

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 29th October, 1925.

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

## BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: 'This is a Bill to amend the Road Districts Act, and is the first step towards effecting some reform in our methods of local government. Our Acts have not been brought up to date, and we are considerably behind the rest of the world in our system of local government. This is not a very extensive amendment, but I hope next session, when dealing with the Municipalities Act, to broaden that, and bring in a Bill to deal with bigger reforms in connection with local government than it is possible to do in respect to roads districts. I have tried to adopt as many as possible of the decisions of the road board conferences that have been held from time to time. I have been able to adopt practically the whole of the last list of amendments that was submitted to me, but my difficulty in following the conferences has been that one conference has differed from the previous one. It is not easy to get an idea of what the road boards are after on many different points.

Mr. Davy: They have that in common with Parliaments, have they not?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I suppose so. There is a distinct difference on fundamental points between one conference and another. The great bulk of the latest list of requests that has come to me from these conferences I have been able to adopt. The title of road districts as now set out in the law is altogether a misnomer. The work of a board is not confined to roads. It deals with a number of matters apart from them, and to call them road boards is wrong. Their functions extend to other activities than merely that of attend-

ing to roads. I have looked round for a more fitting title. I find that in other countries and States they are known as shire councils, county councils, and boroughs. These titles appear to me to have an old-world ring about them that is hardly applicable to Australia, although they have been adopted in some parts of this continent. In this Bill I have adopted the title that South Australia gives to its local governing bodies, namely that of district councils, which I think is a more fitting title. They are really district councils. They will do the work of local government in their districts, and it appears to me more fitting that these boards should be known as district councils, just as municipalities are known as municipal councils. The title now given to the presiding officer of a road board is "chairman." It is suggested that this should be altered to "president," and that the members of the board should become members of the council. I propose to make a fundamental alteration with regard to the qualification of electors. As my colleague, the Minister for Lands, has on more than one occasion informed this House, Australia is the only country, so far as we know, that permits of plural voting for local government. All the rest of the world has long ago abandoned that idea. I have had a search made to see if any mistake has been made, but we have been unable to find any country outside Australia that permits of plural voting for local government. This does not operate all over Australia, and Australia is certainly lagging behind the democratic sentiment that permeates the older countries where they have come down to "one man one vote."

Hon. G. Taylor: It may be the other way about. Ours may be the advanced legislation.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We have stood still in regard to many different reforms of this kind, while the rest of the world has advanced. In South Australia, where a district is not divided into wards, there is one vote for the district; but where the district is divided into wards there is one vote for each ward in respect of the property for which the ratepayer is assessed. In Tasmania the voting is like ours. It varies according to the valuation, and ranges from one vote to six. Our voting ranges from one to four.

Mr. Richardson: Do you propose to provide for only one ward?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I propose to have the system of one ratepayer one vote. If the ratepayer has property in more than one ward, he will have to make a choice as to which ward he will enrol for. He will be entitled to have only one vote for the council. The New South Wales Act provides that electors shall have as many votes as there are candidates, but not more than one vote for any one candidate. If three candidates are to be elected, they will have three votes, but if only one candidate is standing there will be only one vote, which is one man one vote.

Mr. Sampson: That is on the preferential system.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. In New Zealand the votes range from one to three, according to the valuations. In Queensland the system has been that of one ratepayer one vote. In Great Britain the system is similar to that of New South Wales. Every person entitled to vote may vote for any number of candidates not exceeding the number of vacancies, so that this amounts to only one man one vote. In no part of the world have I been able to find that plural voting is permitted for local government. Although the system of one man's vote being equal to another's at the poll is not altogether infallible, there is no other way known that is satisfactory as a means of judging the mental capacity of individuals and as to their knowledge of the subject that will be dealt with by the person elected. There is no known method by which a true test can be made, and by which the votes shall be distributed on that basis. It is generally accepted that the manhood and womanhood of the nation shall be the test upon which the qualification to vote shall rest. I have not gone as far as the New South Wales Bill, which gives adult franchise in the case of local government. It is somewhat peculiar that whilst the adults of this nation can elect men to the National Parliament, they are denied that right in the case of road boards, and are not considered to have sufficient knowledge or capacity to be trusted.

Mr. Latham: That is not it. They do not directly contribute anything to the cost of road making.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What about contributions to the nation?

Mr. Latham: They do make contributions to the nation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we are going to make the test of qualification to vote, the amount that a man contributes in one instance, it should be the basis for all instances.

Mr. Davy: Every citizen contributes to the revenue of the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every person who lives in a district contributes to the maintenance of that district.

Mr. Latham: Not in the matter of road

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where does the money for the roads come from?

Mr. Latham: From the pockets of the people who own the land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where about the people in the district who create the value of the land?

Mr. Latham: But they do not provide the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It does not come from the person who pays out the money alone. The hon. member should examine the position a bit deeper. The hon. member knows full well who creates the payments that are made.

Mr. Sampson: Is the qualification in the New South Wales legislation limited to preferential qualifications?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, similar to that for the election of members of the Commonwealth Parliament. I do not intend to go so far as that. I suppose we have to be content to take things in degrees, but we are moving very slowly.

Mr. Latham: I think you are moving rapidly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the last country in the world to hang on to the old Conservative, Tory, reactionary idea that enables one man to have as many as four votes for local government election. That idea was discarded by all the other nations of the world long ago, and we are one of the worst States in Australia that regard. I am not going as far as would like to go. I am tampering with first principles by admitting that we should limit it to one ratepayer one vote.

Mr. Latham: Does this represent a request from a conference?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, not that I am aware of. This Bill represents the policy of the Government.

Mr. Sampson: Was the request received from any individual board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not that I am aware of. This measure represents the policy of the Government. The present rating system allows local governing authorities the option of rating on the annual values or on the unimproved values. The great bulk of the road boards have adopted the unimproved values for country areas and annual values for the town areas. Under the Bill it is proposed to make the unimproved value system of rating compulsory, with the exception of in the declared goldfields areas. I think it will be admitted that there is practically no unimproved value in properties in the goldfields areas, and therefore that system would not work there.

Mr. Sampson: Will the rating powers be increased?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will explain the provisions of the Bill as I proceed. The road boards will not have any option regarding the rating at all, but will have to adopt the unimproved value system which is already in force with the great bulk of the boards. Power will be given to the boards to adopt different ratings in the town and country areas and also in different wards if it is so desired.

Mr. Mann: Did you explain how the unimproved value system of rating could apply in Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have already said that the goldfields areas will be exempt because there is no unimproved value regarding the great bulk of the properties there. The goldfields will be rated on the annual values. The present position regarding valuations is most unsatisfactory. Some boards rate on fair values, but some rate on ridiculously low valuations. Under the existing system, the boards adopt their own valuations, but the Minister may make a valuation of his own. He can step in and disagree with the board's valuations and declare his own valuations which the board must adopt. I have examined the position regarding valuations, and in order to give hon. members some idea of the difference between the road boards' valuations and those of the Taxation Commissioner—the Taxation Department have not nearly completed the valuation of the State so far—I will inform them that the road boards' valuations aggregate £23,732,605 and the Taxation Commissioner's valuation so far totals

£27,336,148, or the enormous difference of £3,603,543.

Mr. Lindsay: And that applies to road boards only.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Sampson: There is a great difference of opinion regarding valuations. No two valuers think alike.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The system of valuation is simple and the Taxation Department have their experts out, with the result that within a year or two I hope to have the whole State valued. By the time it is completed, of course, it may be time to start over again.

Mr. Sampson: At any rate, you will then have established a basis, and that is what is wanted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. There seems to be no basis adopted now, because there is such a huge difference between the valuations adopted by the road boards and those of the department. I have in mind one instance relating to one of our most progressive areas. The department's valuation represented £818,433 and that of the road board £316,948.

Mr. Sampson: That must be close to Perth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it was 100 miles away. Thus the road board valuation was just about one-third of that of the department. In other instances, where the boards have adopted the departmental valuations, they have permitted appeals and have allowed them. The result was that the valuations have been written down until they got right away from those fixed by the Taxation Department. In some instances, the effect of fixing a limit has been that the small owners have had to pay and the larger land owners have been protected.

Mr. Sampson: In such instances, it would be a good thing for the Minister to intervene.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under the law as it exists to-day, I have not the power to intervene; if the power were there, I would quickly do so. Under the Bill it is provided that road boards shall be left free to make their own valuation, but they will be urged to adopt a fair valuation. Under the powers vested in the Minister now, it has been held that the Minister should he intervene, must make his own valuation. In the Bill I am providing that

in such a case the valuation to be adopted by the Minister shall be that fixed by the Taxation Department. The effect of that will be to tie the Minister down to adopting that basis.

Hon. G. Taylor: So, if the Taxation Department's values are higher and the Minister adopts them, they become the law.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the Minister will have to adopt the Taxation Department's valuation. While that will limit the Minister, the idea is to get a uniform and definite basis.

Mr. Latham: Then it is obligatory upon the local governing body to accept those valuations?

Mr. Sampson: Yes, when the Minister says so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the position.

Mr. Davy: If he steps in, I presume there will still be a right of appeal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but if there is an appeal against the Minister's valuations, that appeal will be to the local court and not to the board. That provision is in the Bill.

Mr. Sampson: Then, while the department's taxations will be the law, there will be an appeal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. It would be a false position to put those concerned in if we were to say that the Minister could intervene and then allow an appeal to the board.

Mr. Lindsay: That is so. Is there any appeal against the State valuations to-day?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, that is provided for in the Bill.

Mr. Sampson: Intervention by the Minister would be prompted by the departmental officers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The action would probably arise from the reports of the auditors who might complain of low valuations. While the great bulk of the road boards have adopted fair valuations, others have a ridiculously low rate and absurdly low taxes. I came across one instance of a board in one of the wealthiest parts of the State. Their rate was at a ridiculously low figure, and there was a tax of 1d. in the pound. Yet that board continued to approach the Government for grants and with requests for subsidies. The road boards in the surrounding districts were crying out about the condition of the through road in that particular road board area. The road

boards that had cause for complaint had attended to their portions of the road and had done their fair share. I told the representatives of this particular board that unless they adopted a rate of at least 2d. in the pound, the Government would not provide any subsidy at all. The board decided to increase their rate by one-eighth of a penny which, they said, would bring in the amount they would be entitled to as subsidy from the Government.

Mr. Teesdale: Where was this?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That indicated that this particular board merely wanted to loaf on the other districts. They were content to jog along, serving their own selfish ends. A new system is proposed in the Bill for the election of district councils, as they will be called in future.

Mr. Sampson: Will that not cause confusion in view of our municipal councils?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would not have included the provision in the Bill if I had thought it would cause confusion. At present a percentage of members retire each year. Members are elected for three years, but so many retire at the end of each year. Should there be any issue to be determined in the district, the local ratepayers have no chance of making their opinion known clearly because, approximately, only one-third of a road board retire at a time. Thus it is not possible for the ratepayers to change the majority of a board on any particular issue. That is a most unsatisfactory provision, and I am providing in the Bill for the election of members of district councils so that their term of office shall be for three years, at the end of which all will retire.

Mr. Latham: Then you will have no continuity of policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill provides for extensively increased powers to be given to boards, included amongst those powers being authority to acquire recreation and agricultural grounds, erect buildings thereon, to conduct agricultural and other shows, to acquire or establish and maintain hospitals—to-day they have only power to subsidise hospitals,—to acquire and conduct cinematograph entertainments, to provide and maintain sale yards for the sale of stock, and for curtailed powers to borrow money to build workers' homes with Ministerial approval. That means they will have to be governed by the conditions of the Workers' Homes Act, to lend money under the same terms as that Act provides, but with Minis-

terial approval they may borrow money for that purpose. Then there is power to prevent buildings and structures being removed from land before rates have been paid. That is to meet conditions on the goldfields. There is to be increased borrowing power from seven times the average income of the past two years to ten times that income. That brings these councils on to the same footing as municipalities. Power is given to define special areas for residence or factory sites and for brick or wood building areas. And there is increased power given to them in respect of subdivided estates. At present when an estate is originally cut up they have to approve of the subdivision, but once that is done there is nothing to prevent a person buying two blocks and building three houses or even four, on them, and so in some districts we are drifting towards slum areas. I want the local authority to have power to say what land there shall be around all dwellings. Power is given to the local authorities to unite with each other for carrying out drains and in restricting the use of boardings, and power for the councils to join together for the engaging of an engineer. At present they have not that authority, and a number of our local authorities are not in a position to employ a skilled engineer. If they could join together, probably they would be able to engage a skilled man between them. Power is also given to impose a lighting rate similar to that of the municipalities, but the rate will be confined to the area lighted. The scope of rating: The Bill leaves the existing minimums as they are. But the maximums on the unimproved value at present is 3d., and with the consent of the Minister it can be increased to 6d. The Bill increases the 3d. to 4d., and with the consent of the Minister it may be increased to 6d. in rural districts, and 9d. in metropolitan districts. So while the minimum shall remain, the scope of rating is to be widened in the annual rates. That will relate solely to mining areas, and it is left as it is. The lighting rate must not exceed 1½d. on the unimproved value, or 3d. on the annual value. On the taking of a poll to consider a proposal for a loan it is now provided that there must be a majority of all resident owners in favour. At one stage they had to get a majority of the ratepayers on the roll before money could be borrowed. At present it is the majority of resident owners that is required. It has been usually taken as mean-

ing a majority of those voting. The point was recently raised in respect of a poll taken in South Perth. The point was submitted for counsel's opinion, and the advice obtained by the local authority has been endorsed by the Crown Law. The Act now provides for a majority of the resident owners, whether voting or not, but the Bill provides for a majority of resident owners voting. That is only a fair proposition, and it applies to every other election throughout the State. Those are the main features of the Bill, the rest being machinery measures included at the request mainly of the local authorities, and on the experience of the local government branch of the Public Works Department. I believe the Bill will permit of local government working much more smoothly and effectively than it does to-day. For years past the local authorities have been asking for a number of the enlarged functions it is now proposed to give them. The Bill will tend to more efficient work and better service. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Davy, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1925-26.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day, Mr. Lutey in the Chair

*Department of Forests (Hon. P. Collier, Minister).*

*Vote—Forests, £22,758—agreed to.*

*Department of Justice and Police (Hon. J. C. Willcock, Minister).*

*Vote—Justice, £95,965.*

Mr. DAVY: I should like to ask the Minister when it is proposed to make permanent appointments to the magistracy. It has always appeared to me to be a bad principle to have persons holding magisterial positions in an acting capacity for a moment longer than is necessary. It is not fair to either the persons so acting or to those who have their cases tried before such persons. I do not want it thought that I am casting any reflection upon any of the magistrates; it is merely a question of principle. In several instances magi-

strates have been acting for a considerable length of time, and I hope that will soon be remedied.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE : It is entirely in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner. The Government do not direct him to make these appointments. When the Commissioner is prepared to take the necessary steps to fill the positions, it will be done. The Public Service Commissioner is the person who is statutorily compelled to take steps to fill any vacancies.

Mr. DAVY : Do I understand that the Minister does not regard it as his duty to supervise the work of the Public Service Commissioner in respect of the filling of these vacancies? If it becomes known that there are vacancies that ought to be filled, is it not the duty of the Minister to ask the Public Service Commissioner why the vacancies have not been filled? I understand the Public Service Commissioner is given a position analagous to that of an auditor; he is put in an independent position. That is quite right. Nevertheless, it surprises me to hear that the Public Service Commissioner, without any criticism, may continue to temporarily fill magisterial positions without being interfered with in any way.

The Premier : The obligation is really his. Of course there would be nothing wrong in the Minister's lodging of a protest.

Mr. DAVY : I presume that if the Public Service Commissioner does not carry out his responsibilities, the Minister would be perfectly entitled to call his attention to it?

The Minister for Justice : Yes, if there is any necessity.

Mr. DAVY : There is a necessity that every position of a magistrate should be filled by a permanent officer as soon as possible.

Mr. LATHAM : There are some temporary appointments being held by magistrates who have rendered valuable services in the capacity of warden. There is such an instance in the Minister's own district, where a man is holding a temporary position.

The Minister for Justice : He is merely relieving another officer who is away on long service leave.

Mr. LATHAM : I think there are others.

The Premier : I think there is only one. They temporarily appoint an officer re-

lieving, but that is not an acting appointment.

Mr. LATHAM : These gentlemen have the qualifications to fit them for the positions of magistrates, yet they are called upon to pass an academic examination. If they have already rendered valuable service as clerk of courts for many years and are fit to be appointed as temporary magistrates, some consideration should be given to them.

The Premier : How can that be done unless there are vacancies? There is only one instance that I know of.

Mr. LATHAM : I think there are others. If a man has been in the service a long time and the Public Service Commissioner thinks he is fitted to be appointed as temporary magistrate, and a vacancy subsequently occurs, due consideration should be given to that man. It is all right to require young men to pass academic examinations, but the opportunities of to-day were not available when the men in question were young. I hope the Minister will give the matter consideration.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : The appointment of magistrates is provided for by Act of Parliament, which stipulates that an appointee must have a legal training and must pass certain tests. Certainly the temporary men are becoming fewer, but when the Act was passed there were several men who had long been acting as wardens and had previously been mining registrars. The acting magistrates are most capable men, and I doubt whether any legal training could fit them better for the position than their many years' experience has done. Still they cannot be appointed. I am sorry that something cannot be done for these men who are fully qualified by experience.

The Minister for Agriculture : They have to pass an examination.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : But men of their years cannot do that.

The Premier : We are precluded by the Act from appointing other than a qualified lawyer, or a man who has passed an examination.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : I realise that. I know one man who rendered great service to the Mines Department and who served in the war, but he could not pass the examination. He holds the position of acting magistrate, but he cannot obtain a permanent appointment. There are other similar cases. It is hard to ask a man of 50 or 55 to sit for an

examination. If barristers, surveyors or architects who passed their examinations 25 or 30 years ago were asked to undergo similar tests to-day, they would find it very difficult to pass. The men of whom I speak have had practical experience, and their work is evidence of their ability; and yet they cannot be appointed. The Minister said it was the duty of the Public Service Commissioner to recommend appointments. Do the Government wait for a recommendation from the Public Service Commissioner before removing an officer?

The Minister for Justice: Generally we do.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It seems inconsistent to have to wait for an intimation from the Commissioner before filling a position, which a man has held in an acting capacity for perhaps many years, and yet not to have to wait for an intimation from the Commissioner in a case of dismissal.

The Minister for Justice: It rests on the merits. A temporary man would not be dismissed to permit of a permanent appointment being made.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not want the Public Service Commissioner to feel that some man ought to be dismissed in order that another might be appointed. No injustice should be done to the acting magistrates, who have rendered fine service to the State during the last 30 years.

The Minister for Justice: That is why the positions are temporary.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then I hope the positions will be kept temporary.

Mr. LINDSAY: Has the Minister made any provision for a local court in my electorate? It is a well-settled district, and yet the people have to travel as much as 120 miles to take a case to the local court. The result is that many business people cannot get judgment for the recovery of debts owing to the great expense. Local governing bodies are in the same position. The people of the Bencubbin district require police protection. On one side of Bencubbin the nearest policeman is 51 miles distant and on the other side 28 miles distant. The district contains several hotels, and it is impossible for police from other districts to carry out thoroughly the work of collecting the census and statistical returns. The people of the Bencubbin district have long desired police protection, and I hope the Minister will see that it is provided.

Mr. ANGELO: I suggest that the Minister make an inspection of the Titles Office. The activities of the department have out-grown the housing accommodation.

Mr. Latham: It is making a big profit; too big, in fact.

Mr. ANGELO: The revenue is about £28,000 and the expenditure only £14,000. I do not think the Minister can better the staff, who are capable and obliging, but the housing is anything but satisfactory or sufficient. Large numbers of people have to wait a considerable time because there is insufficient room for the clerks. The storage space for title records is now so limited that great numbers have to be kept in the Supreme Court store rooms, and this often necessitates delay when documents are required. The Minister should investigate the conditions at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. BROWN: Does the Minister propose to provide a police station at Kondinin? This is a growing district and it is the desire of the residents that a policeman should be stationed there.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Regarding the local court requested by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay)—

Mr. Latham: Tell us also about the one at Bruce Rock, too.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: To provide a local court at Bruce Rock might necessitate creating another magistracy.

Mr. Latham: The population is increasing.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The magistrate at Northam has as much as he can do to cover his district. If we created another court at Bruce Rock, it is doubtful whether he would be able to compass it, particularly in view of the train service. Last year I fully intended to provide for a local court at Bruce Rock, but I found that a full-time clerk of courts or an extra policeman would be required to undertake the duties, and the cost would be £300 or £400 a year. I am now considering whether it is possible to amalgamate some of the positions at Bruce Rock and create a local court. I recognise that the present position is unsatisfactory. There is sufficient work at Bruce Rock to justify a court, and I shall endeavour to arrange for it this year. Regarding the increased cost of the Police Department, it has been recognised that additional police would be needed in view of the added population of the State and of expanding settlement in various directions.

Irrespective of any increase in the personnel of the force, the cost rose by £25,000 last year because of conditions and salaries fixed for the police by the award of a board. If the expenditure had remained anywhere near what it was last year, stations would have been established this year in various places where police protection is considered desirable. The erection of a police station and the establishing of a policeman in a district means a capital expenditure of about £1,500. At Narembreen a police station will be established within a couple of weeks, and there are four or five other new stations to be opened during the current year. The Government did intend to establish a police station at Pemberton, but there is some difficulty with regard to the townsite.

Mr. Sampson: Do you propose to do anything at Armadale?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is an arrangement with regard to Armadale. The constable stationed at Gosnells is in telephone communication with Armadale, and a patrol is carried on.

Mr. Sampson: Has any decision been arrived at regarding the erection of a police station at Armadale?

Items, Solicitor General and Parliamentary Draftsman, £1,100; Crown Solicitor and Assistant Parliamentary Draftsman, £900:

Mr. DAVY: The question of the advisableness of appointing a Parliamentary Draftsman who shall carry out his functions in this building has been raised two or three times. I believe that many members more qualified to judge than I am agree with me that such an appointment would be of the greatest possible assistance in getting legislation passed in proper form, especially where there is need to draft an amendment hastily. Parliamentary drafting, moreover, is a matter of such difficulty that it might well absorb the whole of one man's time. When Parliament is not sitting, the officer's time could be occupied in consolidating and bringing up to date many of our most important statutes. The Land Act, for example, is in a state of utter chaos. Only by most patient search and some knowledge of statute law can one find out just what it means or what application it has to any particular case.

The Minister for Justice: There are seven amending Acts.

Mr. DAVY: I hope the Government will regard the suggested appointment as one of the most urgent claims on the public purse when there are any spare shekels in that purse.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The system recommended was carried out some years ago. Dr. Stow was originally appointed Parliamentary Draftsman, and it was considered advisable at the time to have him housed here. During the first few months of his tenure of the position, his services were availed of very considerably by members, but after some little time had elapsed he had practically nothing to do here, and accordingly he was returned to the Supreme Court, and the position of Parliamentary Draftsman was amalgamated with that of Crown Solicitor. It appears, therefore, that the scheme has been tried and found wanting. A measure has been passed for the purpose of amalgamating the offices of Registrar of Titles and Commissioner of Titles, but we want to see that the interests of officials in the Crown Solicitor's office and in the Land Titles office are conserved. Nothing should be done that will detrimentally affect the interests of men who have served the State well for a number of years, and have possibly given up good private practices to enter the employment of the Government. Their interests should be conserved fully. The Solicitor General, it is expected, will be relieved of the duties of Commissioner of Titles, and that change will mean lesser demands on his time than he has had latterly. The office of Commissioner of Titles may not appear to take up much time, but there are occasions when important Bills have to be drafted and legal questions of great consequence have to be considered by the Solicitor General, and at such times the business of the Land Titles office has been delayed, with serious inconvenience to the public. The change will relieve Mr. Sayer, one of the most hard-working and most willing public servants we have.

Hon. G. Taylor: A most courteous, painstaking, and obliging officer.

Mr. Mann: Yes; and he has far too much to do.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We ask Mr. Sayer to do more than any ordinary man should be expected to do.

Hon. G. Taylor: You cannot stop him from working. If the work is there, he will do it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes; he will work all night if necessary. I do not know whether the member for West Perth is aware that his suggestion was given a trial some years ago.

Mr. Davy: I was not aware of it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The facts are as has been stated by the Minister. As regards the previous appointment of a Parliamentary Draftsman to be housed in this building, a mistake was made in not having our statutes consolidated by him during recess. That would have meant work for him for two or three years. The consolidation of the statutes was one of the first things I discussed with the late Mr. George Leake at the beginning of this century. He was anxious that the work should be done, and agreed to make the necessary appointment. I recommended to him a legal man who was at work on the consolidation of the Victorian statutes. Mr. Leake wrote to him to come over here, but unfortunately, Mr. Leake was seized with pneumonia and died. The next step taken did not go far enough. We need a Parliamentary Draftsman, and I think we need him in this building while the session is in progress. I do not know, however, that he would be of specially great value for urgent amendments requiring to be put up at a moment's notice. When one wants an amendment to a Bill drafted, it takes the Parliamentary Draftsman some time to look the matter up. Still, much of the confusion arising from hurried drafting of amendments would be saved by the suggested appointment. The Parliamentary Draftsman now has too much work to do, and he is too obliging to members of Parliament and to the public. Mr. Sayer is always willing to drop anything he is doing to assist anybody.

Mr. Marshall: And then he goes home at night with an armful of work.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, and the same on Saturday afternoons.

Item, Registrar of Titles and Deeds, £675:

Mr. LATHAM: How does the Land Titles Office come to be a profit-making concern? Surely it was never intended that the office should return a profit of thousands of pounds above working expenses. It is a most unfair method of taxing the people.

The Premier: If some departments do not show a profit, how are we to meet the cost of such departments as Medical, Public Health, and Charities?

Mr. LATHAM: The Land Titles Office should be established in better quarters. The present quarters are in a shocking condition.

The Premier: That state of affairs has existed for some time.

Mr. DAVY: I should not imagine that an attempt would be made to gain a profit from the working of the Land Titles Office. Is the present excess of receipts over expenditure an accidental one, or does it occur every year?

The Minister for Justice: It is usual to make some little profit.

Mr. DAVY: What does the Minister mean by "some little profit"?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The amount of profit depends on the amount of business. It is not intended that the Land Titles Office should be a taxing department, or a means of raising revenue. Certain business has to be done in that office, and we arrange the fees so that the revenue received shall at least cover the expenditure.

Mr. Davy: You aim at balancing the ledger?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Item, Stipendiary Magistrates, £5,145:

Mr. LAMOND: The system practised in the North of appointing doctors as magistrates is not altogether satisfactory. A doctor may be skilful in his own profession without having the necessary training to discharge the duties of a magistrate. Moreover, the dual position frequently does not fit in with the requirements of a district, as a doctor may be called upon to travel many miles to attend medical cases. The desire of residents in many districts is that a magistrate should be appointed for judicial work only.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is like many other cases in the North, it is not possible to find sufficient work for more than one officer to do. Therefore, all the positions have to be amalgamated. The member for Kimberley will know that in one part of his electorate a civil servant there has become a regular Pooh-Bah.

Mr. Lamond: Of course that would not be as important a centre as the one to which I referred.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I realise that. It has always been the practice to amalgamate these positions wherever possible. I know that is unsatisfactory, and that it is not possible to have a man who is a good doctor and a good lawyer and magis-

trate as well. It is necessary to have a doctor, and though he may be good at medicine, he may be bad at law. People must put up with shortcomings of this description. There are only 200 or 300 people to be served, and it would not pay to have a doctor there to do nothing but medical work. Neither could we have a magistrate to attend to magisterial work alone.

Mr. MARSHALL: I appreciate the difficulty the Government find themselves in, but at the same time the people in the North are deserving of some consideration. The position as I found it at Pilbara when I was there some little time back was entirely unsatisfactory. I do not know where economies can be effected, but they should not be effected at the expense of the people in the North. We should economise in regard to those positions that are not advantageous to the State.

The Minister for Justice: What has been suggested is not warranted.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course not; nothing is warranted on the other side of the Darling Range. I am not taking the Government to task because I realise that what is suggested is an expensive proposition, but by the same rule, with a slight increase, the Government could appoint a travelling magistrate to attend to the whole of the North, and a doctor could also be subsidised.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Where would you get the doctor?

Mr. MARSHALL: The subsidy would have to be increased.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: We have offered medical men £1,000 to go to certain places and they have refused.

Mr. MARSHALL: I would not have risen to speak but for the fact that I know there is deliberate waste in many other directions for no service whatever.

Mr. Lindsay: Deliberate?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. And it has been so for years. I am not comparing this position with another in the North-West, though one is essential and the other is not. Let us economise where economies are possible.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Police, £211,102:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not see anything in the Estimates that is likely to improve the efficiency of the work of the officers controlling traffic in Fremantle. The time has arrived when something should be done

to assist these officers, something in the way of providing suitable conveyances so that they may chase and overtake speed maniacs. If something is not done, I predict that there will be many serious accidents in the Fremantle district. The watering places on the other side of Fremantle are frequently visited by motorists, and all have to pass through the town. Most of them travel at breakneck speed. The road to Rockingham is nothing but a death trap.

Mr. Mann: Do you think they go faster than the motor cyclists do along Hay-street past Harvest-terrace?

Mr. SLEEMAN: They go too fast for the safety of my electors. The police of Fremantle should be provided with motor bicycles or motor cars so that they may be able to keep in check those who travel at excessive speed. It is useless to send out police on horseback to catch the speed fiends. It would be better if they were on foot, for then perhaps they might possibly conceal themselves in the bush. With regard to the water police at Fremantle, some years ago that force was very efficient, but now it has dwindled to three men. It would be advisable to have an adequate water police force and then it would not be necessary to bring to the port, police from all parts of the country whenever there was anything in the nature of industrial trouble. If the force were brought back to its old strength, there would be no need to march police from other districts on to the wharf on every trifling occasion. The people at Fremantle resent that kind of thing. Another complaint is that the water police are not permitted to have their own launch. Whenever it is necessary for them to use a launch, they call on the Fisheries Department to supply theirs. The man in charge of it has to go out in all kinds of weather and he does the work that the water police should do. He even has to take the launch up the coast whenever a wreck happens, and at times has to bring back dead bodies. For all this he receives nothing in the way of remuneration. Of course he takes one policeman with him, but he does the work that properly belongs to the water police. Next comes the question of the provision of a Black Maria. I have gone through the Estimates and I have failed to find anything for the provision of this conveyance. It was, I think, the unanimous opinion of the House that something should be done, and yet nothing is provided on the Esti-

mates for the conveyance of prisoners between Perth and Fremantle. Recently there was another escape at West Perth. I do not blame a man for trying to escape under the conditions now prevailing for prisoners' transport. This man jumped the fence and ran away from the policemen. It is no good this House passing resolutions if no notice is taken of them. As a protest I intend to move that the vote be reduced by £1.

**The Premier:** The item the hon. member mentions may appear elsewhere. It may come under some other Estimates. It may be found on the Chief Secretary's Estimates in connection with the gaols.

**Mr. Mann:** The Minister says the item is here.

**Mr. SLEEMAN:** If it is included in the Estimates I will not move the amendment, but if not I intend to do so.

**Mr. Mann:** The Minister says it is there.

**Mr. SLEEMAN:** The Premier said it might be there, but that it was not there.

**Mr. TEESDALE:** I too should like to hear from the Minister as to what the position is in regard to the transport of prisoners. Has the matter slipped the Minister's mind?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Members are dealing with the general discussion. I will not receive the amendment of the member for Fremantle until the Minister has replied to the general debate.

**Mr. LATHAM:** I do not object to the increases in connection with the police constabulary, but I object to the Minister saying that in view of this fact there is not likely to be any further police protection afforded in country districts.

**The Minister for Justice:** I did not say that.

**Mr. LATHAM:** I thought he said that the increase would be so great that there would be grave difficulty about extending the service.

**The Minister for Justice:** Extending it as much as would otherwise have been the case.

**Mr. LATHAM:** If a public utility is required it does not matter what we have to pay for it.

**Hon. S. W. Munsie:** A district is just about broke when it wants police protection. People can get on better without the police.

**Mr. LATHAM:** I wish the Honorary Minister was on the spot when some of these country entertainments occur.

**The Minister for Justice:** You are getting a policeman at Narembreen.

**Mr. LATHAM:** Other places, too, want police. In the whole service there are only three officers who are appointed for relieving purposes. That is a very serious matter. Frequently a country district is without any policeman. In the case of York, assistance may be required at Quairading or some other place, and a police officer is sent out to relieve there. This may lead to there being no police officer on duty in York, because another policeman may have been sent to Perth with a prisoner.

**The Premier:** Has any serious thing happened in York as a result of that?

**Mr. LATHAM:** Yes.

**The Premier:** The situation is not new. It has existed in Western Australia for many years.

**Mr. LATHAM:** Because there was no constable in charge of the York police station, a man was put into the lock-up without the necessary precautions being taken to search him, and he was found dead the next day with his throat cut.

**The Premier:** That may happen with a thousand policemen on duty.

**Mr. LATHAM:** If a policeman had been there he would have made a proper search of the man and probably a valuable life would have been saved. In this case someone else put him into gaol and this is what happened.

**The Premier:** Was he not put in by a policeman?

**Mr. LATHAM:** No.

**The Premier:** So he locked himself up.

**Mr. LATHAM:** No. The man had been drinking and asked to be shut up for his own protection, and a doctor or someone else put him in.

**The Premier:** Suicides occur in the best regulated families.

**Mr. LATHAM:** This was due to the effects of drink. I hope that the increase given to the police will not prevent additional service being given to those parts of the State which stand in need of it.

**The Minister for Justice:** No one said that would be the case.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I have had no answer to my question as to a police station being erected at Armadale. Deputations have waited on the Minister and past Ministers

with regard to this. It is my duty to ask this question.

The Premier: Were you one of the past Ministers you referred to? Is the matter any more urgent now than it was when you were in office?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is nearly two years since I left office, and I think I am justified in asking the question. If the station is to be established I should like to know, and if not, I should like to know.

The Premier: We cannot rectify all your neglects at once.

Mr. MANN: I should like to hear from the Minister something about the scheme of pensions for the members of the police force. The matter has been discussed in the House for five years. A scheme was submitted in the dying hours of the last Parliament.

The Premier: It was not considered. The scheme was promised but nothing was done.

Mr. MANN: I do not think that is quite right.

The Premier: I know all about that scheme.

Mr. MANN: It was submitted in the dying hours of the last Parliament.

The Premier: It was promised to the police all through the session, but never submitted.

Mr. MANN: It was submitted, and the incoming Government favoured it. I want to know whether anything is being done in the matter. The police are seriously considering the position. They have waited for years for this. I know the Minister has increased the salaries of the police, but that does not lead to any provision for pensions.

The Minister for Mines: Now they have got that it does not make any difference.

Mr. MANN: Of course it makes a difference, and the men appreciate it. The Minister cannot suggest that this should prevent their looking forward to pensions.

The Premier: They can look forward all right, but I suggest that money cannot be found for all these increases and pensions in one year.

Mr. MANN: If the Premier means that funds are at present not available, but that the scheme is not lost sight of, I shall be satisfied.

The Minister for Justice: An endeavour is being made to get a scheme through the A.M.P.

Mr. MANN: Then something is being done in regard to the matter?

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Mr. TEESDALE: I understand the Minister for Justice said it was not intended to increase the police force in country districts. If so, I must enter my protest against that. There are many new districts that are making progress.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I did not say that. It is on the cards that there will be an increase in the number of police stations. The expenditure in connection with the police has gone up by £25,000 per annum, as a result of the last award. With regard to the matter mentioned by the member for York, everyone knows that we cannot put on one policeman to take another man's place. If five or six policemen leave the service, we do not pick out others and put them on promiscuously. We have to wait until there are sufficient vacancies so that a number of probationers may be taken on and trained, after which there is a sufficient number available to fill the vacancies. We were a little short of the approved strength of the police force at the time mentioned by the hon. member. Since then we have taken on 25 probationers who are going through their three months' course of training. When they get through they will be drafted to various places in the country, and there will be that much increase in the personnel of the force sometime in the next two months.

Mr. Latham: I will forgive you if it does not occur again.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If six policemen resigned during the next month their places would not be filled until there were sufficient vacancies to warrant the taking on of additional probationers. In the circumstances we are overmanned at one time and undermanned at another.

Mr. Mann: I do not think the force is often overmanned.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The approved strength is a little above the standard this year.

Mr. Mann: By how many?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There were vacancies for 18 policemen and we took on 25 probationers, so that we were seven over the strength. Possibly by the time the probationers have got through their course there may be four or five more vacancies, so that it will be only two or three over the approved strength.

Mr. Mann: As the population increases you will have to consider increasing the force.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are doing that. The police vote is like the votes of other departments. There is a demand for expenditure from every department. Many departments have had to wait for years. When the deficits were up to £500,000 a year the Treasurer was able to tell them that no increased expenditure could be made. Now the finances are pretty well balanced the departments think that this is the time when they can put in a demand for £25,000 or £30,000. If the Treasurer acceded to all these requests it would not be long before we again reached the £500,000 deficit. The Police Vote has been standing at about £80,000 a year, but this year it has gone up to £110,000. That is about as big an increase as any department can expect in one year.

Mr. Mann: The police earn a lot of revenue for other departments for which they get no credit.

The Premier: They earned it when the vote was only £80,000.

Mr. Mann: That point should not be lost sight of. They collect for hospitals, for instance.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: One grouch I have on this matter is that the police undertake the duties of directing the traffic. That is not part of a policeman's duty. People pay license fees and other fees, and the police get only a sufficient percentage of them to cover the expenditure. Because the police control the traffic and are at the disposal of the Traffic Department, men are taken away from their legitimate duties of protecting the public, and the force is somewhat shortened as a consequence. During the past two years additional police have been placed on point duty, and this has led to police protection being to a certain extent withheld from country districts. Those who might have been sent into the country have been absorbed in the work of carrying out the duty of controlling the traffic.

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

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Prior to the tea adjournment, I was dealing with the position of the police and the time they had to devote to their duties under the

Traffic Act. As for the point raised by the member for Fremantle regarding increased protection on account of the motor traffic, I can assure him that this aspect is receiving the serious consideration of the department. We recognise the necessity for the police undertaking prosecutions and generally looking after the safety of the public. It is recognised that the police cannot be expected to secure convictions, or exercise the necessary supervision, unless they are equipped in a manner enabling them to deal with the situation. Recently the department purchased a motor cycle with a side car, and also a motor car, so that they are now in a position to effectively deal with people transgressing the law in connection with what is described as safe driving in the metropolitan area. There have been a considerable number of prosecutions in connection with speeding up and fast driving, but despite that, the prosecutions do not seem to have had the deterring effect that was anticipated. Unless there is a considerable improvement, provision will have to be made so that the punishment meted out to offenders will be much more severe. With the advantage of motors, enabling them to travel sufficiently fast to keep pace with people exceeding the speed limits, the police will be able to devote their energies not only to various parts of the metropolitan area but to Fremantle and other centres as well. It is expected that a considerable improvement will be effected. A perusal of the newspapers shows that this difficulty is world-wide and crops up in every city of any considerable dimensions at all. There are many fatalities and accidents arising from the present methods of motor transport. It is hoped that with more effective supervision and concentration upon securing convictions, the position will be improved in this State.

Mr. Teesdale: Offenders are punished in South Australia far more severely than they are here.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: In this State some people have been sent to prison without the option of a fine, some have been charged with manslaughter, and others have been fined varying amounts ranging up to £50. That phase of the question has also been considered, and while we may not be able to charge people with manslaughter very often, because it is difficult to prove that charge, it may be that the law will be amended to enable us to deal more

effectively with people who drive motors to the danger of the public.

Mr. Davy: One thing you want to do is to make the motor car itself liable for the damage done.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are considering the advisability of amending the law so that people will have to shoulder their proper responsibilities. This is a comparatively new phase introduced into our daily lives and into our traffic problem. It requires drastic provisions if we are to provide for the proper safety of the public. It is appalling to note the number of accidents and fatalities that are reported in the newspapers almost daily. In one issue recently there were half-a-dozen fatalities, to say nothing of accidents.

Mr. Teesdale: Several of those accidents were serious.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Our experience is not different from that of the rest of Australia and the rest of the world. There seems to be a tendency for the present fast means of locomotion to become increasingly dangerous, and if these accidents continue, drastic steps will have to be taken to protect the public.

Mr. Teesdale: It is not safe to go about the streets now, what with motor bikes and other things.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As to the request made by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) for the erection of a police station at Armadale, that hon. member knows that there is a station at Kelmiscott and that arrangements have been made for a constable to be stationed at Armadale with telephonic communication with the station, so that he may attend wherever his presence is required. The same position has cropped up at Belmont, where a constable, although attached to the Victoria Park station, has been stationed in Belmont and has been connected with the telephone.

Mr. Sampson: I understand that the department holds a block of land for the purposes of a police station at Armadale.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, at Armadale as well as at other places. It is all a question of expenditure. We have a definite programme each year enabling us to do something to increase the facilities. It is desirable that we should provide a policeman who is stationed in the district with quarters at a capital cost of about £1,500. That means that it is necessary to find money for the purpose. We will deal

with four or five centres where policemen have been stationed in various parts of the State. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) referred to the question of pensions, and some hon. member interjected that we could not at once right all the industrial wrongs that have been apparent for so many years. During this year the policemen have had their industrial disabilities rectified to the extent of about £25,000. It is not considered reasonable to start a pension scheme at the same time. I understand that the police themselves have been inquiring for information from the department and are desirous of establishing a scheme themselves. They are in negotiation with the A.M.P. Society for the purpose of formulating an insurance scheme which will have the effect of a superannuation or pension scheme. Another matter mentioned by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) was the Black Maria. We know that a motion was carried by this House dealing with that matter. While representations have been made to the Treasurer in connection with it, the question has not been dealt with at present. On the Estimates there is an item for £6,600, part of which, if it is thought that the conveyance, which was the subject of the motion in this House, should be replaced from the Police Vote, could be used for that purpose. The question, however, has not been finally dealt with and I cannot say anything definite on the point.

Mr. Coverley: Have you made any provision with regard to comic opera explorers in the North-West?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Regarding what have been referred to as exploration parties in the North-West, the only instructions that the police have received were that they should keep an eye on them and endeavour to keep in touch with such parties, so as to be available to render assistance if necessary.

Vote put and passed.

*Department of Mines (Hon. M. F. Troy, Minister).*

*Vote—Mines, £62,507:*

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [7.43]: Addressing myself to the Estimates for the Mines Department, I wish to make a few remarks about the position of the industry to-day,

and to review its progress and its importance to the State generally. The total mineral production of the State from the inception of gold mining in Western Australia, and also of base metal mining, till the present day amounts to £161,912,951. During the first eight months of the present year this has been increased by the production of £1,761,285 worth, thus bringing the total production up to £163,674,236. Gold, which represents 90 per cent. of the mineral production, reached, to the end of 1924, a total of £152,195,803. During the nine months of this year ended September last, £1,373,092 worth of gold had been added to the output, making the total production of gold valued at £153,568,895. The production for the past nine months represented £200,000 under nine-twelfths of the production of 1924, but it is possible that better returns during the last quarter of the year may arrest the appreciable decline on this year's operations. The quarterly production of gold this year has been as follows:—January to March, £406,000; April to June, £483,000; July to September, £482,000. During 1924, the last year under review, there was a further decrease in production to the extent of 33,735 ozs. of a value of £143,000. This decline has been due largely to the falling off in the value per ton of ore treated. There was an increased tonnage of ore mined, amounting to 1,991 tons. The total amount raised in 1924 was 783,000 tons. But the average value of the ore fell from 53.28s. in 1923 to 49.24s. in 1924. In the East Coolgardie goldfield, which produced 73 per cent. of the State's reported yield, it fell from 52.13s. in 1923 to 48.47s. in 1924, the decrease amounting to about one pennyweight per ton. I have already said that the tonnage of ore mined has not decreased, but that the values have decreased. That decrease was solely responsible for the decline in the industry last year. That is a feature of mining, not only in Western Australia, but in every goldmining country in the world; as the difficulties of mining increase and the lodes descend to a greater depth, the values decline. Every year in this State it happens that new localities are opened up and some very good discoveries made. To this I shall refer again later. The tonnage mined decreased in all fields except Mt. Margaret—which includes Leonora—North-East Coolgardie and Yilgarn. The increased tonnage

was in Mt. Margaret 6,573 tons, in North-East Coolgardie 1,901 tons, and in Yilgarn 4,964 tons. The decreased tonnage was, in Coolgardie 14,357 tons, in East Coolgardie 15,000 tons, in East Murchison 11,000 tons, and in Murchison 17,000 tons. The following fields had an increased output:—Mt. Margaret, with a total of 43,705 fine ozs.; Peak Hill, with a total of 2,113 fine ozs.; West Pilbara, with a total of 76 fine ozs.; and Yilgarn, with a total of 8,451 fine ozs. It is not possible for the department this year to secure actual details of working costs. The report of the Royal Commissioner appointed by the Government gives those on the Boulder belt as approximately 33s. 6d. per ton of ore treated, the allotment being fifty-fifty as between mining and treatment costs. There are some encouraging improvements to record in respect of one or two mines on the Eastern Goldfields. On the Lake View and Star and the Boulder Perseverance improved plant and methods are being tried, which it is hoped will prolong the life of those properties. There have been one or two interesting discoveries of late, which I hope will lead to the profitable working of those mines for a number of years. At the Gwalia mine the most up-to-date plant in Western Australia has been installed, and the management is endeavouring to make a payable mine while recovering the low grade ore available rather than picking out the rich patches. I hope that any difficulties being experienced by the company on that mine will be overcome, and that the progress of the field will be assured. The Great Victoria, at Burbidge, following on the provision of water supply by the Government, has given excellent results, brought about by the efficient water supply and up to date methods of working. For the first nine months of this year that mine produced 20,100 tons for 5,413.67 fine ozs. of a value of £23,407, as against the previous total production of 7,513 tons for 1,784 ozs. of a value of £7,583. These figures indicate that owing to the assistance given by the Government the mine has produced in one year gold three times the value of that produced during all the previous years of the mine's existence. That mine is an example of what can be done by efficient management and economical working. At the Kalgoorlie School of Mines experiments are being carried out with a view to determin-

ing means by which ore can be more economically treated. One experiment in progress is that known as the flotation process. These experiments are being carried out on some of the sulphide ores, and although it would be premature to make an announcement as to the ultimate value of the treatment, there are good grounds for believing that a new and profitable method of treating this class of ore has been discovered. Also the School of Mines is experimenting on Wiluna ore, and from reports submitted to the department we are hopeful that a means will be found by which the more difficult ores may be successfully treated in the near future. Certainly if the ore can be treated on a large scale as it has been treated in the laboratory at the School of Mines, the more serious difficulties will be overcome. At Wiluna last year boring operations were assisted by the Government to the extent of £1,411. Those operations resulted in a pronouncement being made that a company should be formed to take over the larger number of the leases in the district. If the capital can be found and if the ore can be profitably treated, a new field may there be opened up. At present all eyes are on the developments at Wiluna. If too great a burden be not put upon the shareholders, I am hopeful that Wiluna will soon be maintaining a very large population. It is too early yet to say much about that field, but the prospects are most hopeful.

Mr. Davy: It is a low-grade proposition, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, it has metallurgical difficulties, that is all.

Mr. Lambert: There are no metallurgical difficulties in the lower level.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As Minister, I am not prepared to say that here. One has to be very careful. I can only say I am assured that the ore treated both from the bore and from the shaft indicates no such difficulty. However, that is only a small parcel of ore after all, and I cannot say it is to be taken as an indication of the value of the great ore body existing in the district. That is one of the largest and one of the most continuous lodes to be found in any country. The results from the boring showed reasonably high values, namely, 42s. If the ore can be profitably treated, Wiluna must prove to be one of the greatest fields in Australia.

Mr. Marshall: The cross-cut they put down gave the truest sample ever obtained from that belt.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Below 100ft. from the surface the ore may be profitably treated. When we remember that this great lode has only been bulk sampled to 100ft. we realise the possibilities of the field. The department continues to receive reports of new finds, and it is apparent that the gold mining industry has many years of life ahead of it. As hon. members know, the value of gold is fixed. It ranges about £4 per oz. But by many means the cost of production has been increased. Wages have gone up certainly, but only as the result of the increased cost of living. That is largely due to the fact that since the war the price of every commodity has increased to a greater extent. In addition to the natural increase in prices, this industry is more adversely affected by the tariff than is any other industry in the Commonwealth. Although other industries suffered as a result of post-war conditions, the gold mining industry is the only one that has received no consideration from the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government have given bonuses to almost every industry that has suffered from war conditions. They have given a bonus to the manufacturing industry by virtue of the tariff, to the beef, steel, iron, dried fruits, and other industries in order to help them.

Mr. Davy: Do not forget the bonus on sugar.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Commonwealth Government give a bonus to the sugar industry to the extent of three to four million pounds, and the vicious feature of it is that they give bonuses in those quarters where they will get support, but shut their eyes to giving a bonus to an industry from which they get little support.

Mr. Marshall: What about the £450,000 we are to receive this year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was rather amused to read in the Press a statement that the Federal Government have reduced taxation. We are told they have reduced the income tax, the land tax, the entertainment tax and in fact quite a number of taxes. But while they have reduced those taxes, they have increased the Customs and Excise duties, with the result that whereas a few years ago the people of this country were paying £4 per head by way of tariff taxation, although the population of the

country has since increased by nearly a million, the taxation from the tariff to-day is £6 per head. It is quite a popular thing to tell the people that taxation has been reduced, but when the other side of the picture is shown, it indicates that Federal taxation has not been reduced. The Commonwealth have reduced only the taxation that the people know about. They have reduced the unpopular taxes that the people understand, but they have increased the tariff taxation to such an extent that the industry we are discussing to-night is being wiped almost out of existence. It is a vicious system. We know that recently there was another increase in the tariff, and that that increase affects the mining industry. I am absolutely convinced that the difficulties confronting the gold mining industry are more due to the Commonwealth tariff than to any other cause. It must be admitted that the tariff taxes the every requirement of the people, and all the materials and instruments needed in production in the gold mining industry—

Mr. Davy: And every other industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And is responsible for pushing up the cost of living and making wages higher until the industry is scarcely able to carry on.

Mr. Lindsay: It affects every primary industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not to the same extent.

Mr. Lindsay: Why not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The other industries have had enhanced prices for their products, but the gold mining industry has not. To other industries in difficulty, the Commonwealth have given substantial bonuses.

Mr. Latham: They are giving £450,000 to assist mining.

Mr. Heron: That is only a promise.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Customs tariff is really a bonus for the manufacturing industries, and the only industry that has not received a solitary penny by way of bonus is the mining industry. The value of the commodity produced by our mines is fixed but the value of wheat, for instance, is not fixed. During the last few years the value of wheat has been high, as the member for Toodyay should know.

Mr. Davy: But gold is not fixed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The people engaged in the gold mining industry have

to buy all their living requirements. They produce nothing for consumption. A man on the land is able to live much cheaper, despite the tariff, because a capable farmer can produce 80 per cent. of his own requirements. Apart from his agricultural machinery, he is not so greatly affected by the tariff as is a person who has to purchase every single requirement to carry on his occupation. The gold mining industry is peculiar in that respect. The people engaged in it cannot produce a bag of wheat or even a cabbage. Everything they require has to be purchased, and most of the commodities they need have been affected by the tariff. Consequently living on the goldfields is much more expensive than it was a few years ago, and the people engaged in the industry have to secure a high reward for their work and thus the industry is seriously affected.

Mr. Richardson: Are you advocating the abolition of all tariffs?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but if the Commonwealth Government are justified in giving special bonuses to other industries because they have been adversely affected by the tariff, they have no right to deny similar assistance to the gold mining industry. The grant of £450,000 is not being given for any particular industry. Mr. Gregory and Mr. Mann both denounced the gold bonus proposal.

Mr. Lindsay: They are opposed to high protection. That is the reason.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are not nearly so simple as we look.

Mr. Lindsay: Are not those things due to high protection?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Let us not be thought little children. These same men go back to the Federal Parliament and support the very Government responsible for high protection.

Mr. Davy: Whom else could they support?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those members of the Federal Parliament, pretending to be freetraders, come here and say, "We do not believe in a gold bonus; the first thing to do is to fight the tariff." Mr. Gregory says, "Let us concentrate and fight the tariff." When I read that, it occurred to my mind, "How long is this sham fight going to continue?" They are going to fight the tariff to get better conditions for certain industries, but they go back to the Federal Parliament and support the Govern-

ment in every particular. It is an utterly dishonest attitude. I have a far greater respect for the high protectionists of the Eastern States than for a man like him, because he will get votes here by posing as a freetrader while supporting the highest protectionist Government we have ever had.

Mr. Lindsay: Your party would stop all imports.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member may have cause to complain after the Labour Party have had an opportunity to do things, but he has no cause to complain at present, seeing that the Labour Party have not been in office for 10 years. He reminds me of the fable of the wolf and the lamb. The lamb has not been in office for 10 years, and yet members opposite talk of the attitude of Labour to the tariff. It will be time to discuss the Labour Party when they have had a term of office.

Mr. Latham: The Minister is wasting his time. He cannot convert anyone on this side, and members on his own side are already converted.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, we are all nobbled.

Mr. Latham: It is a political speech.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am addressing myself to the people of our goldfields.

Mr. Richardson: Why not take a trip up there and talk to them?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not for me to accept the view that the industry is not harassed or hampered by the obstacles I have mentioned, and it is not for me, as Minister for Mines, to allow to go unchallenged the statement that the people of the goldfields, instead of asking for assistance, must wait for relief until the tariff is reviewed. This sham fight will continue so long as it will bring votes to the present Federal Government.

Mr. Teesdale: Come back to the Estimates now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am discussing the Estimates; the hon. member does not like to hear facts. When we read statements in the Press about the reduction of Federal taxation, and when on the other hand we know that they have taxed the very clothes on the backs of the people and that gold mining is the one industry to which they are denying assistance, it is our duty to express our views.

Mr. Lindsay: Let us all have a bonus right around.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. The action of the Federal Government in

granting bonuses to obtain support from certain industries, and denying a bonus to another industry from which they cannot expect much support, is not fair. If the Federal Government stood for the principle of granting no bonuses, we would have no cause to complain, but when they grant assistance to some industries, they have no right to deny it to gold mining in Western Australia.

Mr. North: The tariff was not designed in the first place to produce revenue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is producing £34,000,000 a year. The high tariff has done more to injure gold mining in this State than has anything else I know of.

Mr. Lindsay: I agree with you. That is why we are fighting to keep your party out. We know what it would be if they got into power.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The people responsible for the tariff should grant some assistance to an industry which has been put to a disadvantage because of the tariff. Senator Pearce has stated that the amount of £450,000 to be given to Western Australia will provide means from which the State Government can pay a bonus to gold mining.

Mr. Latham: That is perfectly true.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is an utterly unprincipled statement. The amount was to be given because of certain disabilities suffered by the country, and was in no way due to Senator Pearce, whose Government turned down the gold bonus definitely on what they were pleased to call principle.

Mr. Davy: When did they do that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: By refusing to pay the bonus.

Mr. Latham: The industry wanted more than £450,000.

Mr. Davy: Why, we discussed it here only a few weeks ago.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The gold bonus was recommended long ago by the Board of Trade.

Mr. Latham: Do you believe in the gold bonus?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not believe in any bonus provided each industry gets a fair deal, but when the gold-mining industry is declining year after year and is almost wiped out of existence in consequence of the tariff, and when the Government responsible for the tariff pay bonuses to other industries, I contend that they

should treat the gold-mining industry of Western Australia similarly. The tariff, by which is extracted from the pockets of the people £6 per head, or about £34,000,000 a year, is more responsible for the decline of the gold-mining industry than anything else. The same position appertains in respect to other gold-mining communities in Australia. A Government which does this sort of thing is the Government to which the people ought to look for some support.

Mr. Richardson: What would you do to relieve the position?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Government which puts the liability on the people ought to give the relief. It is their business to do so.

Mr. Richardson: You favour a gold bonus. That is the only method by which it can be done.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the tariff remains I am in favour of the Commonwealth Government giving some bonus to the gold-mining industry, just as is given to the sugar industry, the manufacturing industry, the beef industry, the iron industry and others.

Mr. Richardson: Then you believe in a gold bonus.

Mr. Davy: In the case of wheat and wool, too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Wheat and wool have not been so much affected.

Mr. Davy: They must have been affected just as much.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, because their values have not been fixed; they have doubled in price.

Mr. Davy: The price of gold is no more fixed than the price of wheat.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is fixed now.

Mr. Davy: It is the world's parity, just as in the case of wheat.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: For a year or two.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There have been new finds in Western Australia during the last year or two, which hold out hopes of great promise. One is what is known as Corboy's Find in the Mt. Vernon district, and another is Coles' Find in the vicinity of Lake Way on the East Murchison. In both these places the developments up to date may be called reasonably satisfactory. I hope that at Mt. Vernon, as a result of the developments that are taking place there now, it may be possible to give crushing facilities in the near future. We

are not, however, too satisfied yet with regard to the stability of the field. The difficulty there is that water is at a shallow depth. Wherever that is the case there is difficulty in miners carrying on successfully. There is also the disadvantage of the mines being situated in a remote part of the country. With these disabilities the field cannot make the progress it ordinarily would. The department has made arrangements to assist with certain development work there, and if these developments are satisfactory below water level we shall consider the advisability of establishing crushing facilities on the field. Last year the department instituted a system by which we assisted in the cartage of ore to State batteries within a radius of 30 miles. We provided that outside the radius of five miles, and within the radius of 30 miles of an existing State battery, the department would subsidise the carting at the rate of 1s. per ton per mile. This subsidy has been of great assistance to prospectors who are not adjacent to a battery, and by that means the quantity of stone crushed at the batteries has been considerably supplemented. At Mundiwindi and at Sylvania recent discoveries have been made, the reports concerning which are pretty satisfactory.

Mr. Teesdale: Are they reefs at Mundiwindi?

Mr. Marshall: It is lode formation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At the Coolgardie State battery, from prospecting area 2280 a few months ago, there were crushed 49½ tons of ore for 124 ozs. 13 dwts. of gold. At the Meekatharra battery the Empire gold mine crushed 65 tons of ore for 332 ozs. 12 dwts. of gold. At Tuckanarra two crushings by prospectors Gilmour and Ainsworth from a shaft 16 feet deep returned from 10 tons of ore 99 ozs. over the plates, and 19 dwts. 14 grs. in the tailings.

Mr. Latham: That ought to pay.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. These are crushings from new fields that have been discovered within the last 12 months. If these crushings had occurred 20 years ago there might have been quite a boom in mining. Owing to the difficulties I have mentioned, and the lack of interest in the industry, there have not been the results from them there would have been 20 years ago. At the Croesus Proprietary Eclipse lease, there have been good developments of late at the north end, at the 1,000ft.

level. This has been stripped for 65 feet on the foot wall, and a leading stope is being taken over a width of 10 feet, the value being stated at 31s. per ton. This development is most encouraging. It is the farthest north point in the mine where values have been obtained. It appears to be a new lens or chute of ore not seen in the upper levels. It is a fine development. It proves that ore values are likely to extend to a greater depth than was supposed, which is very important. At the Enterprise a good body of ore has been opened up, and shows an average value of 45s. per ton over a width of 12 feet. A sample hole bore in the west wall gave still better values. It is thought that this ore body is the Perseverance lode, in which case they have a good length ahead of them before it passed into the adjoining property. These new developments are some of the most important that have occurred during the past two years. They give us hope that the life of our mines may be continued and that the industry will be prosperous. The South Kalgurlie mine has 24 drills at work, and is preparing to sink the main shaft another 120 feet. When this is completed it will mean a brighter outlook for the mine. The only other shaft that has been deepened during the past few years is the Lake View. A good development is reported by the manager of the Golden Horseshoe mine at the 2,630ft. level, a horizontal diamond drill having penetrated the No. 3 lode, at 2,700ft., giving an average assay value of 89s. 2d. per ton. If the developments later on, as a result of the diamond drilling, produce the same results, it will mean a fine discovery for the mine and the field in general. Next to gold, coal is our most valuable mineral, having produced £4,292,206 in all. This year, to the end of August, our bunker coal was valued at £46,084, but our exports have decreased continuously since 1920, when the exports were valued at £462,872. I cannot say why the export of coal should have decreased to that extent. It is a great pity that we do not produce more coal, and do not more fully utilise our valuable deposits, and that the people who own the coal mines do not try to push the bunkering trade.

Member: Are they not interested in other coal?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not wish to say that it is because they are interested in coal that comes from elsewhere.

This decline is not good for the country. If our coalfields are to be the value they ought to be, our bunkering trade should increase. The people who own our coal mines have laid a fine basis on which they can carry on operations, because they have the control of almost all the coal consumption in the State. Copper, of which the State has produced £1,802,339 worth to the end of August last, was mined during the current year and exported to the value of £15,541. There is a new process in copper production now being experimented with at Phillips River. I am not able to say how far the experiments have proved successful. The Government have assisted very materially in endeavouring to bring them to fruition. We gave quite a considerable amount of assistance in the erection of the plant, and one of our officers at Kalgoorlie was loaned to the company. He is a valuable officer, and has had considerable experience and knowledge of the work. I am hopeful that the experiments at Ravensthorpe will result in copper being more economically treated, put on the market at a cheaper rate, and in our copper industry again becoming a profitable one. Our total output of tin has been to the value of £1,529,436, of which this year, to the end of August, contributed £7,362. Lead, which is next in order of our mineral products, has been produced in this State to the value of £1,489,548, the first eight months of this year having contributed £74,112. The greater proportion of this was produced in the Northampton field, adjacent to Geraldton. Some of the recent developments there have been of a satisfactory nature. It is pleasing to note that one base metal that has maintained its price is lead. From the trade reports we receive we are led to believe that these values will be continued. If so, that field should have a long life before it, and we should be able to look forward to good developments there. The two Boys lease, close to the Surprise mine, has turned out well. It contains a big body of ore. The lode was discovered last year by two children, and holds out promise of being a mine equal to the Surprise mine, one of the richest in the State. I regret that the Surprise mine has of late not been quite so good as was the case in years past. An important development has taken place in the south end, and I am hopeful that the mine will continue as a valuable producer. The department is assisting very materially in that

area. We are assisting in the East Chapman area, and the help we have given has been largely responsible for the production of wealth to the value of £74,000 last year. Next to silver and pyritic ore, asbestos is the State's chief mineral product, the excellent quality of which should ensure us a prominent position in the markets of the world. I am glad to say that our asbestos is recognised as being of high quality. I hope the people we are assisting will be able to find a market for their products, and that this industry will develop in the next few years. The dividends paid by gold mining companies in Western Australia to the end of last year amounted to £28,505,477, and during the year 1924 they amounted to £124,771. The number of men engaged in mining in the last 10 years has fallen from 13,000 in 1914 to 6,289 in 1924. This is a very serious decline, and is largely due to the conditions I have already referred to. I will not refer to them again because they excite the anger and agitation of members opposite.

Mr. Latham: It is such a waste of time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is so far as the hon. member is concerned. He is not calculated to entertain anything beyond his particular viewpoint.

Mr. Teesdale: I shall look up a Standing Order soon.

Mr. Marshall: I do not know that you could do anything effectively.

Mr. Latham: You can't do anything but interject.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Despite the decline in the gold mining industry of Western Australia, this State still contributes 60.40 per cent. of the total output of gold in the Commonwealth, including the Northern Territory, Tasmania, Papua, and New Zealand. The contributions by the different parts of the Commonwealth are as follows:—Western Australia, 60.40 per cent.; New Zealand, 15.56 per cent.; Victoria, 8.36 per cent.; Queensland, 12.31 per cent.; New South Wales, 2.33 per cent.; and South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, and Papua, 1.04 per cent. It is a pity that the percentage throughout the Commonwealth is not greater, but when we realise the great expanse of territory over which minerals can be found in Western Australia, there is no doubt that even though the industry at the present time may not be as prosperous as we would like, it will con-

tinue to play an important and effective part in the history of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: There are more possibilities in this State than in other parts of the Commonwealth or New Zealand.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and we have more gold in the country too. There is no doubt that if the lodes we know exist now were exploited as in the old days, the gold output would be double its present-day total. The time will come again when, owing to a change in the economic conditions, the gold mining industry will once more be conducted with profit. Under the Mining Development Act the department continues to assist legitimate mining efforts particularly in the direction of developing mining properties. The total expenditure since the inception of the Act to the end of last month, was £613,231. During the past year and nine months—that is, from the 1st January, 1924, to the 31st October, 1925—the department authorised the following expenditure:—Advances in aid of mining development and equipment of mines with machinery, £44,658; subsidies on ore crushed, £332; providing means of transport and equipment of prospectors, £10,566; water supplies, £58,624. Thus we have assisted the industry to the extent of £114,180. That is evidence that the State Government have done their duty to the gold mining industry. We have materially assisted the industry so far as the resources of the State will permit and it cannot be laid at the doors of the Government that we have neglected the industry at all.

Mr. Latham: There was relief to the extent of £40,000 granted by the previous Government in connection with water supplies just prior to their leaving office.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Mitchell Government granted the relief, but we paid it.

Mr. Richardson: I don't think that is right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Regarding the operations of the Miners' Phthisis Act, the examination of the men is proceeding. Under the provisions of that Act there will devolve upon the Mines Department the responsibility of finding suitable occupations for men withdrawn from the mines, and settling those men in suitable occupations. The Act applies only to men who were engaged in the industry at the time

the Act was proclaimed. It seems to me a great pity that provision was not made for miners suffering from diseases incurred in connection with their employment and that that provision was not made 20 years ago when the industry was at its greatest prosperity, when a great many men were employed in the mines and when those mines were paying big dividends. Had this provision been made then, it would have been a wise step. It was not made then, however, but under the Miners' Phthisis Act the situation is being dealt with. The full responsibility is now falling upon the Government and we must accept it. We will not shirk our duty. The examination is now taking place at Kalgoorlie, but I am not in a position to say what results have been obtained to date. I am hopeful that it will be found that the number of those found to be suffering from tuberculosis will not be very great, and that the general health of the miners will be found to be good. However, there are bound to be a number of men who will be affected, and the State will have to accept full responsibility for their future in accordance with the provisions of the Miners' Phthisis Act.

Mr. Davy: Miners' phthisis is not the same as tuberculosis, is it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; the Government are not required to make provision for those suffering from miners' phthisis, but we have to accept the responsibility for those suffering from tuberculosis.

Mr. Heron: The name of the Act is really a misnomer.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. A committee has been appointed by the Government, comprising the heads of various departments, who are going into the question of providing suitable employment for men who will have to be taken out of the mines. I think I am safe in saying that both Parliament and the Government will stand up to their responsibilities. This work may be more costly than we think, but whatever the cost, we will have to shoulder it. This is a very sad feature of the mining industry, and the men who are suffering from these diseases are entitled to more sympathy than they get. While people are generally sympathetic regarding persons who are so afflicted, they are so much concerned about their own business that they have not much time to think of others unless

the conditions of those people are brought under their notice directly.

Mr. Heron: A large percentage of the people do not realise what it means.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Here we have a large number of men employed in producing the wealth of this country, providing markets for the agriculturists and working in an industry which, from the standpoint of health, is not a very desirable one. I am afraid that the conditions under which they have laboured have affected the miners mentally as well as physically. It is therefore unfortunate that we are not able to give the people engaged in that industry more consideration even than is extended to them under the Act I have referred to. When discussing the Estimates I hope hon. members will bear in mind the conditions under which these people have worked I think the department and the Government can claim that they have rendered material assistance to the mining industry. A little while ago there was some criticism of the department which I referred to in a statement made in reply to a question asked by the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton). The Government provided assistance for opening up the Gladsome and Sand Queen mines. It was represented to me by a member of the Bullfinch Company that if the mines could be unwatered and sampled, in view of the large amount of gold that had been produced from the mines, capital would be readily available. In order to remove an obstruction in the shaft, and to clean up the mine and the levels, the Government advanced £7,000. Although the results of the sampling were conclusive, the option holders abandoned their options. I do not think it can be said that the Government did not do a fair thing by the company. We carried on the operations until they reached a decisive result. We, as a Government, have no power to compel the company to do anything in the direction of further work on the mines.

Mr. Teesdale: You did not hear a word of complaint from the Opposition side regarding this matter.

The Minister for Justice: No, it was from the people there themselves.

Mr. Davy: Have the Government secured their money back?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, and that is not the only amount that has gone in such a direction.

Mr. Latham: No, there will be a lot more before you people have finished.

The Minister for Justice: We get as much back from the mining industry as from the agricultural industry through the I.A.B.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for York (Mr. Latham) should be the last member of this House to complain. He owes his present prosperity to the State, because of the money he borrowed from the State.

Mr. Latham: I paid interest on all I borrowed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for York should be the last to complain because men on the land received assistance from the Government and were allowed to pay back when they could do so. When people could not pay back, they were carried on until they were in a position to do so.

Mr. Latham: You cannot do that with the mining industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There has been no complaint from the Opposition side of the House because there is no room for complaint. It represented an advance made under the Mining Development Act for a specific purpose. This is not the only amount that will not come back to the Government. While money has been expended under the Act, and has not come back, the results have been that hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of mineral wealth has been produced and that has come back to the country. If we spend money in connection with this industry, we return much wealth to Western Australia. I hope hon. members opposite will not be too critical regarding the Estimates.

Mr. Latham: You would not expect us to be after your speech. You have put the match to it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will put another match to it by stating that whatever the member for York may say, will not be very valuable.

Mr. Latham: I will have something to say about that political speech of yours.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member does speak, he will at least add to the entertainment of the Chamber.

MR. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.45]: It is regrettable that the Minister had not a more pleasing tale to tell of the prospects of mining in Western Australia. Those who have followed the Minister's activities

will agree that he has administered the department very sympathetically, giving assistance to the industry wherever possible. Although we in this Chamber are prone to be a little critical, we might perhaps abjure criticism for the moment and give a little praise to the officers of the department.

Mr. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lindsay: You would not expect us to refrain from criticism this year?

Mr. LAMBERT: There has been very little to criticise. I am very pleased with the officers of the department. Many of them are highly qualified and are giving a great deal of valuable service to the State. Mining has been responsible for half the wealth produced in the State up to date. In the early days, when the industry was in the heyday of its prosperity, it was able to assist the agricultural industry. We cannot compare the two industries, because when we take an ounce of gold out of the ground it has gone for ever. To that extent mining is not comparable with agriculture. Still, it would be regrettable if the great importance of mining generally were lost sight of in the House. Half the wealth produced by the United States of America comes from mining alone.

Mr. Davy: You are including oil in that.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, oil being a mineral production. Whilst, admittedly, oil has played a great part in the development of America, yet when oil shall have ceased to flow, the great iron and steel industry will prove the sheet-anchor of that country as, some day, it will prove also in Australia.

Mr. Lindsay: You want protection for that.

Mr. LAMBERT: Not so much protection as an intelligent conception of the duties of citizenship. Whilst America has been a great protectionist country, it has also developed a sense of local patriotism that, unfortunately, is almost entirely unknown in Western Australia.

Mr. Lindsay: What about the limitation of output?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know what the hon. member means, unless it be the labour question in Australia as compared with the United States. The great thing in the United States is the desire of the employers, not only to make labour employable, but to give the workers a force of man power which is unappreciated in Aus-

tralia. I remind the hon. member that the farmers of Western Australia have never yet started to farm seriously.

Mr. Lindsay: Do they farm scientifically in America?

Mr. LAMBERT: To a very much greater extent than we do in Western Australia.

Mr. Sampson: Do you believe in the American system of piecework?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not believe in the hon. member's system of cornering food-stuffs and putting them through a bureau for sale. Probably the most important happening in the mining industry during the year under review was the report furnished by Mr. Kingsley Thomas. The Government are to be commended on their foresight in first desiring to get an impartial report as to the reason for the decline in mining, and in the second place to determine what to do to revive the industry that has meant so much to Western Australia. I was struck by many of the recommendations put forward by Mr. Thomas. That gentleman was possessed of fine qualifications as a mining engineer, but probably he did not give to the local conditions that strict attention that, perhaps, a longer acquaintance with the auriferous areas of Western Australia would have constrained him to do. Probably he rather judged the ore occurrences in Western Australia, and based his calculations, upon his South African experience. It must be said of the mines in Western Australia, even the rich mines, that they have not been the easiest in the world to work: because in many places the payable ore chutes are erratic and, although rich, are hard to follow and hard to work, keeping a sampler going almost all the time. That is not nearly so easy as first deciding from a systematic survey that you have three million or four million tons of ore of an even grade, when the only problem you have to solve is the economic production of the gold contents. In South Africa mining is by no means as complex as it is in Western Australia. It must be remembered that many of Mr. Thomas's recommendations cover a good deal of ground and evidence a very close reasoning. For instance, he dealt first with the big group of mines at Kalgoorlie. Those mines present a problem distinct from all others in Western Australia. The strictures made regarding those mines could not have any useful application, other than in a general

way, to the other mines in this State. At that time I suggested that those mines should be amalgamated, and subsequently Mr. Thomas made that recommendation. I believe they should have had a central power plant many years ago, and that years ago they should have carried out oil flotation. In 1916, when probably oil flotation had never been mentioned in the Mines Department, I advocated in the House that the Coolgardie State battery should be used for the putting up of the first unit of a reduction plant for concentration and oil flotation. The then Minister for Mines, Mr. R. T. Robinson, promised that that should be the first step to be taken. I thought it would serve a useful purpose as a pilot plant to make effective experiments in the reduction of complex ores and in oil flotation. The Minister in 1917 promised that as soon as the plant got going, the first unit of an oil flotation plant would be installed. Although that plant costing £7,000 or £8,000 was erected at Coolgardie, mainly at my instigation, nothing was done with it beyond crushing a parcel of 100 or 150 tons. From 1917 to 1925 only two or three small parcels have been crushed, apart from which the plant has been unused. The plant should have been used as the first unit of an oil flotation process to decide whether we could profitably concentrate by this method. The Kalgoorlie School of Mines has been carrying out small laboratory tests in oil flotation, and without the slightest desire to devalue the value of that work, little good can be expected from purely laboratory tests. It would be much better to experiment with a 10-ton parcel in a bulk way with a pilot plant rather than conduct numerous experiments in a laboratory by means of beakers or a small plant. The laboratory tests at Kalgoorlie merely indicate that there are possibilities ahead of oil flotation, but even when that work is done, it must be regarded as only laboratory work to be followed by bulk tests. I suggested to the Royal Commissioner that the crushing plant at Coolgardie should be utilised. I am pleased that he recommended it. When the Minister has an opportunity to review the experimental work of the School of Mines, I am satisfied he will see the necessity for taking the next step and operating an oil flotation plant at the Coolgardie State battery, so that working experiments may be conducted on a bulk scale. That would be useful to test the ores in the Kalgoorlie district; it

would be useful to test the ore from Wiluna, while the refractory ore from some of the Coolgardie mines could be treated on the spot instead of being railed away for treatment as it is to-day. The Minister referred to assistance to mining at Comet Vale. I know the methods that have been adopted in the past. I believe we have not obtained the value we should have got from the money we have expended. Our method and policy should be altered, and one direction in which the policy should be altered is to embrace the testing in bulk of the more complex ores by oil flotation or in other ways suggested by our chemists. In this way greater good would be obtained from the expenditure. I have discussed with some of the managers of the Golden Mile the merits of the oil flotation process. Some of them believe that oil flotation could not profitably be applied to the concentration of ores on the Golden Mile. It must be remembered that oil flotation is merely a matter of reducing the ore from 100 per cent. to perhaps 10 or 15 per cent. product. It is not a process to recover the gold; it merely means the reduction of the bulk of the ore from which the gold is recovered. I suggested to the Royal Commissioner that a more economical means of treating the sulphide ore would be by roasting the product after concentration. I am pleased that the engineers advising one of the big mines, having seen a suction gas plant that I designed, intend to give it a trial. I am satisfied it will be successful, and that it will save probably 50 per cent. of the fuel that to-day is wasted through employing the roasting methods that have been in vogue ever since King Solomon's days. I suggested a system of boring the old mines and old ore bodies, and I am pleased that the Royal Commissioner agreed there was a fair possibility of its being successful in some of the bigger and better known belts. I hope the Treasurer will make available a sufficient sum so that the Minister for Mines may put into operation a comprehensive system of boring. Coolgardie to-day appears to be rather decadent, but in the space of three or four years over a million pounds' worth of gold was produced within a mile of the post office. Only one of the mines of Coolgardie, Bayley's, has a shaft down to 900 feet, and I can only conclude that all the gold in that district has not been recovered. That, too, was the opinion of the Royal Commissioner. He was satisfied that the

geological features were favourable. There is another portion of our auriferous belt that should receive attention—the northern end of Kalgoorlie. I believe that by systematic boring there is a possibility of locating other mines perhaps as important as those now being worked. Some people rather discount the value of boring, but it cannot be gainsaid that it is a useful preliminary to more extensive exploitation. Although one cannot accept the results from diamond drilling as being conclusive, they do indicate whether the expenditure of additional money for further development work would be justified. In all the mines to which we grant money under the Mines Development Act, we should insist as a preliminary that they undertake some boring. If there is a mine with a reef that has given payable results down to 100 or 200 feet, and the Mines Department consider it should receive certain assistance, they should insist upon preliminary drilling before permitting promiscuous shaft-sinking, driving and cross-cutting to be undertaken. Wiluna provides a good instance of the value of diamond drilling. It is necessary to be cautious about accepting without reserve the reports issued on any mine, but the indications at Wiluna lead us to believe that we have there probably the biggest and most promising belt of country in the State. Regarding the expenditure under the Mines Development Act, I expressed my views to the Royal Commissioner, and I cannot see any reason to alter my opinion. I consider the expenditure should be properly allocated and supervised by a competent staff. Only in that way can we hope to reap any success from the expenditure. There is one phase of our mining to which we might well direct the attention of the Federal Government; I refer to the Geological Department. The department here is considerably under-staffed. The personnel of the department should be reviewed. When we consider the almost limitless area of our auriferous fields, we can well ask the Federal Government to spend some money in subsidising the Geological Department. As the Minister rightly says, they are subsidising other industries, and assisting them in countless ways which are not apparent to everybody.

Mr. LAMBERT: Of course not. If members of the State Parliament are sufficiently disloyal to suggest that everything should come out of that sum, we shall get nothing but it. It was a sum set aside because of the

general disabilities under which Western Australia has laboured because of Federation. It has no reference to any special obligation that the Federal Government have towards us. The activities and work of the Geological Department are necessary from the point of view of national defence. What is the use of people prating about the defence of Australia when they are in total ignorance of the resources that are so essential for the preservation of the national defence of the country in the case of emergency? What is the use of men talking glibly about that subject? It would be disloyal for any member of this Parliament to suggest that any special service should come out of a mere dole of that kind, when Western Australia has suffered from the effects of Federation for a quarter of a century. It is a disgraceful suggestion for anyone to make that work of this national character should be done out of the £450,000. The work of the Geological Department should be regarded in the light of a national undertaking, and should be subsidised by the National Parliament. I hope the Minister will draw the attention of the Federal authorities to this question. The Federal Parliament should know of our resources in lead, copper, iron and other minerals, when these factors enter so much into the life of the nation. I hope that greater appreciation will be shown for the preliminary work that ought to be carried out by the State in conjunction with that which should be done by the Federal Government. We have a State as rich and varied in its mineral resources as any other country in the world. The trouble in this State is that we have not the courage and foresight displayed by the more advanced and better developed countries. Unless public men draw attention to them, many of these industries may remain unknown for another century. I am sure the mining industry will receive sympathetic treatment at the hands of the Ministry and of all members. It is not right that we should take a parochial view concerning any industry. We should take the bigger view that every industry, if properly nurtured, will lead to the development of this vast and rich State.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [9.20]: In the main I agree with the remarks that have been made by the Minister, but there are one or two points with which I should like to deal. There is not likely to be a

great revival in the gold mining industry until money becomes cheaper. There was a time when one had only to say there was such and such an ore channel containing a small quantity of gold, to bring about a rush of investors and prospectors. To-day we can refer to the most promising belt of country that has ever been discovered in the State since the Golden Mile, but it creates no interest whatever. I put this down to the fact that a particular section of the people look upon the gold mining industry as more or less a speculation. They have other avenues for investment that are more certain. Unfortunately for other industries they are loth to place their capital in these particular channels. Every now and then fresh avenues of investment are offered, and people avail themselves of the opportunity to put their money into these gilt-edged securities. People with money at their disposal will naturally place it where the return is most assured.

Mr. Mann: Do you not think that taxation has something to do with it?

Mr. MARSHALL: It has no more to do with it than the cry of a certain section that Labour has anything to do with it. I am getting tired of the catch phrase that this, that or the other is responsible. It does not matter what is happening in regard to labour conditions and taxation, when money is free, plentiful and cheap, people can be decoyed into almost any form of speculation. I have seen men become almost insane in their desire to speculate with their money. When they have had no other investment offering they have gladly put it into some ramp. Money has frequently been invested upon incorrect reports. These reports have detrimentally affected our gold mining industry. Ramps have been foisted upon the people. Glowing reports have been issued about the discovery of gold and of untold wealth being found in ore-bearing channels, whereas these finds have been merely salt bush flats. I am surprised that the Minister has not amended the Mining Act to prevent people issuing false reports that have been so harmful to the industry. I remember when we had to take a drastic stand with regard to a certain ramp that greatly affected a number of people. Half the people who invest their money in gold mining ventures know nothing about the facts until they are brought forward in this Chamber or on the public

platform. I am glad the Government have seen fit to proclaim the Miners' Phthisis Act. This has hung fire for a long time, due to the fact that the laboratory had not been completed by the Commonwealth Government. I am glad that the miners who are affected with T.B. will at last be taken out of the mines, and put into avocations of a more healthy nature. This will avoid contamination for the healthy miners, and will give the mines a chance of getting rid of the germs that are in them. Nowadays there is no great abundance of alluvial or specimen gold. To-day it is far more difficult, and more expensive, to make new discoveries than was the case in the past. The Mt. Vernon field is a promising one. Some of the values obtained there over a length of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles of country are very encouraging, and satisfactory to all concerned. The first impression one has upon seeing the field is that it must have been a difficult one to locate. Except at the south end, there is nothing to show the existence of any auriferous belt of ore, or any gold-bearing channel of ore. The field traverses what is known as a spinifex belt. In some cases the overburden is nine or 10 feet deep. There are other fields of a similar character which entail a good deal of labour and expense to discover. In the early days of the industry people used to pick up slugs practically on the surface. In the future it will be even more difficult to locate new gold-bearing channels, because of the increasing expense and because of the labour that is required to get at them. I agree with the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) that, outside the Golden Mile, there is not one belt of auriferous country that has been thoroughly prospected. I have worked in most of the mines in the back country, and there is not one district that I would be prepared to say has been properly tested. It is very difficult indeed, outside the Golden Mile, to find a shaft down more than 300 or 400 feet. The argument advanced by the member for Coolgardie was a good one. Old fields that people, not thoroughly conversant with the mining industry would imagine worked out, are, in my opinion, far from being exhausted. I think it should be the policy of the Government to thoroughly test those older fields by means of diamond boring.

Mr. Panton: That is the only reasonable method of testing them at this stage.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so, because the great gold-bearing channels do not show at the surface and some are down 300 or 400 feet below the surface. To invite people to sink shafts to that depth, put in crosscuts and explore the country below is unreasonable when a policy of diamond drilling would provide the indications necessary to ascertain what was to be found below. I suggest to the Minister that if the Treasurer can see his way clear, the mining vote should be still further liberalised. From what I ascertained during my travels with the Minister for Mines recently, he would be prepared to enter upon a vigorous policy of diamond drilling if the funds were made available for him. I have read the report of that most amiable gentleman, Mr. Kingsley Thomas, the Royal Commissioner who reported upon the mining industry. While I cannot see eye to eye with him in some of his statements, I agree with him in most of his conclusions. Whether any good will be the outcome of his report, I cannot say. After all, his report was mainly confined to the Golden Mile, where the interests of no prospectors are involved, nor are the Government involved. That area was left to the tender care of private enterprise. Mr. Kingsley Thomas's report was most illuminating and to my mind, indicated the only solution of the difficulties confronting the mines grouped on the Golden Mile. I agree with the Minister for Mines that the mining industry is the only one in Western Australia that has not received sympathetic treatment at the hands of the Federal Government. The Minister argued that gold has a fixed price. I disagree with him there, for I contend that gold has no fixed price. What is fixed is the fineness and quantity of the gold contents of a sovereign. To say that the price of gold is fixed is quite wrong. If it were, we could not have received the high price paid per ounce during the war period.

The Minister for Mines: That was due to extraordinary conditions.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is not so, any more than it would be correct to say that the fluctuations in the price of wheat were due to extraordinary conditions.

The Minister for Mines: Then why don't we get that price now?

Mr. MARSHALL: The reason is quite apparent. To say that the price of gold is fixed is economically wrong.

Mr. Davy: Who fixes it?

Mr. MARSHALL: That is the point. If we could deal internationally on a gold basis, and pay by gold instead of a floating currency, we would find that gold had no fixed price. It is not the price of gold that is fixed; it is the floating debt. That is what influences the value of our sovereign. It would be as logical to say that the price of any other commodity is fixed, and we know that is not so. We do not buy gold with gold. We might just as well say that the price of wheat is fixed and that we will buy wheat with wheat. The fact that we get more wheat, more clothes or more supplies to-day for a certain sum results in people thinking that we speak in terms of three or four sovereigns. We do not do that, and that is where the harm comes in regarding gold. I have received 7s. 6d. and 11s. 6d. per ounce for gold more than the standard price. Irrespective of whether the price of gold is fixed or not, the Federal Government have rendered assistance by way of subsidy to every other industry, that assistance in some instances taking the form of tariff imposts. I have no objection to that.

Mr. Latham: You could not have any objection.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Federal Government have not rendered any assistance to the mining industry.

Mr. Latham: They cannot do everything at once. They may do it directly.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Federal Government will do so if they remain there long enough.

The Minister for Mines: They may do it when the change comes.

Mr. MARSHALL: In view of the present outlook they will not have a chance of doing it.

Mr. Lindsay: Did not the Federal Government reduce taxation on the mining industry recently?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, they reduced taxation with the one hand, but took twice as much with the other hand.

The Minister for Mines: Ten times as much.

Mr. Latham: Did not the Federal Government exempt prospectors from taxation?

Mr. MARSHALL: I admit that they brought the Federal law into conformity with the State law.

Mr. Richardson: That was done to assist the prospectors.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, it was to encourage them. The prospectors get little assistance.

Mr. Lindsay: Is it not a fact that formerly if the prospector found anything he had to pay it all away in taxation?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and the Government who imposed that taxation years ago have now taken it off. They woke up to the stupidity of their actions.

Mr. Lindsay: What about the duty on agricultural machinery compared with mining machinery?

Mr. MARSHALL: I think it is no higher on agricultural machinery than it is on mining machinery.

Mr. Latham: You would be surprised to know that it is less.

Mr. North: Do you believe in reducing the tariff?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, I believe that the industries of the State and of the Commonwealth should be protected. I think I can see what is happening. I have not been able to visit the Eastern States to inspect industries there, but I think efforts are being made to protect industries because of the present position of plant and so forth. Take our own State Implement Works. I believe the machinery was obsolete when it was purchased.

The CHAIRMAN: Keep to the Mining Estimates; we are not discussing manufactures generally.

Mr. Latham: Tell us how we can assist the mining people more than we are doing.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister made a statement to which I desire to draw attention. He may have made the statement innocently.

Mr. Teesdale: He said a lot for which he is sorry now.

Mr. MARSHALL: I asked him a question regarding diamond drilling at Kalgoorlie and at Wiluna. The reply I got was that for the year ended 30th June, 1925, the expenditure at Kalgoorlie was £5,486 3s. 1d. and at Wiluna £710 2s. 10d.

The Minister for Mines: This Government have not spent a penny at Kalgoorlie.

Mr. MARSHALL: The reply was given to me in the House this session. At all events, the Kalgoorlie figure does not come into the argument. I was told that the Government had expended £710 2s. 10d. at Wiluna, but the Minister informed us tonight that the Government had spent £1,400 at Wiluna.

The Minister for Mines: The reply you got was as to the amount spent up to that date.

Mr. MARSHALL: As the boring at Wiluna had ceased long before I asked my question, naturally I thought the answer contained the total cost. However, that point is now cleared up. Gold mining has become most unattractive to the workers. The old-time miners are not to be found in the same numbers to-day as they were available in years gone by. Men have become wiser. From time to time I have complained of the method of rising in mining. Some time ago a deputation waited on the Minister at Meekatharra and asked for the abolition of rising. The Minister said he would see what could be done. Unfortunately, although four months have elapsed, we have had no definite reply. Men have been working in rises for four months while the Minister has been thinking about a reply. It is about time the Minister, conversant with the dangers of rising as he is, should be considerate enough to give a decision. The Minister understands the position thoroughly, and so I expect him to see what he can do about the abolition of rising. Again, a geological survey of the district was promised to Peak Hill four years ago. Since then the Minister promised to go into the question and see what could be done. Unfortunately nothing has been done yet. When people are prepared to go out and make sacrifices, and concessions are partially promised to them, the least that can be done is to fulfil the promise or give reasons why it cannot be done. To leave the matter unattended and keep those people in suspense is to create general dissatisfaction. If the Minister says definitely that we cannot have those concessions I shall be content, although I shall be much better pleased if he says we can have them. I strongly object to the removal of any State battery.

Mr. Latham: Whether wanted or not.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member's removal is not far distant.

Mr. Latham: Removal to the other side of the House.

Mr. MARSHALL: Even though a State battery be constructed of entirely new material, to pull it down and erect it elsewhere is to greatly depreciate its value. For a considerable time the policy has obtained of supplying machinery parts from one battery to another. When the transfer is effected,

generally the result is found to be unsatisfactory, and invariably it is explained, "Oh, it was no good when it was brought here." So our State batteries are ever in need of repair and none of them is in satisfactory condition. In the second place, I disagree with the removal of State batteries for the reason that one never knows where the next belt of payable country will be discovered. In one instance a State battery was removed, and shortly afterwards the prospectors cleared out because there was no longer a battery available to them. So to-day we have up there neither battery nor field. One complaint made by a great number of prospectors against the State batteries has relation to the charges for treatment. They complain that the 3 dwts. deducted is exorbitant. However that may be, a deduction is also made for moisture. A prospector goes to a State battery with 100 tons of ore. When it comes to the treatment, 15 per cent. of the 100 tons is deducted on the score that 15 per cent. of it was moisture. The prospectors do not complain of the deduction of 15 per cent. for moisture, but they complain of being charged with the crushing of 100 tons and being paid on only 85 tons. The complaint is a legitimate one. The prospector should not be charged for the crushing of the full 100 tons. I know the State batteries do not pay, but I know also that many other Government utilities do not pay, notwithstanding which no great outcry is raised. I claim that State batteries are on all-fours with those other unprofitable utilities. If the batteries do show a loss, they are essential to the prosperity of the mining industry. I want to thank the Minister for the regulation introduced granting a subsidy over a range of 30 miles from each State battery. It has been most encouraging, and I only regret that the quantity of ore crushed at State batteries has not been increased as the result of that subsidy. It is one of the best innovations every made, and has been of immense value to prospectors. How it comes about that we have not treated more ore as the result of the concession is a puzzle to me. Still, I thank the Minister for it, because it has assisted in a great measure to develop certain belts of country far removed from State batteries. I thank the officers of the Mines Department for their unfailing courtesy and attention to all the business I have had to transact with them. Finally I thank the Government for

their liberal consideration to and sympathetic treatment of the mining industry.

[*Mr. Panton took the Chair.*]

**MR. DAVY** (West Perth) [9.58] I do not pretend to know anything of the details of mining, and perhaps if those members who have spoken on the subject to-night had confined themselves to mining technique I and others on this side would have found ourselves quite unable to say anything. I would have been quite overwhelmed by the argument in favour of oil flotation—whatever that may mean—put up by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert). I would have been compelled to accept his assurance that the prospects of Coolgardie's resurrection from a village of bare walls and goats and tobacco plants into city fit to be represented by the hon. member, were almost assured. If the hon. member had kept to that, I would not have had a word to say, but he saw fit to deliver a lecture on the subject of patriotism, and apparently his idea of patriotism was to disparage Australia and Australians, and to boom America and the Americans. In that respect he differs from the Premier, judging from that gentleman's remarks last night.

**Mr. Lambert:** Last night I took one of your members to task.

**Mr. DAVY:** Again we have had a discussion outside the question of mining and into the fields of economics by practically all the members who have spoken. We have discovered that the 14 gentlemen who sit on the Government side of the House and represent mining constituencies are, as regards mining, freetraders, and they condemn very strongly the Government who have inflicted on Australia—I use the word “inflicted” and mean it—a measure of protection which is much less than it is the avowed intention of the Federal Opposition to inflict.

**The Minister for Mines:** How much do they intend to inflict?

**Mr. DAVY:** Prohibition.

**The Minister for Mines:** Who said so?

**Mr. DAVY:** It has been declared over and over again.

**The Minister for Mines:** By your people.

**Mr. DAVY:** Not by us.

**The Minister for Mines:** By your people deliberately for party purposes.

**Mr. DAVY:** It has been declared over and over again, and there is no doubt in the minds of anyone, not even of the Minister himself, that the Australian Labour Party stand for a greater measure of protection than even the present Federal Government.

**The Minister for Mines:** You are counting on the barrage of lying in the papers to-day.

**Mr. DAVY:** I am not counting on any barrage of lying. I am speaking of the views expressed constantly in the newspapers by Labour members who sit in the Commonwealth Parliament.

**The Minister for Mines:** Quote one of them.

**Mr. DAVY:** I admit that there are one or two members of the Labour Party who to some extent stand for free trade, but it is a fact that the Australian Labour Party stand strenuously for even a greater measure of protection than do the present Government. Over and over again we have been told that the accepted policy of Australia is protection, and there is no voice raised against it except by gentlemen who represent this State in the Federal Parliament. We are asked to agree with the Minister for Mines that these gentlemen are adopting a dishonest attitude because they declare constantly and publicly that they are opposed to the present high tariff. What is their alternative? Does the Minister suggest that if the Labour Opposition in the Federal Parliament are put into power after the forthcoming election, we shall have less protection than we have to-day?

**The Minister for Mines:** We shall have better protection for the mining industry.

**Mr. DAVY:** I am afraid the Minister is deluding himself by reason of the fact that supporting the Government of Western Australia are 14 representatives of mining constituencies and he is hoping that the Australian Labour Party in the Federal Parliament will reflect the opinions of the State Labour Party.

**The Minister for Mines:** Mr. Charlton has already said so. The Labour Party, as distinct from your party, always keep their election promises.

**Mr. DAVY:** I wonder whether anybody really believes that. However, I do not wish to diverge further from the question than I have been driven to do by the absolutely unprovoked and unwarranted at-

tack made by the Minister for Mines on Messrs. Gregory, Mann and Prowse, and the other gentlemen who are standing for election. It has nothing to do with the question, but the Minister went out of his way to declare that their attitude in fighting the tariff—and they have fought it openly and constantly—was a dishonest attitude. There was nothing dishonest about it. It was an upright and honourable attitude adopted in the interests of Western Australia, though on other matters they supported the Government, which was quite a proper thing to do.

The Minister for Mines: And you do not believe a word of it.

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps the Minister judges me by himself. I have never yet been caught out for saying something that I did not believe. I honestly believe that those gentlemen, holding the political opinions they do, have no alternative. To support the Labour Opposition would land them in no better plight on the tariff, and to act as they have done was a proper and honest thing to do.

The Minister for Mines: If the tariff is the great issue, why do not they stand out and cultivate public opinion?

Mr. DAVY: Are not they doing it every day, and at every possible opportunity? Have they not fought in every possible way every increase and at all times? Do they ever speak publicly in Western Australia without fighting the tariff? How can they do otherwise?

The CHAIRMAN: I have already allowed the hon. member great latitude and he must now confine his remarks to the Mines Estimates.

Mr. DAVY: I have finished dealing with that aspect. I was driven to touch on it; otherwise I should not have spoken on this most important vote because I do not pretend to have any technical knowledge of mining.

Mr. Heron: You showed good judgment.

Mr. DAVY: Of course I did. I hope I shall never attempt to speak about something of which I am so entirely ignorant as mining.

Mr. Heron: I meant you showed good judgment by never working in a mine.

Mr. DAVY: Had I done so, I would at least have had the advantage of working with some of the best people in Western Australia. In that connection I agree with the Minister when he claims for the people in the mining industry a proper degree of

sympathy from the rest of the people, a proper degree of understanding of the great disadvantages they have suffered, and that they should be treated properly in the matter of diseases contracted through carrying on the mining industry. There is no doubt that the outbreak of mining in Western Australia brought some of the finest citizens to this country—miners, mine managers and persons who to-day are engaged in earning a living in a hundred different ways from farming to the carrying on of my own profession. They were attracted to Western Australia by the mining, and if another mining boom would bring to Western Australia another 100,000 people of the same calibre, it would be a boon of the greatest possible magnitude.

Mr. Heron: It would solve all our migration troubles.

Mr. DAVY: It would. I must controvert the statement of the Minister that the mining industry is the only industry in Western Australia which does not receive protection. On my suggesting to him that there were the wheat and wool industries, he answered that the prices of wheat and wool were not fixed, whereas the price of gold was fixed. I am not prepared to enter into an economic argument on the question whether the price of gold is fixed, but if it is fixed, it is not fixed in Australia. It must be fixed somewhere else in the world; by whom I do not know.

Mr. Lambert: It was fixed in 1640 by Imperial Act.

Mr. DAVY: We in Australia have no control over the price; neither have the Federal Government any more control over the price realised for the product of mining than they have over the prices realised for wheat or wool. No control is exercised by any authority in Australia over the price of one of those articles any more than the other. Although wheat growing and wool growing have prospered during recent years they have, owing to the high tariff imposed, suffered just as much as has the mining industry. They have not prospered as much as they would have done were it not for the high tariff.

The Minister for Mines: Do you ignore the fact that the high tariff provides a big consuming population in Australia, which is a very great advantage to the agricultural industry?

Mr. DAVY: Of what advantage is any population in Australia to the wheat or the

wool growing industry? The farmers of Western Australia would get exactly the same price for their wheat if there was not a single man, woman or child other than those in the industry living in Australia. It does not make the slightest difference. The consumption of wheat and wool in Australia has no more influence on the world's markets for those products than have the words I am uttering here to-night.

The Minister for Mines: What about other farm produce?

Mr. DAVY: Fruitgrowing is not so prosperous largely because we have not a bigger population, but I am not discussing fruitgrowing. I have mentioned the two principal commodities, wheat and wool.

The Minister for Mines: What about beef and mutton?

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the Mines Estimates and not with beef and mutton. The member for West Perth will address himself to the question before the Chair.

Mr. DAVY: I shall obey your instructions; I propose to carry the argument no further. I have no criticism to offer on the Estimates presented, because I am not competent to criticise them. I have directed my remarks to certain incidental matters raised by the Minister and by other speakers who followed him.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [10.14]: I have no knowledge whatever of mining, but the Minister made a reference to coal to which I should like to refer. He pointed out that there had been a falling off in the bunkering trade. I suggest to the Minister that he should consult with the Premier, who may be able to arrange for the large Collie power scheme with the cheap money from the Old Country, and that will absorb all the coal raised in the next 50 years.

**MR. LINDSAY** (Toodyay) [10.15]: I was once foolish enough to have something to do with mining. Then something occurred that took me out of the country, and I have kept away from mining ever since. I put in many years of my life on the goldfields, and deeply deplore the present condition of the gold mining industry. Probably had it not been for the goldfields Western Australia would not be in the position it occupies to-day. Many of the pioneers on the fields found their way into the agricultural areas. In those days

we were all "t'othersiders," and there is no doubt we did a great deal for the State.

The Minister for Mines: The goldfielders largely made the wheat belt.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes. We have considerable sympathy for the industry. Anything I can do to assist it I shall at all times be prepared to do. I fancy, from what I have read, the best thing we can do to increase production is to increase the tariff. Senator Needham at the Unity Theatre recently stated that goods were always cheaper in that country where the tariff was high enough to stop importation. I cannot, therefore, follow the argument of the Minister for Mines when he says that it is the high tariff that has decreased the production in mining.

The Minister for Mines: What is your opinion?

Mr. LINDSAY: I am stating the opinion of the leader of the Minister for Mines so far as the tariff is concerned.

The Minister for Mines: My leader is here.

Mr. LINDSAY: Surely the Minister does not contend that Senator Needham, the leader of the Federal Labour Party in Western Australia, is not his leader on tariff questions.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: He is not the leader of the Labour Party.

Mr. LINDSAY: He is the leader of the Federal Labour Party in Western Australia.

The Minister for Justice: He is not.

Mr. LINDSAY: He said their policy was that of a new protection. He also said that they intended to make in Australia everything that was possible, and that it was possible to make anything in Australia if the people paid for it. He also said it was proved conclusively that in the country where there was a high protective policy the goods were always sold cheaper than they were in any other country. The Minister's argument about high protection is, therefore, wrong.

The Minister for Mines: What is your argument?

Mr. LINDSAY: It is the opposite of that of Senator Needham. I believe the Minister for Mines and I are at one in this matter. The policy of my organisation has been opposed to that of high protection, and always has been. Mr. Gregory is a member of that organisation. When the Minister for Mines states that Mr. Gregory

is opposed to high protection and supports a Government that is increasing protection, I agree with him; but it is better to support a Government, which does not compel its followers, as the party to which the Minister belongs is doing, to be prohibitionists, a Government that allows its followers to fight the high tariff, when that tariff is generally carried by the solid vote of the Labour Party. Even Mr. Theodore, who is going to be the leader of the Labour Party, has stated that Mr. Bruce is only fooling with the tariff, and is not giving protection to Australian industries. The tariff is certainly detrimental to Western Australia, and I feel sure that the Labour Party, if returned, will make the tariff even higher than it is to-day.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that topic on this vote.

Mr. LINDSAY: The tariff is detrimental to the mining industry. The party to which I belong is opposed to the tariff for that reason. It is detrimental to any industry.

The Minister for Mines: Your party is making remarkable progress under it.

Mr. LINDSAY: It is a small party, but because it is in existence, the duty on wire, steel netting and tractors has been removed. That is one thing we have accomplished. Unfortunately the mining people do not belong to our organisation. Probably if they did there would be sufficient strength in the party to enable it to remove the rest of the duties. I advise members representing the mining industry to consider that point. Our interests are the same as theirs. Anything we can do to assist any of the primary industries of the State, we intend to do. I would not have risen but for the remarks of the Minister for Mines. He further stated that the only industry that had been affected by the tariff and the war was the mining industry. The Minister for Justice stated that the price of wheat had been doubled. It has not been doubled. Wool and wheat have suffered, but not as much as the mining industry, which has not been able to get the price for its gold that it should have had. If there had been better control over the price of gold in the beginning the mining industry would not have been in as bad a condition as it is to-day. Undoubtedly that industry has suffered great disabilities. I do not altogether favour a gold bonus. If we begin giving bonuses to industries we shall move in a vicious circle, and will ulti-

mately reach the point when we shall have to go right round again. The only thing to do is to get rid of the cause, namely, the tariff. If the Minister for Mines would use his influence with his party, I will use my influence with mine. If we can make some sort of amalgamation we might get some further reductions in the tariff.

MR. LATHAM (York) [10.22]: I congratulate the Minister upon the able manner in which he has brought down his Estimates. His remarks about the tariff have led to a good deal of stonewalling.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member does not intend to deal with the tariff on this vote.

Mr. LATHAM: The matter has been pretty well settled by the last two speakers. The Minister said a great deal of assistance had been given to the gold mining industry. It is quite right to assist it, provided we get a fair return for the money we advance. Mining is different from any other industry. It costs more to produce gold than it does to produce anything else. I will quote some figures contained in the report of the Mines Department for 1924. This says that the number of men engaged in all classes of mining was 6,289, a decrease of 208 over those employed in 1923. This falling off is regrettable. It would possibly be better, from the point of view of the health of the men, to close down some of the deeper mines. If anyone studies the question from the humanitarian point of view he must agree that the men would be better off if they were producing from the land than if they were left to dig gold from the soil. Gold, after all, is of very little value except as a means of exchange, or as an article by which we buy things. Gold does not produce anything that can be turned into wealth, as is the case in other industries. The gold produced per head of the miners engaged in the industry has also declined. In 1923 it amounted to £389, and last year it had fallen to £376. There has, therefore, been a falling off in the returns from the industry, despite the money that has been advanced towards it.

Mr. Lambert: That is due to the fact that the mines are getting poorer.

Mr. LATHAM: Yes. We have to be careful how we use State money, lest it be put into something that will fall away altogether. I suppose the falling off will continue until eventually all the mines are

closed down, and other industries are carried on in their place. It would be better to utilise a good deal of this money in opening up the land, building railways, and putting more people upon the land.

Mr. Lambert: You know what Mr. Kingsley Thomas said.

Mr. LATHAM: That gentleman knows a great deal about mining, and is obsessed by his great knowledge of the industry. We may congratulate ourselves that in the Minister for Mines we have a gentleman who is also Minister for Agriculture. At the end of the financial year he will be able to weigh the advantages that have accrued to the State from the advances that have been made to the mining and agricultural districts respectively. He may be able to do something for the men who are not producing full value for the money that is advanced to them, and who would be able to do so if the money were spent upon the agricultural or pastoral industry. I hope that due consideration will be given to that aspect of the situation. Every member who knows anything about the sufferings of the men in our mines would do all he could to relieve them. The best way to relieve them is to close down the deep mines, and find some other avocation for the miners. I should like to have replied to the Minister on the tariff questions raised by him, but I am not permitted to do so. I hope there will be a revival in the mining industry, and that the Wiluna field will prove as good as is anticipated. Possibly next year I may have something to say about mining in my electorate. The Minister did not refer to it, but next year I may be able to inform the House concerning a prosperous gold mining centre at the east end of my electorate.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—in reply) [10.28]: I should like the member for Coolgardie to know that it is proposed, if the Treasurer will give me the money, to do some boring in Kalgoorlie and on the Murchison.

Mr. Lambert: Not at Coolgardie?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Coolgardie will come within the East Coolgardie district. If I can get the money I propose to get together two boring plants, and to have boring operations carried out at Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and in the northern districts. I hope to keep these plants em-

ployed during the year, in the endeavour to awaken interest in those mining localities which have produced large quantities of gold, and also in the expectation of providing means whereby still more gold may be found there. Regarding the criticism in connection with the expenditure under the Mining Development Act, it is not always possible to get results. The Government are in the same position as any other individual and have to take their chances. One disability I have encountered in connection with the advance of money is that once we lend money, beyond seeing that the money is spent in the direction for which it is granted, we have no control over the organisation or management. That appears to me to be a weakness. Money is given to persons who may not have the capacity to see that it is expended in a proper manner. We cannot rectify that except in organising a staff to take control ourselves. I do not think it would be wise for the department to adopt that course and I must be thoroughly convinced before I will recommend it. We might do as we did at the Surprise Mine and put an officer on the board, but the department will take no responsibility beyond seeing that the management is as efficient as it could be in the circumstances. Regarding the geological staff, I admit that it is weak. The Federal Government called a conference of geologists recently, and I propose later in the year to make some provisions as suggested at the conference. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) complained that a promise that had been given to make a geological survey at Peak Hill, had not been kept. It was not kept as the staff was not available. Mr. Feldtman has been at Kalgoorlie in connection with the geological work for some considerable time. I intend to make some inquiries as to the best results to be obtained from the staff as it is constituted at present. Regarding the hon. member's complaint that I did not reply to a deputation that waited upon me in the Murchison, I admit that I did not reply. On the other hand, I told the deputation that I would look into the matter, but that I would not do anything regarding rising in mines unless I was convinced that it was in their interests. I said that if anything were done that would adversely affect the position, it would not be myself but the men who would suffer. I told them that I would not do anything to limit their employment,

but that if I found it was in their interests. I would have no hesitation in attending to the matter. As a matter of fact, I have under consideration an amendment of the Mines Regulation Act, and hope that it will be possible to introduce it this session. That amendment will have the effect of limiting the height of rises and this may do something in the direction desired. I have no objection to take to the criticism by hon. members and I thank them for their toleration and kindness towards me and my Estimates.

Item, Assistant Petrologist, £276:

Mr. LATHAM: While there is provision for an assistant petrologist, there is no money provided for the petrologist. Have we a petrologist?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Dr. Larcombe, of the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie, is the petrologist and he is paid from that vote.

Item, Director Eastern Goldfields Mining School, £402:

Mr. LAMBERT: While there is provision for the director of the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, this officer is also director of the Technical School, for which he draws another £402. I do not know what led to this position, but I think it is wrong. We have an assistant director of the Technical School who draws £636 per annum. It shows how closely these activities are co-ordinated. Some time ago I complained that a beautiful model of a three-head battery had been disposed of and the battery case had been sent to the State Implement Works to be smashed up. At that time the School of Mines were purchasing a miserable old three-head battery for their experimental plant at Kalgoorlie. I drew the attention of Mr. Shaw, of the Implement Works, to the fact that the battery case was too good to be smashed up. This may have been an oversight and I do not wish to complain about it, but it does seem peculiar that such an incident should occur. I do not know whether this was an oversight, but it is an inefficient way of carrying on the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie and the Technical School in Perth. That is only one of the instances that have come under my notice in respect of the control of both those institutions. I deeply regret that a beautiful little plant like that referred to should have been thrown out and scrapped while an

obsolete plant was erected in its place, although so unsuitable that no wheel in it has since been turned. I do hope the position in regard to the control of those two institutions will be considered. It is entirely unsatisfactory and should be abolished.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 3rd November, 1925.*

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

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW asked the Chief Secretary: 1, When will the Agricultural College at Muresk be open to receive students? 2, Did an advisory committee, appointed last July to assist the Public Service Commissioner in the selection of a candidate from amongst those applying for the position of principal of the Agricultural College, make a unanimous recommendation? 3, Has the Cabinet selected anyone for the position? 4, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, February, 1926, if the necessary buildings are completed. 2, Yes. 3, An appointment has been made. 4, Answered by No. 3.