hon. J. Cornell: It has always been an unfortunate battery. Its history will not bear inquiry.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Mr. Reside says the Government could have bought it for £1,500.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Is he reliable?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: His statement has never been denied.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You ought to call for the papers.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I have not become a politician yet, and do not want to call for anything. I know what is going on under my very nose. Whoever is to blame amongst the officials of the department should be pushed out of his job. The whole thing is disastrous for Kalgoorlie. A battery was being subsidised by the Government and was doing the work that was necessary. The prospectors have now had their subsidies cut out, and they have to take their ore to this derelict plant. In such a bad condition was it that it had to be put on to concrete. Although some of the mines officials are drawing about £1,500 a year, they do not know the A.B.C. of mining. This is something that the industry has to put up with. Why do not the Government invest in more batteries like those on the Lake View or go in for an up-to-date treatment plant? Such a plant would not cost more than about £4,000. There are wet treatment plants in the district coping with 350 tons of ore a day. This other old plant will not do that much in a month. Up-to-date companies are dismantling their batteries and putting in modern equipment, notwithstanding which we find the Government renting and reconditioning an old plant.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are not ball rollers more economical than this old method?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The plant recently erected at Lake View can do 350 tons of ore every 24 hours. I am informed that a wet mill costs only about £1,500. True the old battery has not been running very long. There is a station nearby called Kallaroo, and another called Golden Gate. To reach Golden Gate one has to go over a high bridge. Within 150 yards of the battery is a railway. No one has yet thought of connecting the railway with the battery, a distance of 150 yards.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It crosses the main road, does it not?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That does not matter. The Lake View trams run across the main line.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the main road cuts it off from the railway, it should never have been put there.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: One train a day would be sufficient to shift all the trucks. Prospectors now have to cart their ore half a mile from the Golden Gate station and also unload it at the battery. The Government had not the initiative to put in this short stretch of line. Mr. Leslie, of Kurrawang, would have had it down in an hour. The Government have allowed all these months to elapse, and forced the prospectors to make all this long haulage. It is no wonder the State is in difficulties when we have a railway commissioner who is so devoid of common sense ideas. Any kind of old rails would suffice, and almost any kind of sleeper would do. The construction of this short line would have proved economical to the Railway Department as well as to the prospectors.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is Esperance in your province?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am just coming to that. I have tried to represent the farmers in my province. I do not know anyone who has suffered more than they have. The unemployed have to put up with vile conditions, but in the case of a big percentage of them, principally the single men, when their hats are on, they are home.

Member: They have no hats nowadays.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Then those who are not bald will have their hair as their home. It means that they go where they like, how they like. But the man on the land, having put in years of labour and all his capital, thought he would make a success of life for himself and all connected with him. Now he has become disorganised. I have heard hon. members say that this is a non-party House. I have certainly heard the President describe himself as an Independent, a non-party man. He stood as such.

Hon. E. H. Harris: We thought we heard you say that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, and I stuck to my word. No politician in Australia should have the audacity to put up as a Labour man and then proceed to reduce old-age pensions. I said that if that was the action of the Labour Party, I would have nothing to do with it. Still, I do not profess to be an Independent; I am a pledged mem-

ber of the Labour Party. There is no independence about me. I am an absolute party man, and so is everyone here except the President. I do not know that the President will take that as flattery, but he has had the courage, over a number of years, to stand as an Independent. I have had the pleasure and honour of fighting him politically. Many persons emulate the President up to the time when an election is near, but then they take shelter under the wing of a party.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about Mr. Piesse?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: He is such a young member of this Chamber that I quite forgot about him. I apologise.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the declared secessionist alongside you?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I understand that that hon. member is a pledged Labour man. Secession is not a plank in the Labour Party's platform. The Cabinet of this country consists of four farmers and three Nationalists. I see no difference between them. The farmers' representatives are doing the same as I am doing, talking to farmers with farming on their lips. The farmers' representatives have had every opportunity, both in this State and in the Commonwealth, to do something for the farmers. The Government have no right to expect the farmer to stay on the land, grow wheat, and put in all his capital and all his life with absolutely no bright outlook. The farmer has been asked to go broke and stay broke on his farm, so that the country may continue. Can the farmer under present conditions see daylight? The Government have no intention of relieving him in any way, or of offering him assistance to get over the high stile confronting him. My district is a new district as regards farming. How can the Government expect the settlers there to repay what they owe to the State, with wheat at its present price? The time is overdue for the Government to say something that will show the farmer that he has a chance of sticking to his farm, and of getting overhead charges which he cannot possibly pay written off. The present Government, though consisting largely of farmers, offer no help whatever to the farmers. If a Labour Government were in power to-day, I would fight that Government tooth and nail, would refuse to vote for the measures of such a Government, if my constituents in their present position, were not helped by the

Government. The present Government have the taxing power needed to help the farmer. It is sheer hypocrisy for farmers' representatives to urge the farmer to remain on his land. How can farming succeed without any help from the rest of the people? A large portion of our population is living in plenty; the picture shows are never empty. At the goldfields races the reflection occurred to me that thousands upon thousands in this State were living on 7s. a week, while there before my eyes was £100,000 worth of clothes, beautiful suits of the men and splendid costumes of the ladies. The Government have had two years at reducing costs, and where are they ending? The country is ten times worse off to-day than previously. Some of the farmers' representatives are fairly prosperous, having been long on the land. They do not feel the pinch. I shall go down to Esperance in November and tell the farmers, as I told them two years ago, that they are mugs to remain on the land under present conditions, without any hope. They are used by every Government as a football to be kicked along. Meantime nothing is done for them. We reduced the land tax because we knew the farmers could not pay it. It is high time the Government did something to ensure that the farmer gets a price which will afford something like a living wage. Or else let the Government wipe off some of the back debts, some of the overhead charges. Let the Western Australian people share that liability. After all, we are living on credit. When the farmer becomes well off again, the Government can tax him a bit more. In the Esperance district farmers work under a local board, and are not doing so badly, apart from the overhead charges which are being piled on their land. We shall never be able to sell the sheep we have in this State, nor the cattle either. There are railways in Western Australia. Would it not pay the Government to take sheep from the sheep men and, in return, put some hundreds of the unemployed in those districts to conserve water for the sheep and cattle? Then the Government would not have to worry about the farmers at all; the farmers would be able to live on their farms comfortably and well. It would be necessary to try to make wheat growing pay expenses as they came along. But there is no initiative. The sheep will be allowed to die in the South-West, and the cattle to die on the hoof in

the North, before the Government will spend money to send the stock to where they can be supported. What would it cost? We have the trains and they must be employed. We know it would cost nothing, but under the system of bookkeeping that we have, there are so many charges to be made as between departments, that in the end the cows are worth nothing. I want the Government to break away from that system. They and their departmental officials should display some initiative. Here we have people starving in a land of plenty. I could go on speaking for a long time about the farmer and the deal he is receiving from a Government drawn from his own political representatives. They say that because of the financial position, they can do nothing to help the man on the land. If I were Minister for Lands, I would see to it that I did something for the farmers, or I would get out. I would tax those people who run motor cars or go to picture shows.

Hon. J. Cornell: They would get rid of you.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: They could try to do so as quickly as they liked. Fancy the hypocrisy of the present position, when two-thirds of the people have plenty and the remaining third are starving! We have the goods and everything that we require—except the cash. What the dickens is the good of cash? It is merely a means of exchange. We have plenty of cattle, sheep, fruit, and everything else and not enough brains to distribute them. We give people permanent positions in the metropolitan area and pay some £1,000 or £1,500 a year, and they have not the brains to show a way out. Yet we have to get down and bow to them, because they have the drop on us. They can make things very uncomfortable for us if we want something for our constituents, and they can force us to pay if we owe a little taxation. We are overridden by public servants and alleged experts, with the result that politicians have become extremely frightened. When men get into the highest positions I have in mind, they immediately become frightened of the people who put them there. They are afraid to tell them the truth.

Hon. G. Fraser: Are you speaking for yourself?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am not afraid of anyone. I am saying what you should be game to say. Get up and say it! Two-

thirds of the people on this State are not paying enough towards the upkeep of the remaining third. I say that emphatically, as a Labour man. There are thousands practically starving. That is what I want you to say. It refers to your people, who are my people.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member can address another hon. member only through the Chair.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I beg your pardon, Mr. President; I shall not go over it again. I did not mean to be personal; the hon. member knows it. What is required to-day is sincerity of purpose. That is lacking in politicians to-day. Here we have seven of them out of a Parliament of 80 members, and those seven secure the plums. It is always a scramble for those plums. The seven members have got those plums, and neither Heaven nor earth will shift them until the end of three years; and all the time there are 35 or more who are endeavouring to shift those seven so that the plums may be secured by seven of their own rank. "Dummy," as the Press refer to the general public, has grown tired of members of Parliament because "Dummy" realises that members in this State and throughout the Commonwealth are in Parliament for the emoluments and power to be gained. That is proved by what happened to the Scullin Government, and is proved by politics of to-day. We see what has been happening in the Federal arena. We realise the football provided for the people in the shape of tariffs. They were not fashioned for love of the people to kick up or down. The tariffs were framed for another purpose. From whom do the political parties of Australia secure their funds? From "Dummy," from the ordinary rank and file of their party? Nothing of the kind. They secure their funds from people who are looking for perquisites and for some return.

Hon. J. Cornell: Where are they? I would like to find them.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The importers and exporters of Australia benefit by the increased tariffs, and by inside information that the tariff on such-and-such a line is to go up or is to be decreased. Neither the worker nor the farmer secures any benefit. That is what politics in Australia to-day amount to. The result is that one-third of our people are out of work, and many thousands of people on the land are receiving a

very raw deal. I had better not continue talking along these lines, or I shall be insulting someone. I realise the hypocrisy of politics as we know it to-day. Instead of people being fought for and everything possible being done to provide work for them, we realise that no attempt is being made to get over the difficulty, except by the provision of a scheme for shovelling sand and that will enable men to be kept away from Perth. That may not last for ever, and the people may not stand it. If they do anything later on, all the police in Perth will not hold them. The object is to keep the men out of town, on the ground that if they get enough tucker they will be satisfied. The time is drawing near when the Government will not keep the farmers satisfied, and when that time arrives, I will risk a punch on the nose by telling them that they are the biggest mugs in the world to have allowed the Government to keep them on starvation conditions. The average farmer will not tolerate a Labour man. He now has a Government of his own representatives, and I have shown what sort of a deal he has been receiving. I will now refer to matters relating to Esperance. You, Mr. President, Mr. Cornell, and every member who has been to that port must have seen the ridiculous arrangements regarding the railway service. Instead of the train pulling directly into the town, as soon as the train is near Esperance, the engine is detached and is joined up at the other end of the train, and then the passengers are pulled around a sandhill into the township. The railway officials have no brains, or they would put on a few men to dig a cutting through the sandhills and enable the train to be taken straight into the township, thus saving the present wastage of coal and haulage. When the Government went in for retrenchment, the railway engineers at Kalgoorlie were left there, but the men on the road were sacked. The result is that we have this sort of thing going on. Not sufficient initiative is possessed by the authorities to cut through a small sandhill! No wonder the people of Esperance growl. The Chief Secretary has visited Esperance and knows the position not only regarding the railway arrangements but the jetty as well. It is a wonder the townspeople did not take advantage of the presence of a Minister of the Crown to duck him.

Hon. J. Cornell: On the other hand, they gave him a good time.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is the trouble with the people there. They give a visiting Minister a good time and then he goes away thinking they will be happy for the next 12 months. It is time some work was done at Esperance. The jetty has proved satisfactory so far, seeing that it has not been knocked down by a boat or broken up by the weather. When the time comes that either one or the other happens to the jetty, will the Government then say that they will shift the wheat from the Esperance farmers' allotments over the railway system to Fremantle for the same price as they charged over the line to Esperance? I do not think they will do so. On the other hand, I hope that the Government will spend a few pounds by putting the unemployed on the cutting I have referred to, and on the strengthening of the jetty. We have heard complaints about the attitude of people on the goldfields in trading with the Eastern States rather than with Western Australian merchants. It is the business people who buy their lines and then dispose of them to the general public. Why do not the Government and the railway authorities make the Esperance line attractive to the goldfields residents and induce them to make use of the port of Esperance? Almost a ton of dynamite had to be used to induce the Commissioner of Railways to put on a suitable engine so that the people from Kalgoorlie could journey to Esperance in decent time for their Christmas holidays. I admit that it is shameful that people on the goldfields draw their supplies from the Eastern States and patronise the Commonwealth railway in preference to trading with people within their own State. When the mining industry was depressed, the goldfields people called out for concessions and got them from the Government of this State. Now the industry is in a flourishing condition, they should patronise local industry and so provide a return for what they had in earlier days. That, however, does not get away from the fact that the port of Esperance is not being used as it should be, and the Government should do something towards that end. I wish to dissociate myself from remarks made by Mr. Holmes with reference to Collie coal. I do not know much about Collie coal and I do not want to know much more. Even if we do pay a few shillings more for Collie coal in comparison with what we pay for Newcastle coal, surely it is justified because Collie is a fairly large town where some

hundreds of men are employed in the mining industry, which maintains some thousands of townspeople as well. It is highly unpatriotic for any Western Australian to advocate that the town of Collie should be wiped out merely for the sake of saving a few shillings per ton on coal and satisfying some pet theory for buying coal from Newcastle. What is New South Wales to us? It is a sister State and the people there are our kith and kin, but this is a time when the motto should be each for himself and this State for itself. This State already submits to enough hardships from the Eastern States, and it ill-becomes any member of Parliament to advocate extinguishing a flourishing industry at Collie to satisfy his own personal animosity and save a few shillings on the coal bill. We in this State are in honour bound to buy everything possible locally. If anybody purchases outside the State anything that can be supplied within, he should be shipped to the other States and not paid any pension either. I would thank the hon. member not to suggest in my hearing the purchase of Newcastle coal in place of Collie coal. Everybody feels sorrowful at the trouble caused by unemployment. Those of us, whether young, middle-aged or old, who have seats in the House should consider ourselves fortunate that we are not unemployed. No one should make skittles of the unemployed. No one should use the trouble to make political capital out of it. I have been unemployed for two periods of three months and I can sympathise with the people who are out of work to-day. I was a feetotaller then; if I had been a bit of a boozier, I do not think I would have survived. I have every sympathy for the man who is looking for work because that is harder than the hardest toil. A man suffers more hurts and his feelings sink lower when he is unemployed than when he is engaged in the hardest work. I have done some of the hardest work, and I would sooner put my back to the truck, or handle the shovel to-morrow at 14s. 10d. a day underground, than walk around unemployed. It is the most heart-breaking experience. There are avenues on the goldfields for employing many of the workers. The Chief Secretary, when recovering from his illness, met the local council and a proposal was submitted for the erection of cheap houses. Rents at Kalgoorlie are much higher than those in

Perth. The average house in Perth, let at 20s. or 30s. a week, is a mansion compared with a house commanding the same rental in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. Cornell: The average out-house is better.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The average motor garage is better than some of the Kalgoorlie houses let at 20s. or 30s. a week. One agent said that previous to the depression which hit the rest of Australia, and which re-acted in a different way on the goldfields, he used to walk out and look at the sky and remark, "God bless me, I think I shall have to take a trip away." The explanation was that when the rain came, the tenants would call upon him and complain about leaky roofs, etc. Now he said he could stay in, regardless of whether it rained. They did not want their roofs mended; they had no option but to pay their 20s. or 30s. rent where previously they paid 7s. 6d. We have the bricks, the timber, the cement and the lime; we have plenty of bricklayers and other men out of work, and there are many people on the goldfields wanting houses and unable to get them. Many people are renting rooms. Many of the hotels that were delicensed have been converted into flats, and the owners are able to command three times the rental value they got from the premises as hotels in the boom days. There are over 2,000 men working in the mines and there are also the town employees, the railway employees and the prospectors to be considered. Men are working full time and earning fair money, and they need houses, and would it not be a good plan to send unemployed there to build houses? Houses might as well be erected where they are so badly needed as to leave the material lying in the timber yards and brick yards. There is need for hundreds of reasonably cheap houses, not houses such as are being erected at a cost of £350, £450, or £600. They are too dear for the workers, who would not be able to pay for them, but there is need for cheap houses and many of them. The Government show no initiative. They would sooner have the money in the shape of material lying in the timber yards and brick yards. If they put unemployed on to building houses much money could be saved in sustenance and the men would feel more independent. I commend the proposal to the Government. There would be no difficulty about selling or letting

such houses. Regarding sandalwood we used to get 6,000 tons a year. Since the Government imposed restrictions some years ago, we do not get 600 tons. Some 10,000 tons of sandalwood are said to be in stock at Fremantle and in China, held up for a price, while the industry is allowed to go to pieces. Hundreds of men were employed in the industry and could be employed to-day, despite the statement of the Minister for Forests, but the wood is held up because the Government let the business to a combine. Such a stage was reached, owing to the restrictions of the Forests Department, that sandalwooders, thrown out of work, went to South Australia and pulled sandalwood there. They made thousands of pounds by selling it to the Chinese at a price satisfactory to themselves. They were certainly not paying £9 per ton royalty. They continued to pull wood in South Australia for a year or two until the people interested in the monopoly in this State interviewed the Government of South Australia, and those people lost their contract. The same people who have the monopoly in this State then got the contract there, with the addition of a Chinaman. Instead of this State exporting its share of the wood, the firm exported the wood from South Australia and accumulated the thousands of tons at Fremantle. Western Australia has suffered the loss of practically the whole of the sandalwood trade and at least 300 men have been thrown out of employment. The Government, too, lost the wealth derived from the industry. This is a crying shame. It is another example of the absolute uselessness of the officers of the Forests Department. The Premier says that the Conservator, Mr. Kessell, is a good man, and so does Mr. Collier. I do not agree with them. The sandalwood can be sold in China. Skuthorpe showed that he could sell all he could pull and at a remunerative price, but because thousands of tons are in stock here, no more will be pulled until that is disposed of at the price asked by the combine, a price forced high by unbusinesslike methods. The Government should help the monopoly to cut its loss, get rid of as much of the wood as possible at a price, and allow the puller to be sent into the bush again. There is another matter affecting the Forests Department to which I wish to refer. If what I hear is correct, it is somewhat akin to the battery matter at Kalgoorlie. Twelve months or more ago the Forests Department issued a regulation refusing to allow the cutting of

mining timber in the Widgiemooltha State forest. I wrote to the department taking exception to people who had sidings being deprived of this right, and was informed that the Kurrawang company were going through such good bush that it was a shame to see good mining timber being cut for firewood. The people who had been operating at Widgiemooltha were asked to go to Kurrawang and cut the mining timber, as the company cut the firewood, so that the State forest could be reserved for future use. The money that previously went to the Government in the shape of freight on mining timber then went to the Kurrawang company. Thus good trade was turned away from the Government railways, trade representing some thousands of tons of timber a year. That was bad enough, but then I found that a party of Jugo-Slavs had secured the exclusive right to cut the mining timber. The people who supplied timber to the mines had to sign an agreement to take it from the Jugo-Slavs and it is currently said that the forest rangers are behind the foreigners. I should like some inquiry made into this, an inquiry by an independent source to find out who really is behind the Slavs. I have no wish to be told it is not true—because I know it is true—that Mrs. Leslie signed an agreement that she would take timber from the Slavs. In any investigation that may be made I do not want to get a report from the department telling me that what I have said it not true. I know it is true. There is another instance of a man who had a contract to supply ginlet wood to the mines. He could get tons of it within a short radius of Kalgoorlie, but the forest rangers would not let him. No; it had to come from the Slavs on the Kurrawang woodline. I want an inquiry made as to whether that is so, and whether the officers of the Forests Department are advising the Minister to prohibit the cutting of timber on Government reserves so that everything shall go out to the woodline where the Britishers will not get a look-in at cutting timber. I do not want the inquiry conducted by Mr. Kessell. It is a pretty state of affairs, and everyone seems to know what is going on except the man in charge of the Forests Department. I think I have said enough to show that I am dissatisfied with what is going on. The Minister will tell me that he is helpless because of the scarcity of money. I shall not go into that question now. There is one other

matter to which I wish to draw attention. On the Esperance line there is a siding called Speddingup and there are pioneers there who should receive every ounce of encouragement. The Government are contending all the time that costs of production should be brought down. The pioneers at Speddingup have gone on to sandplain country and one family named Smith have spent a considerable amount of money there already. They should be encouraged in every possible way. These people ask that a siding should be put in at Speddingup so that a truck may be shunted on to it. At present they have to pay all sorts of extra charges. That is not the way to encourage pioneers. I hope the Chief Secretary will draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to the disability under which these people labour. At least they should have a privilege similar to that granted to the settlers of Scaddan and Grass Patch who do not pay the extra charges that are levied from the people at Speddingup. I hope that before Parliament rises something will be done for the farmers in the way of increased prices for their commodities. The people in this State who are living in plenty, or who have good jobs, should be made to pay their share towards the assistance of their unfortunate brothers who are not getting it.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [9.20]:

I am sorry to have to take up the running at this late hour of the night, but circumstances compel me to do so. I shall be leaving for the country to-morrow morning and I understand the Minister is anxious to bring the debate on the Address-in-reply to an early conclusion. Therefore, I shall be as brief as I can. I join with other members in the congratulations extended to you, Sir, on your re-election as President of the Chamber. I also extend congratulations to the new members and express my regret at the passing of those to whom reference has already been made. I regret also to learn of the serious illness of Mr. Allsop. The first matter mentioned in the Speech which comes to my attention is that of wheat production. That it continues to be satisfactory is something that we can all feel proud and happy about, but as we all know it is not only a question of the yield, and while we have to be thankful for that, we must realise that the wheatgrower cannot be expected to continue his operations until con-

ditions make it worth his while to do so. In this State we ourselves are not able to raise any money with which to pay a bonus or make it worth while for the wheatgrower to continue. Therefore I hope that representations will be made to the Federal Parliament to again grant a bonus to the wheatgrowers. This is one of the things on which all members of Parliament in the State should unite. We should emphatically draw the attention of the Federal Government to the vital necessity for doing something of that nature. The Federal Government have seen fit to take away the gold bonus after having reduced it, and whilst in certain parts of the Central Province there are goldfields, I am bound to say that during the period gold is bringing a high price, and wheat, an unpayable price, if the Federal Government must take away the bonus on gold because of the enhanced value of the commodity, the farmers have every right to ask that the payment of the wheat bonus shall be continued. The next matter we come to is the reduction of interest by the Agricultural Bank. That reduction is very welcome. The Associated Banks have also reduced the rates of interest. Without desiring to join in the chorus against the banks in the State, and whilst there is the necessity for interest rates to come down, we have every reason to be thankful that our banking institutions are conducted in a manner which has saved us from a catastrophe such as that which has happened in the United States of America, where in the last 12 months no fewer than 1,000 banks closed their doors. We have a small idea of the trouble, inconvenience and hardship that can be caused by such institutions failing. In our own city a small bank that had not been functioning for a great length of time closed its doors. That did a considerable amount of harm. Just here I should like to ask how it was made possible for such a bank to keep going at all, because there were ugly rumours about it from its very inception. When that bank closed its doors a number of primary producers throughout the State were badly hit. The operations of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, notwithstanding the hostile criticism that was levelled against it in this and another place, has exceeded the expectations of the Government and certainly of many members of Parliament, and likewise many connected with the agricultural industry. I am sorry I cannot say the same about an Act that created a lot of discussion and

to which a great amount of thought was given—I refer to the Hire Purchase Agreement Act. It will be remembered that when the Bill was before us it was referred to a select committee, and notwithstanding what we did we have proof of the old adage that a coach and four can be driven through an Act of Parliament. I am in a position to say that the Hire Purchase Agreement Act has not given that redress and relief that many primary producers required, but I hope, notwithstanding the difficulties that surround the matter, the Government will give it consideration and bring down amendments that will be more in keeping with the ideas of members which were expressed when the measure was being considered. With regard to the pastoral industry, I understand that the wool clip will be a record one, but here again, while not troubled about the production, we are troubled about the price. I have here a communication from one of the wool companies showing the following figures:—

			Production.	Value.
1927	..	..	13,878 bales	£402,458
1928	..	..	14,312 "	346,729
1929	..	..	13,938 "	204,568
1930	..	..	12,301 "	131,337
1931	..	..	13,168 "	146,544

Another direction in which low prices have seriously affected business is the sale of sheep. While in 1928 this company sold 82,150 sheep at 14s. 4d. or £58,862, the total sales last year were 203,280 at an average price of 5s. or an aggregate value of £51,106. Thus three times as many sheep yielded only a slightly smaller return. So no words are required to draw attention to the very serious condition of the pastoral industry. We learn from the Speech that in dairying we have almost overtaken the local market, but that the imports for 1931-32 indicate that although considerable progress has been made, we still have a long way to go. In this connection I remind the Government that the land in the Central Province served by the port of Geraldton is considered by those in a position to judge to be amongst the best mixed farming country in the State. Quite recently the Director of Agriculture, paying us one of his too few visits, expressed surprise at the undoubted suitability of the land in the Victoria district for the production of fat lambs. Dairying also is making great strides in our district. The rich lands of the Irwin River flats under any sort of jud-

icious administration in the past would now be producing as much butter as the South-West factories, and at nothing like the cost to the State. In Northampton and other districts the low prices of wheat and sheep have forced settlers to turn their attention to dairying, and with very satisfactory results. I should like to draw the attention of the Government to the Chapman State Farm. I can remember many years ago when we had young men up there learning to farm. That has been discontinued, I suppose for some very good reason. The people of the Central Province, if they want their sons to learn farming, must send them down to Narraggin or to Muresk. But it has for too long been overlooked that in this State with its great agricultural distances, the conditions vary tremendously. We have the Chapman State Farm up there, and I should like to know why we cannot have at least half a dozen students on that farm. If there is a good reason for it, I should be glad to hear it. Here I want to express my appreciation of the promise the Minister for Lands made to some people in our district, that as soon as possible he would arrange for a visit by the Railway Advisory Board to report on the railway project north of Yuna. The board has been, and members know that the report made is very favourable. There is no doubt we have there a very fine stretch of country eminently suited to wheat production. It is hard to believe that this is so far north as the Murchison River, and that it is not merely the opinion of men, but that splendid results have been obtained. Of course we know that money is not available just now for the construction of the railway, but many of us are of the opinion that if money is to be advanced to keep men employed, it is high time they were put on to work that will help us in maintaining the volume of our exports wherewith to meet our commitments and balance the Budget. Therefore, if it be true that there is a fair quantity of second-hand rails in our district, I think attention might be given to using them up. It would save purchasing the rails, and if there be not sufficient second-hand sleepers in satisfactory condition, at all events the State produces sleepers. If we have the rails we have the major portion of the line, and the men on sustenance work might just as well be employed in laying that railway to enable farmers to lift their wheat

to the port of Geraldton on which so much money has been spent and which, unless it be properly utilised and occupied, will not pay interest and sinking fund. Now I should like to know from the Minister whether any consideration has ever been given to doing anything with our abandoned farms beyond placing caretakers on them. I understand that there are no fewer than 1,000 abandoned farms, representing some tens of thousands of public money. I was wondering whether the Government in the not very distant future could get sufficient money to enable them to do something with those farms; not in the way of calling for tenders as at present, but to place unemployed agriculturists on them under the supervision of Agricultural Bank inspectors. It has occurred to me that unemployed men with agricultural experience might well be put on to those farms, of course under the supervision of a departmental inspector, each of whom might be given half a dozen farms to supervise.

Hon. J. Cornell interjected.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I realise that, and perhaps the Government having had such experience, would prefer the arrangement I have suggested rather than put men back on to farms on which they had previously failed. This is a matter in which we are all interested, and the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank might be able to call in some experienced agriculturists to assist him in this problem. I can quite understand that if so large a number of farms were on the books of any one or more of the Associated Banks, some action would be taken beyond what has been taken by the Government to preserve the equity in those properties. An abandoned farm very quickly deteriorates and unfortunately even the houses on them are not left alone, for vandalism is carried on to a shocking extent. I think it would be well worth while for the Government to give attention to this matter. I hope the Minister will make a note of this, for it is most impressive to listen to the remarks of members of Parliament during a long dreary debate like this which costs the country a considerable amount of money and justifies the comments made in the "West Australian" at times, especially if the suggestions put out by members are not given due consideration. Do the Government take any notice of the suggestions thrown out? I think we are justified in asking that question. Very often we hear that the party system should be

abolished, and that we should have elective Ministries. But this kind of thing is all by the way while the strongest individual critical party in Parliament still sets its face against anything of the kind. If we cannot have that, then members of Parliament should be encouraged to put up constructive criticism in the assurance that due attention will be given to it. Whilst the increase in our production is gratifying, it is necessary to direct attention to the imports of those things which we could and should provide in our own State. Notwithstanding that we are told in the Speech that we have just about overtaken the local demand, I find that in 1931-32 we imported butter to the value of £236,041. In the previous year we imported £390,897 worth, so that we are improving. During 1931-32, the cheese imports were valued at £90,859. Now that we have a cheese factory we shall continue to improve on these figures. During 1931-32 we imported bacon and hams to the value of £682,103, and potatoes to the value of £11,573. These figures show how necessary it is that we should concentrate on the encouragement of local industry. Good progress has been made, but much remains to be done. For the year ended the 30th June, 1931, we imported £158,275 worth of confectionery. Worse still, we imported £1,538,969 worth of apparel and soft goods, and £388,447 worth of boots and shoes. We have woollen mills of our own. We were told the other evening by Mr. Wittenoom that the mill is exporting clothing to the Eastern States. The Minister for Mines and the Chamber of Manufactures are constantly trying to din into our ears the necessity for displaying greater loyalty to the State and giving greater patronage to local industry. Yet we find we are sending a million and a half of money out of the State for apparel and soft goods. That may be the fault of our manufacturers, and the price charged may be too high. I heard a lady in this city speaking over the wireless a few weeks ago. This woman has battled for years. I had never met her, but she said she had been paying £50,000 a year in wages, but to-day she was struggling along with a payment of £5,000. A man I knew in Geraldton started a clothing factory. He used to employ 300 or 400 people, but to-day he can only keep 20 or 30 going. Is it any wonder our people are out of work when there are so many citizens who are disloyal to the State, and refuse to

pay the small extra charge in the purchase of locally manufactured goods? I do not know what is best to be done. There is something wrong with the people. I am a son of this State. During the war we were second to none in the response to our country's call. This matter is just as serious as the war. I do not know that Parliament can do any good. We could close down Parliament, and send members all over the country preaching the necessity for patronising locally manufactured goods and providing employment for our young people. Of course it is hard on the housewife, who goes out with her all too meagre purse, that she should pay the extra price demanded for local goods. It is a short-sighted policy to buy the cheapest stuff and fail to patronise our own State.

Hon. J. Cornell: You throw all the blame on the purchaser and not on the retailer.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am doing nothing of the kind. I said I did not know whether or not the trouble was due to the extra price charged. The Arbitration Court, I think, provides for a higher wage in this State than in any other State. Gold mining is referred to in the Speech as one of the brightest features in the State's development. Reference is made to the exchange and the gold bonus and to the gratifying developments on the Golden Mile and at Wiluna. Other goldfields representatives can, I am sure, offer some meed of praise to the Government for the assistance they have rendered to prospectors. On many occasions, however, complaints have been made to me concerning the niggardliness of the Government in the treatment they have accorded to individual prospectors. I think, however, the Government have done their best in a critical period. I ask the Chief Secretary to note the very serious condition of affairs resulting from the treatment of arsenic at Wiluna. There is such a thing as arsenical dermatitis. I have seen men in the Geraldton hospital suffering from that disease. We understand from Dr. Atkinson that the matter is receiving attention. I have read his letter. Notwithstanding that he has visited the mines and looked into the preventive methods that are adopted, it seems to me that the Principal Medical Officer is not fully seized of the serious nature of the trouble. If Dr. Atkinson had seen a man I saw in the Geraldton hospital I think he would have regarded the matter in a more serious light. It may be difficult

to do anything that will altogether prevent the trouble, but we have a right to expect that every possible means will be adopted to safeguard the health of the men employed from the ravages of this disease. The Speech also makes reference to land. Again I stress the need for doing something, even at this late hour, to bring into use the thousands of acres alongside existing railways that are locked up as reserves. I do not want posterity to be robbed of its land, but when so much territory is serving no useful purpose, and is close to existing railways, something should be done with it. Will the Minister let us know why so much land has been locked up in this way?

The Chief Secretary: To what reserves are you referring?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The information can readily be obtained from the reserves branch of the Lands Department. This position applies to many parts of the State. I also wish to draw attention to the areas of alienated land alongside existing railways that is also unused. How much better off we would have been now if years ago Governments had insisted on the holders complying with the conditions under which the land was granted. I have previously directed attention to this matter, but very little has been done. Cases of hardship frequently occur, and it is only right they should receive consideration. After due allowance has been made for such cases, determined action should be taken to remedy the position. The consideration with respect to the utilisation of idle lands should be those lands which are within reasonable distance of a railway. Successive Governments have failed to bring into operation the provisions of the Closer Settlement Act. Will the Minister say why this Act has not been brought into force? If it is considered unworkable, the conditions should be amended so that it might be utilised in a manner that would be favourable to the landholder, and to the people of the State generally. If the present Minister for Lands can do something in the direction indicated he will accomplish what will be worth while. Considerable economies have been effected in the railway system, but one wonders why they were not brought about years ago. One also wonders why, if we have that management which Commissioner control is supposed to provide, it was possible to have such a big reduction in the number of the employees and yet maintain the existing service. It is stated

that over a thousand employees have been dismissed. In a comparatively small system such as we have that is a drastic reduction, especially as the services are being maintained as they were before.

Hon. J. Cornell: We shall pay the price later on in maintenance.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If there be any doubt as to the ability of the Commissioner successfully to administer the railways under existing conditions, I would refer to the written statement in which he said he was obliged to take whatever coal the miners cared to supply and to pay for it at the basic price demanded by the supplying company. If that is not an unholy alliance it will be difficult to find one. I should like to know where the taxpayer comes in, the person who must rightfully be considered. If we are to have political control, let us get rid of Commissioner control. If we are not to have it, let us give the Commissioner a free hand, such as is given to our judges. Who was responsible for reducing the fares in the metropolitan area? It is stated that the Government refused to do this, but that after the trains had been run empty for a couple of years they acceded to the request of the Commissioner. How long, I wonder, must we wait before the Commissioner reduces fares in the country? At present three first-class returns over a distance of 17 miles in the country cost 17s. 9d., whilst a similar number of first-class returns from Perth to Armadale, a distance of 19 miles, cost 12s. 6d., a difference of 5s. 3d. This anomaly should be remedied, especially if the Government have the power to do it. Ever since cheap freights were introduced by the Midland Company between Perth and Geraldton, a profit has been made by that service. Had the Government remembered that and adopted a similar method, the State railways would not have been the losing proposition they are to-day. A reduction in wool freights has taken place; but motor trucks in the country, like motor buses in the city, secured the business, and to get it back is going to mean a hard struggle. Motor trucks are still competing with the railways, bringing down wool hundreds of miles as back-loading. If the Commissioner cannot fix freights or fares, cannot fix wages or hours or conditions of labour, cannot dismiss an employee unless the Appeal Board approve, how can it be claimed that our railways are controlled

by the Commissioner? In the South Australian House of Assembly it was stated that the Government were considering the introduction of a Bill to provide for the parliamentary control of railway operations and expenditure. These are at present under the complete jurisdiction of the Railways Commissioner. I am given to understand, by one who should know, that £20,000 a year could be saved to our Railway Department if Collie coal were covered until required; that when the coal is being conveyed in trucks to the various out-stations, and when it is put into dumps before being used on locomotives, some arrangement should be made to have it covered. I am not prepared to say just how the dumps or stacks would be covered. I know that the stack or dump at Geraldton occupies a fair space. The statement quoted above was made to me by an experienced coal miner, who explained how the coal deteriorated when exposed to the air. If there is anything in the suggestion, I hope that it will be noted, and that experiments will be made to test whether the position is as stated. The next item mentioned in the Speech is unemployment. We all agree that this is one of the most serious problems facing Australia to-day. The apparent inability of the world's leading statesmen, economists and thinkers generally, during the last couple of years especially, to evolve some method or system to check this devastating state of affairs, has been such as to try out the stoutest hearts and the keenest brains. Yet in spite of the serious effect this condition of affairs has undoubtedly imposed upon so many people throughout the world, it would appear that in every country the majority of the people are not really vitally concerned. It is, therefore, if that supposition be correct, incumbent upon those of us who have been elected to positions of responsibility, to apply ourselves very seriously to a consideration of the problem, remembering how handicapped we are in our endeavours to arrive at a solution of the difficulties which are causing such widespread injury. If we approach the subject in that spirit, it should assist to soften the criticism we feel it our duty to apply to those who occupy responsible administrative positions. It is with a full realisation of the unprecedentedly difficult period through which the State is passing that I offer my contribution to this debate. I am not sufficiently egotistical to imagine that I am able

to teach those in control, but I do most certainly think that members should give expression to their views, even though it would appear that not the slightest notice is taken of them. I think that under the present world-wide conditions the first thing we must try our utmost to do is to provide employment for all our people. If an honest endeavour is made to do it, it can be done; and then there is no doubt at all in my mind that we shall be able honourably to fulfil all our obligations and also to increase the volume of our exports. Mr. Lyons, when Leader of the Federal Opposition, wrote an article which was published in the "West Australian" of the 6th October, 1931, and which contained the following passage:—

Three fundamental problems confront Australia. Firstly, we must retain our national solvency. Secondly, we must provide employment and an equitable standard of living for all rural and city workers. Thirdly, we must maintain and progressively increase the volume of our exports.

I respectfully suggest that Mr. Lyons's No. 2 should have been his No. 1, and his No. 3 his No. 2. His No. 1 should and could only be done when international action is taken to manage the currency and maintain price levels. In support of that contention I quote a debate in the House of Commons which was contributed to by Sir Robert Horne, Mr. L. S. Amery and Mr. Winston Churchill. We all know that Sir Robert Horne is looked upon as an authority, and not merely as a theoretical authority but as one with considerable practical experience; and this is what Sir Robert Horne has to say of the currency:—

These questions of currency always seem very remote from the ordinary life of the people, who have not had to consider them for more than 100 years, and yet the question of currency sits down at every table that is spread with a meal, in every cottage or castle throughout the country. It very intimately concerns us in the House of Commons. Aristotle said long ago that money exists not by nature but by law. It is the law that gives it efficacy. It is the law that says what is legal tender. It is in this House that we make the law. We were the people who decided about our return to the Gold Standard. We were the people who gave authority for £15,000,000 to be added to the fiduciary note issue. In fact we are, God help us, the people who have to manage this currency, under the advice and through the means of the Chancellor of the Exchequer using as his instrument the Bank of England. . . . I will venture to read to the Committee a statement in the report of the Macmillan Committee which I do not think has received the attention it deserves. It is one

of the most emphatic and striking statements that has ever come from a committee set up by a Government. On the subject of prices they say this: "To allow prices to be stabilised at approximately their present level would be a serious disaster for all countries of the world alike; and the avoidance of such an event should be the prime object of international statesmanship. Our objective should be, so far as it lies within the power of this country, to influence the international price level, first of all to raise prices a long way above the present level and then to maintain them at the level thus reached with such stability as can be managed. We recommend that this objective be accepted as the guiding aim of the monetary policy of this country." I do not propose to argue that point of view. I accept it as sound, and given by one of the most important committees that has ever discussed monetary problems in this country. Some people take a different view but they are very few in number . . . The worst, the most pitiable, victims of this terrible economic disaster are, of course, the primary producing countries. They are in the main the borrowing countries, the new countries of the world. What has happened to them? They have now to find in commodities twice and in some cases three times as much to meet the interest on their debt as was necessary at the time the money was borrowed, and with the cost level at which they have to work it is impossible for them to do it. The result is that you have had defaults in many countries, and if this condition persists you will have many more.

Mr. Amery, ex-Secretary of State for the Dominions, is well known in Australia. Referring to Sir Robert Horne's statements, he says—

I would support my right hon. friend in earnestly pressing the Government to tell us their general monetary policy. Do they, for instance, subscribe to the general objective laid down by the Macmillan Committee that it is essential to influence the price level so as to raise it a long way above the present level and to maintain it there with as much stability as possible?

Lastly, I will quote briefly Mr. Winston Churchill—

When I was moved by many arguments and forces in 1925 to return to the gold standard, I was assured by the highest experts, and our experts are men of great ability and of indisputable integrity and sincerity, that we were anchoring ourselves to reality and stability; and I accepted their advice. I take for myself and my colleagues of other days whatever degree of blame and burden there may be for having accepted their advice. But what has happened? We have had no reality, no stability. The price of gold has risen since then by more than 70 per cent. That is as if a 12-inch footrule had suddenly been stretched to 19 or 20 inches; as if the pound avoirdupois had suddenly become 23 or 24 ounces instead of—how much is it?—16. Look at what this has meant to everybody who has been

compelled to execute their contracts upon this irrationally enhanced scale. Look at the gross unfairness of such a distortion to all producers of new wealth, and to all that labour and science and enterprise can give us. Look at the enormously increased volume of commodities which has to be created in order to pay off the same mortgage debt or loan. Minor fluctuations might well be ignored, but I say quite seriously that this monetary convulsion has now reached a pitch where I am persuaded that the producers of new wealth will not tolerate indefinitely so hideous an oppression.

These declarations from experienced men—I think we may reasonably call them statesmen—make us understand why it is that we get statements such as those made by Mr. Williams this evening in speaking on farmers' disabilities, statements of almost an inflammatory nature, statements which no member of Parliament should make unless it is, as I think in the case of the hon. member, that such a condition of affairs makes him wonder what is going to happen. We should confront them with the serious position in which the primary producers are placed. Need I apologise to hon. members for reading the opinion of men so highly placed? It shows that they realise the position and any action taken by the Government to secure relief to the people will, I am sure, receive the earnest consideration that we have the right to expect. I think it is possible to do more than we have done to relieve unemployment. Pending that international action that is vital to deal effectively with it, those who are in receipt of regular salary or wages should make a greater general sacrifice for the common good. I want to read a public announcement made by the Premier, as reported in the "West Australian" of the 1st September last. When speaking at a meeting of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, he said—

One of the great troubles in this State, I think, is that there is so little public spirit. There are any number of critics, but not much public spirit. This is to be regretted. A man may be told that there is no work, or that wages are down, but why can't he be told why that is the position. We criticise, but we do not exert ourselves to make the position clear. In that connection much can be done by men who are not in Parliament. I think it is necessary that a great deal of public spirit should be abroad in these times. Everybody has some part to play with regard to his fellow-man, and the difficult period through which we are passing needs the efforts of all men to combat it.

The Premier states that much can be done by "men who are not in Parliament." For

my part, I say that much more can, and should, be done by men who are in Parliament, even in our own State Parliament, although admittedly we have not that control over currency or price level considerations that we would like. On the other hand, we are able to make laws, and surely about the first it should be our duty to frame is one that will ensure that, as far as possible, every person in the State is made to take his or her share of the sacrifice that thousands of our fellow citizens have to make. They have to make that sacrifice through no fault of their own, but are placed in their unfortunate position because of the collapse of conditions to which we had become so accustomed that we were caught unawares. Many factors no doubt contribute to the present deplorable state of affairs which will take time to remedy. Let us do what can and what has been repeatedly asserted we would do—make a really serious attempt to equalise the sacrifice borne by the people. I maintain that can be best and most quickly accomplished by Government action. If the Government cannot secure Parliamentary support, then surely it were better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all. Just as I voted for conscription so that my country might call upon any and every man to assist her in her hour of need, so now am I prepared to vote that every person shall be called upon to help. When one realises the thousands of pounds that are spent every week on gambling, drink and various forms of amusement, the fact is brought home to us that there must be thousands of people who are able to spare something more for their less fortunate fellows who can earn but sufficient to keep themselves alive while many, indeed, are denied even the opportunity to work. On the 19th September, 1931, a well-known Australian and a man formerly prominent in the political life of the Commonwealth, but who now occupies a judicial position and is Lieut-Governor of Victoria, Sir William Irvine, made the following statement:—

Qualities of heroism, endurance and patience were needed to lead Australia out of its troubles. The crisis was one in which ordinary men were incapable of forming their own conclusions. It presented features different from those of any crisis in history. One might almost call it a currency crisis. It was only necessary to look around at the evidence of productive wealth in Australia to-day. Wool and wheat were desired as much as ever. The crisis affecting prices was due entirely to a dislocation of the machinery of exchange.

It was a technical and banking question, possessing features which even the financial crisis of the Great War did not present. It was a question which must be solved by the financial geniuses of the world. It was essential that Australia should carry through a drastic system of economy.

Continuing, Sir William Irvine said:—

It is not merely an economic, financial and political crisis; it is one which will test the character of the people of Australia more even than the Great War did. Heroism and valour were shown by Australians who went to the war. "There must now be heroism, endurance and patience. No other qualities will lead us out of this trouble. The crisis is assuming in certain aspects a moral importance which is almost of greater moment than the financial aspect. Our one sheet anchor is the character of the people, particularly of the young, upon whom must fall the responsibility and burden of the future.

When we think of the position facing our young people, should that not make us ready for the sacrifice? Many people have made sacrifices, but those sacrifices have not been so general or as heavy as the occasion demands. In the financial columns of the "West Australian" on the 4th February this year there appeared the following statement:—

A trend towards a more normal statistical banking position is revealed in the aggregates of the 10 trading banks in their Australian business for the December quarter. This swing is due largely to the benefit that has accrued from the movement of wool and wheat, and the relief afforded by the receipt of produce. Deposits are £5,023,843 higher than 12 months earlier, and the fact that current accounts have contributed the larger part of the increase, £3,650,179, is noteworthy. Fixed deposits are higher by £1,373,664. A stronger factor in the improved position is a fall of £19,867,232 in advances from their high level, due in large measure to the liquidation of overdrafts.

On the 9th January, the following British official wireless message was despatched regarding the good results achieved by large British banks during a difficult year. The statement said—

Despite the difficult problems presented by the past year, Lloyds, Barclays, the National Provincial, Westminster, and Midland Banks—the four members of the "big five" in British banking, which have now announced their 1931 results—show highly satisfactory statements. Lloyds results were made known to-day and the total dividend on "A" shares was 15 per cent. for the year, less tax. Barclays maintained a 14 per cent. dividend on "B" shares, the Westminster made a distribution for the year of 18 per cent., and the National Provincial of 16 per cent. The Midland dividend was

16 per cent., compared with 18 per cent. last year. On the exchange, bank shares continued very strong. Banks showed a moderate decline in such a difficult year, but dividends are maintained practically at rates declared last summer, which are a little lower than in the previous year.

Is it any wonder that we hear harsh words spoken about the banks? Again quoting from the financial columns of the "West Australian," I find that a prominent wool company in this State showed a net profit for the year ended the 30th June last, of £102,699 and declared a dividend of 4 per cent. The company carried £6,953 forward. The company's reserve fund totals £1,000,000 and their capital £2,393,640. The net profits made by the company for the past few years were as follows:—

		Profit.		Dividend.
		£		Per cent.
1928	..	252,346	..	10
1929	..	227,106	..	10
1930	..	128,724	..	5
1931	..	99,820	..	4
1932	..	102,699	..	4

Then there is the position of a well-known newspaper company in this State. Last year a net profit of £61,368 was made, an improvement of £4,172 on the results of 1931 but £25,000 below those of 1930. The company paid £16,000 in Federal and State taxation, declared a dividend of 8 per cent., and carried forward £20,000 to the general reserve fund. In their report the directors stated—

There has been no improvement in the trading conditions during the year, and it is by reason of economies in working costs and by efficiency that the trading profit is approximately the same as last year.

So many of these complain if their results are not up to what they have experienced in past years. A drop from 10 per cent. to 4 per cent. would probably be felt by the shareholders of the wool company, but what about the people who are producing the wool? Their profits have not only been reduced but have entirely disappeared. Many wool-growers have been able to continue operations only by drawing on their reserves. The same applies to the wheat growers. Everybody else has been making money, even at a reduced rate, out of products grown at a loss. This cannot continue, and it is for the Government and Parliament, as representative of the whole of the people, to see that those producing the wealth of the coun-

try receive the protection and assistance that will encourage them to continue their operations. In addition to making the whole of the people contribute a fair share towards the cost of providing for those who are working at a loss or cannot even find work at all, we must see to it that those who will not work shall be suitably dealt with. I suggest that attention be given to the reduction of the cost of Government in every possible way. There is no longer any necessity for the Licensing Court. Good work has been done, but the police should be able to see that the present satisfactory conditions are maintained. If we are to retain the Arbitration Court, then the two lay members are certainly no longer a necessity. Then there is the question of joint electoral rolls; that principle has been adopted in New South Wales. When men receive 14 days' annual leave, and hold full-time positions, when others in the same State cannot get work at all, surely Parliament should take the opportunity of saving £90,000, by abolishing long-service leave, which was never approved by Parliament. They could also effect a further saving by abolishing long-service leave to salaried officers as well. Why should that not be done? Why tax the people to provide conditions that those taxed cannot afford for themselves? Is it not time we called upon those who are in a position to do so to pay for their University training and so save some £30,000 a year? At the same time, to encourage those who are really anxious to study, increased scholarships should be given. I would rather the whole amount now represented by the grant to the University were spent in providing scholarships. We would then have the satisfaction of feeling that the money was being expended on those who were willing to work. Then there is the saving that could be made in the conducting of Parliament. Is it too much to hope that the Printing Committee will reduce the number of publications every year? Reports and returns are sent out, and I cannot understand the reason for it. Surely if a reasonable number were kept at Parliament House, that would suffice. Then if members required copies, they could be supplied. My opinion as to the reduction of members is well known. I hope the Government will take action also to reduce the number of Ministers, a matter that was referred to by the Premier some months ago. The Govern-

ment Printing Office, I feel sure, should be investigated. Attention should be given to the retirement of all officers of 60 years of age. The present economic position compels attention to this matter so that younger men may be given a chance. Another economy which would not inflict any great hardship would be to lengthen the life of Parliament to four or five years. Other well-governed countries have a longer interval than three years between general elections, and the times demand that this economy should be brought about now, in order to save the expense of a general election next year. Change will not of itself bring better or worse times. Notwithstanding the severe strain to which many of our people have been subject, I am satisfied that in trying to meet the position as Australian people have done, they have sought to adopt the right course, and as a result of that course having been adopted, the confidence of which we hear so much and without which, under our present system, we cannot progress, is steadily being regained. This, with other factors, I think, will slowly and surely lead to happier days, and it is my desire that we may all be very much wiser men for the experience gained during this most depressing period. I support the motion.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [10.33]:

I do not intend to detain members, but the Chief Secretary is anxious to bring the Address-in-reply debate to a speedy conclusion in order that the House may give attention to legislative measures. I join with other members in congratulating you, Mr. President, on the further mark of confidence bestowed upon you. You have earned the position, and I am satisfied that no one has carried out the duties with greater regard for the rights and privileges of the House, with greater consideration for the rights and privileges of members, or with a greater desire to assist them to carry out their duty to the country. I join in the expressions of regret at the demise of Mr. Lovekin and the loss of members at the recent election. I congratulate the new members, and I hope they will assist to give a careful judgment on all matters brought before the House, to carry on the business in a non-partisan spirit, and to retain the judicial attitude that has been characteristic of this House. Of the matters exercising the minds of Government and people alike, I suppose finance is the fore-

most. The Speech directs attention to the achievements in the realm of State trade, the wonderful response by the primary producers. When we think of the enormous production created by a mere handful of people, the result is marvellous. I attribute that to the fact that the ratio of masculinity is greater here than in most countries, that our men are of vigorous age, and throw themselves thoroughly into the work of producing the commodities required by the world. It is unfortunate that we have fallen on a period when the prices for our primary products have declined and we have to conform to a lower standard. With our small population we have been able to produce £6,000,000 worth of exports in excess of our imports, which is an outstanding achievement. Our production per head of population is twice that of the next highest State, and that speaks volumes for the work of those engaged in primary production. Much of that result is due to the good work in the gold mining industry. Gold is a highly necessary commodity at the present time and the output is increasing. We hope that the increase of production will continue and that greater confidence will be inspired, not only in the Old Country, but in other parts of the world. We hope that new capital will be introduced still further to develop the mines that are only waiting for capital to work them on a large scale. Much of the legislation passed in recent years, I fear, has somewhat destroyed the confidence that capital requires, and unless we can restore confidence, it will be difficult to get the requisite capital. The present Government are doing much to inspire confidence. A better feeling undoubtedly exists, and assuredly there will be an increase of interest abroad in our mining development. We hope that from the Ottawa conference beneficial results will accrue.

Hon. C. B. Williams called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I regret that it has been necessary to disturb members, but I thank the hon. member for securing me a better audience, and I hope they will not be disappointed. What appeals to me as a hopeful sign is that the main aim and object of our representatives at Ottawa was to increase prices. Recently, we conducted a wool campaign to use more wool. During that

campaign I discovered that whereas the wool grower was realising only about eightpence per lb. for his wool, the price of wool to users actually increased. The ordinary skein of wool the people use, which weighs 1oz., went up in price by the amount of 2d. That meant that wool had risen in Perth 2s. 8d. a lb. whilst in London the price quoted showed it had gone down 5 per cent. It is very unsatisfactory to the wool growers to know that whilst the price in London had gone down 5 per cent., locally it had gone up 2s. 8d. At that time everyone was encouraged to buy wool freely so as to support the wool industry in Australia. Even before the wool went up 2d. for a skein, 10s. 8d. was being charged for the skein. Thus while the grower of wool was selling his product for 8d., which was the average price being realised, he was being charged 13s. 4d. for the skein, and anybody who went in to purchase woollen goods found the prices were on about the same scale as they had to pay for similar goods when wool was fetching 2s. 6d. or 3s. a lb. It seems to me rather extraordinary that the woolgrowers' price has come down to such an extent. It is not comparable with any fall that has taken place in respect of articles that are manufactured from wool. The same thing applies to pretty well everything for which the primary producer is responsible, except gold. I have been twitted with not being a purchaser of articles such as leather goods, for instance, harness required for the farm. Station owners and farmers who have been sending in sheep skins to the market have realised 2d. or 3d. for them, but when those same pelts are tanned they fetch no less than 4s. or 5s. each. Later, when an article is manufactured from the pelts, the price is still further added to. That is what the farmer has been up against for a considerable time. He has to pay a greatly enhanced price for the articles he requires, whilst he himself receives practically nothing for the raw material. The same thing applies to the hides of cattle which may realise between 7s. and 10s. apiece, and when turned into leather fetch in the vicinity of £4. Those who sell the hides when they want to buy leather goods have to pay enormously increased prices for their requirements. The question arises then, what happens to create such a difference in the figures between the original cost of the raw material and the cost of the manufactured goods? I might instance a

case that came under my notice a few days ago. A man sent 41 cases of apples to the markets and received for the whole of the consignment a return of 5d. Who got the benefit of those 41 cases? Somebody undoubtedly benefited to a great extent. The community pay big prices for the fruit but the producers get practically nothing. In every direction the same kind of thing happens. I saw a letter in the Press a few days ago stating that the woolgrowers were quite satisfied they were not getting a reasonable price for their output, while the people who were manufacturing articles from the wool were getting good returns for their products. Not only in that direction but in all with which other producers are associated the same thing is taking place. Therefore one is glad to notice in the Governor's Speech that it is proposed to adopt bulk handling. While in the past the wheatgrower was satisfied to receive a fairly good price, there is a consensus of opinion to-day amongst the growers that they must get to bedrock with regard to costs. There seems to be a certain amount of opposition to the bulk handling proposals, just as there was some years ago when we first embarked upon wheatgrowing and were trying to encourage people to go on the land. In 1903-04 when we started to export a little wheat, we had an idea then of going in for bulk handling, but vested interests seemed to be too strong. We have for a great number of years hoped that it would be introduced, and now because of the strenuous efforts on the part of the community associated with wheat, together with the backing of the Government, there is a promise of the introduction of a measure to provide for bulk handling.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There was a Bill for bulk handling introduced in 1919.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes, but I am satisfied that that was quite the wrong time to introduce it. It was a wise move at that time to decide to wait until we saw what was likely to happen in New South Wales. The results of bulk handling in that State proved to us that it would have been folly on our part to have embarked upon the scheme at that time. All the costs so inflated at that period would have to be borne by the farmers, and that would have made the position very much worse than going on without it for some years.

The Chief Secretary: We had bulk storage in 1918.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We had bulk storage during the war period, but anyone who had experience of it will be satisfied that we do not want a repetition of it. I was producing wheat and many of my friends were doing so, and what happened then was sufficient to convince us that the further away we get from Government control of the wheat business, the better will it be for us all.

The Chief Secretary: Did you not support that Bill?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I attended a joint meeting of the two Houses when the proposition was first put up. Mr. W. D. Johnson claimed that he himself had persuaded Parliament to inaugurate the system. For several years I had taken part, with others, in exporting wheat, and we found up to 1910 and 1912 that the prices that were to be paid to those who handled the wheat, under that Government system, were 100 per cent. more than they should have been. It was claimed that they had to have that price because they were taking the responsibility with regard to the wheat. We found, however, that no one took the responsibility except the people who grew the wheat. They had to foot the bill for all the losses during the war period of control. It was not only the Government handling from which we suffered but also from the gigantic wheat steal that took place when we had to supply the quota of New South Wales. That State received 7s. 6d. and we got 5s. 6d. That in itself showed us the amount of sympathy we might have expected from New South Wales even at that time in any transactions or business dealings. We have seen much the same thing in respect of Federation as a whole. Why those on the land want to get these improved conditions of handling is because we have been jockeyed into a position where we have become the hewers of wood and the drawers of water for the rest of the community, and we are beginning to feel that we shall be kept in that position, like the Israelites of old, who had to go through 40 dreary years in the desert. So there is a great clamour for all these improvements, and a very close scrutiny of the savings that can be made. I congratulate the Government on their earnest endeavour to bring about the bulk system of handling. The railways come into this picture. I can understand the Commissioner of Railways being very much against bulk handling, because it would put the de-

partment to some inconvenience and cost and he would lose a certain amount of revenue from the haulage of bags into the farming districts. That is the typical attitude held at Fremantle, where the Harbour Trust do not encourage bulk handling because it will make a wonderful difference to the time the vessels will have to remain in port, and so the trust will lose revenue. But we, on the other hand, want to take advantage of all that, whereas the vessel's interests are averse from the savings we shall make, and so they do not wish for any alteration in the existing system. It reminds me also of remarks made by Mr. Holmes and Mr. Williams and Mr. Hall regarding the railways and Collie coal. Those members were under the impression that the Commissioner of Railways was badly treated because he was expected to make the railways show a profit and pay 19s. a ton for his coal. From time to time the Commissioner has said that if he had his way he would prefer to use Newcastle coal exclusively. But it is to the credit of successive Governments that they have always encouraged the opening up of Collic mines, and induced the community to put up with the difficulties of Collie coal, which was said to give off sparks and set fire to crops in the summer months.

Hon. E. Rose: Where did they get their coal during war time?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Had the Governments not insisted upon opening up the Collic mines the State would have had difficulty in running its railways during the war. So too, much more recently, when there were strikes amongst the coal miners of New South Wales. And we are likely to have the same experience again for the New South Wales miners, we are told, will probably come out on strike. But even with the greatly reduced price of Collic coal there has not been a corresponding reduction in the railway freight charged on that coal. The Midland Railway Company would be only too glad to use Collie coal if they could get it at its value: but due to the excessively high railway freights on the coal from Collic to Perth, it is cheaper for the Midland Company to bring coal from Newcastle. So, too, the Albany Woollen Mills can get Newcastle coal at a better freight than they can get coal from Collic. The railways should introduce reasonable rates that would encourage trade. Then not only would the railways themselves get the coal cheaper, but they would enable

other people to create more freight for the railways, both by the use of Collie coal and by the increased trade that would be encouraged by the cheaper coal. It seems wrong that the railways should insist upon a reduction in the price of the coal but refuse to grant a corresponding reduction in the freight on the coal. I doubt if there has been a corresponding reduction in railway freights in any other direction. The department is ready to demand a reduction for itself, but is not inclined to pass it on. We see in the Speech reference to legislation under the heading of transport. Previously the Government put additional charges and embargoes on the motor transport along our roads, making it very much more difficult for people in the country. My constituents have been hit heavily as a result of legislation passed in connection with motor transport. The Commissioner of Railways should not require to approach Parliament to secure authorisation for impositions that will add to the difficulties and serious problems of transport. He should be required to handle his railways so as to cope effectively with the opposition of motor transport, and meet conditions as he finds them. It is extraordinary that the railways cannot cope with motor transport because the latter has to use the most expensive fuel in the world. The same applies to tyres and other requisites of motor transport and engines. On the other hand, the Commissioner of Railways can put down his lines more cheaply than is possible anywhere else in the world. Perhaps our railway construction has not been as cheap as it should have been. The cost of some lines has got almost completely out of hand, and it is high time great reductions were effected. Had we not adopted the day work principle, the Commissioner of Railways would not have been confronted with such high interest charges debited against his department. Some of the lines constructed in the wheat areas presented no engineering difficulties and should have been constructed more cheaply than the cost at which it was possible to make roads. Mr. Thomson and others, both inside and outside Parliament, have advocated a reduction in the number of members. It would be much better for economies to be effected, in conformity with the drastic reduction of incomes of those who seek to carry the industries of the country to a successful issue. I am

averse to a reduction in the number of members of Parliament because I believe in the old saying about safety in numbers. We have a vast area with a small scattered population. If we reduce the number of members of Parliament, we may leave those in the outlying parts without representation. It is difficult for a few members to travel all over the State to get in touch with those who are doing wonderful work in the out-back areas. If it is possible, I hope the Government will introduce a Redistribution of Seats Bill before the next general election to restore to the country areas some of the seats at present allocated to more populous areas. I would prefer to see a reduction in the salaries of members rather than a reduction in their numbers. I hope the Government will give attention to that phase before the next general election. A suggestion has been made that the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council rolls should be amalgamated. I do not see how that could be done successfully. I do not know whether there is any such proposal before the Government, but I would rather have a redistribution of seats for the Legislative Assembly with the alteration of Assembly electorates to conform more to those of the Legislative Council Province boundaries.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I would relish that change.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The boundaries should be altered and I would prefer to continue the present Legislative Council boundaries pending a redistribution of the Assembly seats. I regret the unsatisfactory answers I have received to questions I have asked in this House. I was surprised that I received so little consideration. I hope the Minister will help members when they ask for information, because there is very often more than meets the eye behind their queries. The questions I submitted were reasonable and could have been easily answered. There is a tendency on the part of the Government departments to withhold information from members and to submit tricky answers. It may be clever but it does not engender good feeling as between members of Parliament and departmental officials. I hope the Minister will help us to get the information we desire and will not sit behind officials and applaud them for their tactics. I sincerely hope that the Minister will help us in obtaining what we require from the depart-

ments. I do not wish to take up the time of members further at this late hour, but I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by Hon. E. Rose, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 13th September, 1932.

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

QUESTION—PEEL ESTATE.

Richardson Swamp Settlers.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Premier: What action is being taken by the Agricultural Bank to relieve the settlers on Richardson Swamp, Peel Estate?

The PREMIER replied: The matter is under consideration.

QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT.

Third Schedule Premiums.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE asked the Premier: 1 What amount has been paid by the mining industry in premiums under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act since its inception, also the amount paid by the Government on their behalf? 2, What has been the total payments under the Third Schedule for the same period?

The PREMIER replied: 1, £213,391 5s. 11d. up to 30th June, 1932, of which £83,154

was paid by the Government. 2, £25,146 10s. 9d. has been paid under the Third Schedule, in addition to which £20,000 has been re-funded to the Mines Department in respect of amounts met by that department which could have been claimed under the Third Schedule. A further £20,000 has been allocated for the same purpose. Under the Miner's Phthisis Act £278,187 has been paid, and it is estimated that the greater part of this sum might have been claimed under the Third Schedule. There is also an accruing liability in the case of every miner in respect of which some reserve must be created.

MESSAGES FROM THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

Messages from the Lieutenant-Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Main Roads Act Amendment Bill, and the Industries Assistance Act Continuance Bill.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This is mainly a Committee Bill, there being no outstanding principles involved. Several attempts have been made to amend the Road Districts Act. In 1929 the Hon. Mr. Cunningham brought down an amending Bill. That measure proposed to amend the franchise and to alter the name "road board" to "district council." In the Bill before the House neither of those amendments has a place. Under the Act a road board district may be abolished and amalgamated with some other district if the revenue from rates falls below £300 a year for two consecutive years. In the Bill it is proposed to increase that amount to £500, for it is thought that nowadays a board cannot properly function on a smaller income. It is further provided that if a road district be transferred to a municipal district the loan obligations incurred by the municipal district shall not be a liability within the area transferred to the municipality. Provision is also made that if a person nominates for membership of a board, knowing that he is not eligible, he