

fine. Was it intended that a magistrate should send a man to goal for two years?

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: The clause had been taken from the present Act.

Hon. M. L. MOSS moved an amendment—

That in line 7 the words "two years" be struck out and "six months" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: That period would hardly be sufficient.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Two years was pretty stiff punishment for breaking a glass; moreover he did not know of any instances where a magistrate had the power to send a person to goal for two years.

Amendment put and passed; the new clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 30th November, 1909.

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

PETITION—PUBLIC SERVICE GRIEVANCES.

Mr. BROWN presented a petition from the Public Service Association praying for the redress of certain grievances.

Petition received.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVANTS' SALARIES.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Premier: 1, Have any promises been made to any

officers in the service to grant them retrospective rises in payment of salary? 2, If so, have they been complied with? 3, What are the names of the officers, and the amounts due or paid under those promises? 4, If they have been paid, out of what vote?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, E. A. Mann, Government Analyst, and C. J. Matthews, Chief Inspector of Machinery. The amount due has not yet been determined. 4, Answered by No. 3.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1909-10.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 26th November; Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Works Department (Hon. Frank Wilson, Minister).

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £129,428:

Roads (new works) £10,500:

Item, Roads throughout the State, £10,500:

Mr. BATH: Had the Minister yet arrived at any decision in regard to the disposal of this item, about which there had been so much discussion on Friday?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In accordance with promise the matter had been inquired into, as a result of which it had been found that it was impossible to treat the estimated amounts, as itemised, in the manner desired by certain hon. members. Consequently, there was no alternative to deleting the item and bringing it in as supplementary Estimates, when the details could be dealt with separately. With that object he moved—

That the item be struck out.

Amendment passed.

Bridges (new works), £1,767:

Item, Gosnell's Roads Board, tar paving Gosnell's and Bickley bridges:

Mr. BATH: This seemed rather an extraordinary item. Surely it was sufficient if the State built the bridges, without

going to the expense of tar-paving them. If the people in the district wanted such luxuries the local governing bodies should supply them.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: While rather inclined to agree with the hon. member, he understood that the tar-paving was necessary to complete the work of practically rebuilding the bridges. It had been found that the tar-paving preserved the decking of the bridges.

Mr. BATH: This was a provision that the Committee should not be called upon to make. If the bridges were built by the Government in the first place, the local governing bodies should carry out the necessary repairs. This provision did not appear in respect to other bridges.

The Minister for Works: Some of the others are being macadamised.

Mr. BATH: Could the Minister tell the Committee the original cost of the bridges?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: No figures had been supplied to him as to the original cost of the bridges.

Mr. JACOBY: When the department built the bridges it was intended to make provision for macadamising them, but there was some doubt as to whether that system was better than tar-paving. The sum might well have been put in as part of the original cost of construction.

Mr. BOLTON: A bridge was recently built by the Government across the Swan and part of the work was to macadamise it. It was decided, however, to do that at a later date. The bridge was not yet completed and it might well be that on the next Estimates an additional expenditure for tar-paving would be shown. Probably the item under discussion was in a similar position.

Item, Guildford municipality, repairs Helena River bridge (one-third cost) £780:

Mr. SCADDAN: What work was to be done in connection with the bridge?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: It was originally intended that very extensive additions should be put in hand as to this and two other bridges. They were to have been widened and metalling done, the roads board district in which they

were to contribute two-thirds of the cost. As the bridges were to be handed over to their control the boards asked that they should be put in repair before this was done. Instructions were given that the work should be taken in hand, but no provision was made for widening or anything else as was originally suggested. As the estimated cost of the work was £650, the sum mentioned in the Estimates would not be reached.

Mr. SCADDAN: An officer of the department should be sent to make an investigation of the work, as it was nothing more than a disgrace, the bridge being almost impassable. Was the bridge to be macadamised and handed over, or was it to be re-tarred?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: The idea was that the bridges should be put in order before being handed over. The wood-work would be repaired and a new decking provided. There was nothing about macadamising. If the work were not being carried out properly he would be very glad to send an inspector out. The authorities complained that they were called upon to take over bridges and maintain them, but that they were in a bad state of repair, so he had promised that they would be put in good order first.

Harbours and Rivers, £10,300:

Item, Bunbury lagoon improvements, £250:

Mr. SCADDAN: A similar sum of money was voted last year and not spent; perhaps the member for the district would say why the money had not been expended.

The **PREMIER**: The local council had spent something between £1,000 and £1,500 in connection with the filling up of this lagoon. It was an eye-sore and unhealthy, and the work was necessary. The council had done very good work in the matter already. No doubt the money was not advanced last year because the council had not the plant sufficient for filling in the lagoon.

Item, Cottesloe, reconstruction of buildings (pound for pound), £125:

Mr. BOLTON: Doubtless the reconstruction of the buildings was necessi-

tated owing to the damage done by the storm during the winter; but it seemed peculiar that this grant should be made in one case and refused in another. He had made a similar request for a grant in connection with North Fremantle, where very great damage had been done by the same storm, bathing sheds, electric light poles, etcetera, having been destroyed. He, however, was refused the grant, but the member for Claremont had been able to get one. What was the reason for the discrimination?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Cottesloe beach structures suffered very severe damage last winter from the storm, and the municipal council spent £500 to replace them. He did not know why the request of the member for North Fremantle was refused. The Cottesloe Beach was resorted to by tens of thousands of Perth citizens and others, and the place was very conveniently situated for the residents of the capital and of the suburban municipalities. It was thought desirable, therefore, that some assistance should be given to make good the damage. The stipulation of a pound for pound subsidy was a safeguard that the local people should not spend the £125 only. He had been told that the municipal council had spent £500 in repairing the damage.

Mr. BOLTON: North Fremantle had spent a large sum from their local funds on the improvements to the beach for the residents of the State, and only one small grant had been made to them by the Government, while Cottesloe had received £900 for a jetty and £300 for a special road, etcetera. He objected to one particular locality getting a pound for pound subsidy year after year, when just as deserving a place asked for a grant, guaranteed the pound for pound, and was refused the request.

Mr. FOULKES: The member had complained that his request for a grant in order to repair damage done by the storm at Cottesloe Beach had been refused; but a portion of the grant under discussion would be spent in part of the member's electorate while the people using the bathing sheds there would con-

sist largely of those living in the North Fremantle district. It was not fair that the member should attach more importance to works to be carried out at one end of his electorate than at another. One district being unable to get assistance should not debar another from obtaining a grant. That day he had obtained a return from the Railway Department showing the number of passengers who had travelled to the Cottesloe and Cottesloe Beach districts during the past four years. The figures were:—1905, Cottesloe Beach, 587,000; Cottesloe, 570,000. 1906, Cottesloe Beach, 581,000; Cottesloe, 605,000. 1907, Cottesloe Beach, 577,000; Cottesloe, 588,000. 1908, Cottesloe Beach, 564,000; Cottesloe, 581,000. Every effort should be made to encourage these seaside resorts, and assistance ought to be given to North and South Fremantle. The interests of all these places were practically identical. Reference had been made to the fact that the Government had spent £900 at Cottesloe on the jetty, but it had to be remembered that the local authorities also expended £600 on that work in order to obtain the grant. The people in the district derived no particular benefit from the visit of the crowds to these watering-places; it was the Railway Department that obtained almost the sole benefit. The fact that the value of the traffic to these two railway stations last year was £14,000 showed that it paid the department to contribute towards works that were so largely responsible for the railway traffic. In England the railway companies had spent a considerable sum of money in opening up seaside places, and it would certainly pay the Government to do the same, not only at Cottesloe but elsewhere where there were similar advantages.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Government had done well to keep this place up to the necessary requirements. He (Mr. Scaddan) was at Cottesloe beach on Saturday, and was much impressed with the surroundings and saw at once the necessity for the vote which appeared on the Estimates.

Mr. ANGWIN: If the arguments used by the Minister and the member for

Claremont, regarding the grant of money for Cottesloe beach, were worth anything, they meant that the Railway Department, which it appeared derived the whole benefit from this traffic, should be charged the cost of the improvements at this watering place. It had to be admitted that Cottesloe beach was one of the principal places of attraction on a holiday, but the district itself was small, while the people were leaving it and taking their children to a place of safety like the beach at South Fremantle. The latter place should have greater consideration at the hands of the Government, for the reason that what had been done there had been done by the people. When a large number of people went to a district, that fact must prove of considerable benefit to the district, and he could not agree with what the member for Claremont had said, that the district did not derive any benefit.

Water Supply, Sewerage, Drainage, etc., £5,668:

Item, Stock Route, Eucla to Coolgardie, £506:

Mr. BATH: Was this sum for maintenance of the existing route or the opening up of a stock route from Eucla to Coolgardie? Could the Minister say whether this Stock route crossed the Nullabor Plains?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not within his knowledge as to whether the route crossed the plains which had been reported on so favourably by the engineers who surveyed the Transcontinental railway route. The money was required for the existing stock route. It would be noticed on the Estimates that the whole of the amount voted previously had been spent. The route was in a good condition. Provision had been made for a large quantity of marram grass to be planted somewhere near Eucla in order to prevent the sand drift. A sum of £350 was still in hand out of the previously voted authority for the planting of this grass at a later period of the year.

Mr. HUDSON: The route was close to the survey of the Transcontinental railway line and over the plains and plateaus referred to by the leader of the Opposi-

tion. The work on that route had been done exceedingly well and water was supplied at distances of about one hundred miles and it was largely used, especially during the last two seasons, since the completion of the large tank to regulate the supply of water. At the present time there were two driving parties on the track.

Buildings and other services not classified, £3,530:

Item, York, Government Buildings, Filling up Stagnant Pool, £280:

Mr. HUDSON: It was surprising that after £125 had been spent last year that a sum should be required again this year. The pool was evidently getting worse. York was not a new settlement. A large sum of money had been expended there in past years, and it should be beyond the stage of stagnant pools at the present time of its history.

Mr. MONGER was glad reference had been made to this item because it was owing to the representations he had made through Sir John Forrest to the Federal Government that this objectionable nuisance in York was filled up. It was owing to the fact that the Federal Government had not contributed their quota towards the work in the past that it had not been carried out before. After considerable correspondence Sir John Forrest had got the Federal Government to sanction twice the amount spent by the State Government in filling up this particular nuisance.

Mr. SCADDAN: According to the Estimates the Government had spent £405. Evidently the State Government had spent twice what the Commonwealth spent, and the hon. member was out after a cheap advertisement for Sir John Forrest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was credit due to the Federal Government who contributed one-third of the cost. Their contribution was a just one because the post office and drill hall were so close to the pool.

Buildings and other services for Minister for Education's Department, £6,234:

Item, Coolup (central) school, removal of West Coolup school to site near station, £160:

Mr. GEORGE: If the school were shifted some of the children would have to go seven miles to attend. He had asked the Education Department to send an officer to investigate the matter to see no injustice was done. Would the Minister stop the work until the inquiry was made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work would not be done until the Education Department made full inquiries.

Item, Yorkkrakine school, £232:

Mr. ANGWIN: This school was 20 miles from the station and in country where there was timber suitable for fencing, yet the fencing material was taken up from Perth. Was it not possible to have a cheaper class of building?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The school was built to accommodate 30 children. The fence might have been made locally, but while putting up a decent school-house it was as well to have a decent fence.

Vote, as amended, put and passed.

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

Vote—*Mines Generally*, £41,920:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): It has been usual to give a short review of the mining industry in connection with the introduction of the Mines Estimates, but in deference to the ruling of the Chairman, and noting at the same time the desire of the House in connection with the matter, I shall endeavour to touch as lightly as possible upon the general policy and to keep as closely as possible to the items under discussion. I would like first to know whether in speaking to the Mines Generally vote we may discuss matters pertaining to Water Supply and Batteries and the other divisions in connection with the Mines Department, and then get rid of everything in the nature of a general debate after first concluding the general discussion? I would like the opinion of the leader of the Opposition upon the point. I think it would save time if the whole of the departments were reviewed in the one speech.

Mr. Bath: I would sooner see it on the general discussion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I shall deal generally and keep away from everything of a general policy if I can, but if I find I am going beyond anything the Chairman desires in connection with the matter, I hope he will stop me.

Mr. BATH: It would be advisable if we were clear on the point. I think in regard to the ruling given the other night members made it plain that they considered the question of policy was bound up with the question of the Estimates, and really the decision of the House was that the practice always adopted in the past should be carried out in regard to these Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: My desire is to fall in with the wishes of the Committee so far as possible and at the same time to try and keep to the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. Walker: The ruling was overruled.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: More particularly did I desire to know whether we should deal with the whole divisions. I think it would save time if we were to deal with them at the one time. There have been many recently who have felt there has been a decline in the mining industry, because during the past few years we have noticed a continued diminution in the value of the gold won; but I would like to point out that since 1903, which was our record year in mining, there have been 22 big mines which were producing then, but which are not producing to-day or have reduced their output to such an extent that the reduction has amounted to 517,615 ounces on gold from these mines alone. However, notwithstanding this enormous reduction from these 22 mines, our small mines have produced over 100,000 ounces more than they did in 1903. What I particularly desire to point out is the policy that has been pursued by the Mines Department in connection with its Water Supply and Battery Departments, and with the assistance of the Ministry obtained loan authorisations, so as to build up somewhat successfully the small mines of the State. Prior to 1903 very little in the way of protection, of what may be termed the small mines of the State, took place.

Compare the 1903 returns with the last year; the small mines produced over 100,000 ounces of gold more than they did in 1903. I do not think there can be any doubt in a person's mind as to the value of the small mines. While we encourage the introduction of capital from outside in aiding our mining propositions, there is not the slightest doubt every incentive should be given, and every inducement offered by the Government to build up the mines owned by the people within the State. I hold that especially during the past few years has this been successful. Some time ago an eminent professor of geology came to Western Australia, and I made provision for this gentleman to travel by motor-car from Leonora to Wiluna, and in a private letter which he wrote to me, giving his private impressions of the State, he said, that although there were several propositions in that area which would well repay the expenditure of a large sum of money in the development of mining and in the erection of machinery, there were innumerable small propositions which, from their present outlook, by the investment of capital, would well repay the money invested. The principal method that the Government have adopted for the assistance of mining is by railways. That is a policy I have always advocated, to give reasonable conditions to these people; but that is not of much use except we provide facilities so that people can treat their ore. I do not think that any person can accuse the Government of not doing all they possibly can for mining by water supply and in connection with the railway policy. The numerous railways brought forward recently in connection with the mining fields show that the Government have a great desire to give every assistance they can to the mining industry. Then in regard to the Water Supply Department. I do not think that any member recognises the vast work done by this department in connection with the help rendered in the back country at the present time. We have 42 dams constructed with a storage capacity of 140 million gallons. We have 10 of these dams lined with concrete, seven with asphalt, and ten roofed, and any person

knowing the conditions and difficulties of making a storage capacity and to line with concrete and asphalt, and to roof knows that we have done well. We have 1,247 wells under our control of a depth of 124,000 feet; 43 bore wells have been sunk to a depth of 2,500 feet, and during the past five years we have bored no less than 63,000 feet in search of water. Several towns have received a water supply, and we have done some 13,241 feet of diamond drilling, and, in addition, the stock routes have been under the control of that department. The most important feature, I think, to be brought under the notice of the Committee, and which, probably, some exception may be taken to today, is in connection with the battery system. As to the system itself, there are some who believe that the battery system has been injurious to the mining industry of the State. The growth of their objections to the erection of batteries is that we often induce people to take the ore from the surface and probably in a short time abandon the leases, which, if abandoned, often fall in, thus preventing them from being worked further. There are, of course, other objections, but taking the system as a whole I do not think any person who views the result of the system in Western Australia can say anything otherwise than that they have been a public benefit to those connected with mining. Since their inception they have produced over three million pounds' worth of gold, and the plants extend from Norseman in the South to Nullagine in the North; 32 plants are crushing for the public and we are erecting more batteries. We have just completed the erection of a battery at Messenger's Patch, and we are erecting batteries at Mt. Sir Samuel and Marble Bar. The plants which are now being erected are far more efficient than those formerly erected. They are being supplied with gas producer plants, that is where it is found there is an insufficient water supply or very little fuel. There the gas producer plant enables us to crush ore cheaper than with steam. The two-head mills erected at Linden and Desdemona have not proved as satisfactory as was anticipated. I stated when the plants were

erected that I anticipated one man would be able to control the whole plant, and I am satisfied that if these plants had been placed on prospectors' shows they would have done exceedingly good work. During the last quarter the Linden mill crushed 363 tons, and members will be pleased to hear that although there has previously been a great loss in connection with the work of that mill last quarter the loss at the Linden mill only amounted to £29. We find that the prospectors declined, although the plants are fitted with self-feeders, to feed them, and, therefore, it is necessary to keep two men engaged where, under ordinary circumstances, if the plants were worked by one man it would mean a great benefit, for one man could easily look after the duties pertaining to a plant of that sort. The main subject that will be discussed will be the charges made in connection with the battery system. In 1906 we had a scale of charges on what was known as a sliding scale, charging from 10s. to 14s. per ton, and during that year 95,000 tons of ore was treated, the revenue receivable by the department being 11s. 3.8d. per ton; in 1907 we again crushed 95,000 tons of ore under the same conditions, and the revenue receivable by the department was 11s. 4d. per ton, whilst the cost of crushing amounted to 13s. per ton. In 1908 we altered the scale of charges, and that year we made a fixed charge of 10s. a ton. I want members to particularly note this, that in 1908 our crushings were 95,000 tons, equal to that of the preceding year, and the charge was reduced to 10s. per ton with certain rebates, and the receipts of the department amounted to 9s. 3d. per ton, that is as against 11s. 4d. per ton for the preceding year, a reduction in our charges to the public of no less than 2s. 1d. per ton. The cost of crushing was reduced to 2s. 1d. per ton, and I want members particularly to note that in 1908, when we made a fixed charge, the actual amount received on an average under the sliding scale amounted to 11s. 4d. per ton, whereas the amount received when we made the charge 10s., and allowed rebates, gives the department 9s. 3d., or a reduction of 2s. 1d. per ton on the price charged prior to 1908.

Mr. Underwood: How are you going to make up the difference.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In 1905 it was again urged upon me that we should return to the sliding scale and, contrary to my own wishes, but feeling a desire to try and carry out the wishes of members, I again instituted a sliding scale, charging from 8s. 6d. to 15s. During the first six months of the year the actual revenue received per ton amounted to 9s. 8d. It was expected that we would receive increased tonnage from our customers. I want members particularly to note that the charges under our sliding scale introduced last year exceeded the amount received from the previous charges. We received then 9s. 8d. per ton as against 9s. 3d. in the previous year. It was represented that if we made a special charge of 8s. 6d., less a rebate, for large parcels, greater quantities of ore would be brought to us, enabling us to keep the plants going. Instead of that being the case, during the first half-year we got a reduced tonnage. The quantity crushed during the past three years, 1906, 1907, and 1908, averaged 95,000 tons each year, while, for the first half of this year we received 41,695 tons, which is a considerably reduced tonnage. We have plants capable of treating over 300,000 tons of stone a year, and if we get large tonnages we are able to crush at considerably less cost than we have been able to crush in the past, because, with the quantities, we should be able to keep the mill going.

Mr. Underwood: You ought to have a low rate for low grade ores.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member would probably ask me to crush for some mines at a rate less than the cost to the department, at the same time telling people they can have the battery at so much per hour, and crush the stone at the actual cost, less a percentage, according to the charges per hour. Another reason that ought to appeal to members generally, is that when we had the sliding scale and lower charges for low grade ore, when a person had stone of a high value, instead of having the stone crushed according to the sliding scale charges, it

would be crushed at per hour. I published in the *West Australian* a few days ago an interesting statement of the crushing of some 280 tons of stone at the Youanme battery. That stone went over an gunee to the ton and those people have had the stone crushed by the hour, and the actual cost to them has only been 5s. 4d. a ton. I want the hon. member to recognise that we not only thus have the advantage taken of us—

Mr. Underwood: What of the advantage you take of them?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I wish the hon. member would not interject so much. If he would take out more stone from those shows of his in the North-West—

Mr. Underwood: I have to pay 19s. for crushing up there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Probably the stone is worth it. I want to point out the advantage taken of the department. We had the two systems in force and, as requested by the Prospectors' Association, I felt that it would be wise in the interests of the department and of the prospectors generally to alter our scale. Some little friction occurred here recently in connection with my action in this regard. I would like hon. members to consider what object I could have in endeavouring to deceive hon. members, especially the members for Mount Magnet and for Murchison in regard to that question. I feel quite satisfied they misunderstood me on that occasion, and I can only ask them what object I could have in attempting to mislead them. However, that is by the way, and I am going to leave it to the public to judge in regard to that matter. I have pointed out that late this year, indeed within the last month, I decided we should abolish our sliding scale and have a fixed charge of 20s. a ton, or that the prospectors should have the right to use a plant at so much per hour. If the majority of customers in any district decide upon the question, I am prepared to let them have the charges according to the sliding scale, provided at the same time we abolish crushing by the hour. Those people who have rich stone come to us

and ask us to crush their stone by the hour, while others who have poor stone of hard quality ask us to crush by tonnage. I cannot understand why all of our customers cannot conceive the idea that the fairest and most just method would be to crush by time alone.

Mr. Holman: How would you fix a reasonable price?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I would endeavour to reduce our prices. The hon. member knows we have had a loss on last year's operations.

Mr. Holman: By what was the loss occasioned?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: For the reason that under the sliding scale in 1907 the charge was 11s. 4d. a ton on all ore crushed; in 1908 I altered this charge to a fixed charge of 10s., with certain rebates, which meant that we received only 9s. 3d. If the mills had been kept going we could have made a profit at that. To-day I feel quite satisfied we could make a much bigger reduction in our charges if only we had an increased tonnage to crush. Take the Menzies plant: last year over ten thousand tons of stone was put through, and the plant was kept fully going, with the result that we showed a profit of over £1,000 in connection with crushing alone, and over £2,000 for the whole of its workings. That was simply due to the fact that the plant was kept going all the time. Wherever we have continuous work we can crush more cheaply than at present. I pointed out to a deputation that waited on me that if we could not show that the cost of administration was becoming less, that we were reducing our expenditure, then hon. members opposite would have good grounds for attacking me on the score of mal-administration, that they could say: "Your cost is increasing and because of that you cannot give reduced prices to your customers." Now in the years 1906, 1907, and 1908, the tonnage was about equal to 5,000 tons each year, and the cost of the system in 1907 was £92,973, while in 1908 it was £84,043, or a reduction of over £7,000 in connection with the cost of administration. That. I

think, shows that we have been economical in respect to the administration. Then again, the cost of crushing in 1907 was 13s. 0½d., in 1908 it was 12s. 1¾d., while for the three-fourths of this year it has been 11s. 8¾d. That shows there had been economy effected and that our costs are being reduced each year as we go along. In these circumstances I do not think it can be said that the head of the branch has not been endeavouring to make all due economy in connection with his work. The returns published by the Queensland Mines Department show how much higher is the cost of treatment at privately-owned batteries in Queensland than it is here. It is strange that wherever we have our State batteries it is in but few instances that we find any person endeavouring to compete with the State mill.

Mr. Troy: That comes well from you—the champion of private enterprise in all other matters.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did not know that I was a champion of private enterprise. I think the hon. member for Mount Margaret, who has been an old producer in the Menzies district, can remember when he had to pay from 25s. to 35s. per ton for crushing his stone. He could compare these prices with the prices of to-day. And we find the same discrepancy in prices occurs in many other districts. In no instance do the people appear to be as well satisfied as when they are having their stone treated at a State mill.

Mr. Heilmann: That is what I have been telling you in regard to Cue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have had some exhaustive reports made by the officers of the department, and they are under the impression that we could do much more in the outside districts with small plants than in a district like Cue where considerable crushing facilities already exist. For instance, we put in a crushing plant at Menzies, where the cost of crushing was 25s. At Cue the cost is 14s. a ton. Here is a great difference in comparison of prices. Where people have expended money with a view to affording facilities to the public, and where the terms of those facilities

are reasonable and just, it would be improper for us to introduce State competition. If those conditions were not reasonable, I am quite satisfied that the recommendations of our officers would have been very different from what they were. An objection will be raised by hon. members opposite in respect to a slight reduction which recently occurred in connection with some of the men on certain of our State mills. A few months ago I received a report to the effect that at our State batteries they were not paying the arbitration award. I gave instructions that the award should be paid. They took that as an instruction that the arbitration award and that alone should be paid, and they acted accordingly. I heard of this and obtained a list of the different awards in the several districts, and to those I added sixpence or a shilling a day and fixed the sum as the rate. However, we found in many districts what is known as the standard rate. We gave instructions that in all those districts the standard rate should apply. I found that in some places we were paying as much as fifteen shillings a day. Each manager paid at his own sweet will what he thought was a fair thing, and in some places 15s. was being paid, while in others the rate was as low as 10s. Now, however, the men either get the standard rate or, where the award obtains, they get the award with from 6d. to 1s. over and above that rate. I do not think I need say any more except it be by way of answer to criticism in reference to these battery charges. The department has shown a considerable reduction in the last year over the preceding year in respect to the cost of administration of that branch, a reduction of over £7,000. But notwithstanding this, we have made a loss owing to reduced tonnage. I contend that as far as the system is concerned, apart from working expenses we have never asked that it should pay any interest in connection with the capital expenditure. The leader of the Opposition has, time after time, complained of capital being expended on work which he deems to be unproductive, and he contends that all our expenditure should earn interest. If

is quite possible that the leader of the Opposition would look upon the State battery system as one, if not directly showing a profit, at least showing an indirect profit. The advantage to the State is so great that probably he would not include the battery system among the objects to which he would apply that argument; he would probably consider the system was reproductive indirectly and that the State could afford, if not to lose revenue in connection therewith, at least not to ask it to pay interest on the outlay. We have never asked that this should be done, but we do think that the system should pay working expenses. In this half-year we have spent £3,400 in connection with repairs and renewals of various batteries, and the expenditure of last year and the latter portion of the preceding year on upkeep and improvements has enabled us this year to show so big a reduction in connection with our crushing costs. The first half-year the crushing cost was 12s. 1d. while the last quarter of this year it was only 10s. 4d., showing a reduction of about 1s. 9d. a ton.

Mr. Troy: How does it compare with last year?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The crushing cost last year was 12s. 1.92d. For the first six months of this year it was 12s. 1.2d., while for the third quarter of this year the cost was 10s. 4.4d., showing a very considerable reduction in the last quarter. I do not think anyone can say too much of the indirect advantages of this scheme. We have produced over 3 million pounds worth of gold, and we have in places like Mulline, where mining has been going on for many years past, kept the localities going with the aid of the State mill. The same remark applies to Burtville, Darlot, and dozens of other mining camps which have been kept together solely by the operations of the State mills. The Menzies district, which formerly was a big gold producer, and wholly one of large companies, to-day has changed greatly. The big companies are almost non-existent, and the district is being kept entirely by the small mine holders, and by the State mill. We can boast that the Meekatharra district has

been built up by the State mill, and I am sure the member for Mt. Magnet will agree that the prosperity of the Black Range district is due, to a large extent, to the work of the mines water supply and State battery systems. We are continuing to build up the battery system. Batteries have just been erected at Messenger's Patch and at Youanme, while another battery is now on its way to Marble Bar, and another to Mt. Sir Samuel. Members will be pleased to hear that the main portion of the battery for Mt. Sir Samuel is being built in this State at a foundry at Kalgoorlie, while the battery for Marble Bar is being built in Perth. We are therefore not only assisting the mining industry, but we are also helping to build up foundries in the State. I need not dwell any further on the batteries' system. I shall be only too pleased to give any information—I have the full departmental reports with me—in regard to the work of the past three quarters. Another way in which we are assisting the industry is by the expenditure of the money voted for development of mining. The member for Guildford has introduced a motion asking that some different method should be adopted in connection with the system so as to enable a more equal distribution of that vote. For the consideration of members I have had prepared a return showing the expenditure from the vote from the years 1904 to 1909. During that period the expenditure in the various districts was as follows:—Coolgardie, £6,194; North Coolgardie, £4,716; East Coolgardie, £3,108; East Murchison, £1,765; Murchison, £5,111; Broad Arrow, £6,797; North-East Coolgardie, £4,050; Peak Hill, £718; Mt. Margaret, £6,046; Yilgarn, £2,126; Phillips River, £422; Greenbushes, £1,485; Pilbara, £685; Northampton, £500; Yalgoo, £329.

Mr. Underwood: Not much for Pilbara.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: To endeavour to do anything genuine in the Pilbara district without a railway would have been, to a great extent, throwing money away. Both at Woorawoona and Marble Bar there has been a good deal

of Government expenditure, also at Roebourne. One of the best bits of work the department can show exists at Carbine, while at Mount Malcolm also very good work is being done. The assistance given in the endeavour to open up the north end of the Kalgoorlie field has resulted satisfactorily as was shown by recent reports in the papers. Again, good work has been done at Mt. Morgans. The local people there and at Leonora formed syndicates to carry on mining development in the district. They obtained assistance from the Government and a diamond drill was set to work there. While I regret that Leonora turned out a failure, yet at Mt. Morgans two lodes were struck with very fair values, and I intend to give the syndicates further assistance to enable a shaft to be put down 200 feet to prove the lodes. If anything good is discovered the nucleus of a valuable proposition will be provided, as the property is altogether owned by the people in the district and they will obtain the advantage not only of being the owners of a prosperous show, but also of building up the township. Assistance in the erection of plants has been given in various places. The leader of the Opposition has given notice of a question as to the assistance given to the plant at Marvel Loch. We have also helped in the erection of plants at Jaurdie Hills, Yaloginda, Cullion, Warrawoona and Roebourne. At each of these places we insist that for a certain period, and until the loan has been paid off, the people must crush at rates to be approved by the department. In addition we have granted subsidies for deep sinking where we have batteries, with a desire of keeping legitimate mining carried on where we have State mills. There are liberal subsidies given for the development of mines at a depth. In many instances where people are prospecting at a distance from a crushing plant they have been given reasonable subsidies to enable them to cart the ore to the nearest mill, and obtain a crushing of a trial parcel. Those are the methods we have adopted. The Government with their railway policy generally, with their water supplies and battery system, and the

granting of subsidies to assist the small mine owner have endeavoured to promote the industry. There have been a great many applications for water supplies in the back country, and while at all times the department are only too pleased to endeavour to open up new auriferous areas there is no reason why there should not be some little return for the expenditure. The Mines Water Supply Department revenue shows a very big loss, and has done for the last few years. We have never paid, nor been asked to pay, interest in connection with that work. We have not been asked even for working expenses, but objections have been raised in many small places, where we have constructed tank and windmill accommodation, to our having called upon the people to pay something in the way of upkeep. There have been remonstrances against the action of the department, but I think that where we spend money in a community of a reasonable size, there should be some return from the expenditure. I do not think I need say anything more in regard to these matters, and I have no wish to say much about mining generally. While we are all quite satisfied with the reasonable development during the past six months, not only in Kalgoorlie but also in many outside districts, where there are shows carrying good values, still, while we hear of those very green far fields, and we find a great many people endeavouring to reach new fields 400 miles perhaps from a port, where the quantity of gold obtained so far has been almost infinitesimal, we should try and bring before the public the value of many of our semi-abandoned fields, and tell them of the rich crushings being obtained from various small shows. Some recent crushings show that the Linden Star at Linden crushed 22 tons for 149 ounces; at Meekatharra, a 7 hundredweight parcel from the Midge returned 157 ounces; at Menzies, 37½ tons from the Black Jack returned 280 ounces; at Leonora, 88 tons returned 247 ounces; the Waterfall, Coolgardie, crushed 41 tons for 394 ounces; at Norseman, the Viking from 11 tons obtained 65 ounces, and in addition a great quantity of free gold. At Mulwarrie 40 tons realised 213 ounces, while a

prospecting area at Dartot returned from 23 tons no less than 131 ounces. There was an exceedingly rich crushing at Waverley, 2,000 ounces being returned from a very small crushing.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Before tea I was explaining that in connection with many of our small mines some very rich and important crushings had taken place, and that these should induce our people to pay more attention to many of the old mining camps rather than to seek fields which are thousands of miles away. Some time ago I gave instructions, and we issued lists of crushings from mines now abandoned. I would like to state that we are having a pamphlet prepared showing the crushings which have taken place from propositions that are now abandoned, and to show that in many of these propositions, which gave fairly good returns, and in many instances very rich returns in the old days, great possibilities still exist. The latest returns I have from the Phillips River lead me to believe that the district has a good future before it. The mines there are developing well and it is a district which will produce not only a great amount of copper and gold, but will prove a great addition to the mineral industry of the State. With regard to Whim Creek, owing to the difficulties that they have had to contend against, the progress has not been what one might have desired. At the same time they are constantly shipping large quantities of high grade stone from that district. Another pleasing feature to be regarded in connection with the introduction of new industries in the State is that of the manufacture of superphosphates and I notice that one of the companies which is starting works here has taken over the old copper mine at Anaconda and that it is their intention to use the pyrites from that mine for the purpose of making sulphuric acid. This company will, therefore, be contributing to two industries, helping to build up the mineral industry, and also assisting the agricultural industry. In the Onslow dis-

trict there has not been much development in connection with the silver lead industry, but we have established a system of subsidies there in order to give some assistance. In tin mining there seems to be a slight increase at Greenbushes where I hear new capital is being introduced. At Pilbara we can hardly expect to see any great development until the railway is completed. I can see no reason why alluvial tin mining there should not be more consistently exploited, and I think that sluicing similar to that at Greenbushes can be profitably carried on.

Mr. Underwood: Where will you get the water?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe it will be possible to conserve water. I feel much inclined to try and see if something cannot be done in that direction, and I believe it can be done. There was a mining gentleman from North Queensland here recently, who assured me that in the State he came from they were working lodes which were only carrying 2 per cent. of tin. I believe there are many lodes in Pilbara carrying more than 5 per cent.

Mr. Underwood: You should put a crushing plant there; never mind about the sluicing plant.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At any rate I hope that something will be done there. Then, again, we have the recent discoveries of tin near Cue, and also near Coolgardie, which show that tin exists over a far greater area than we believed in the past. The coal industry at the present time has the opportunity of its lifetime and I do hope that every effort will be made by the various collieries to not only endeavour to build up a trade by trying to give their supplies at fair and equitable rates, but that the whole of the supply will be of the best quality that the field can produce. Collie is a district which has had a lot of advantages offered to it indirectly by the Government, and it has the opportunity now to show that the coal is of good value, and I hope that the future will prove that this coal is not only of value as we have proved it to be on the railways, but that it is of

great value for bunkering. Another matter I should mention is that of the workmen engaged in our mines. It is the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of miners' complaints, or tuberculosis, as far as it affects the mining industry. The Commission will make all inquiries as to the prevalence of tuberculosis in our mines, and as to the best methods for the prevention of the spread of that disease, and it will then consider the advisability of giving further consideration to the question of what should be done for those persons who may be debarred from following their occupations. I would like to point out in conclusion that it will be found in my Estimates there has been every reasonable retrenchment. We desire at all times to give all facilities to the public, while, at the same time, we may be able to effect many reductions. There have been many officers retrenched during the past year, and in the previous year also, more especially in connection with the draftsman's branch. I would like to say that I consider the policy adopted by the Government, more especially in connection with the water supply, battery system, and subsidies generally, has done a great deal to build up the mining industry, and I look forward to receiving the assistance of agricultural members because they should recognise the great value of the mining industry to the agricultural, and, in fact, every other industry. I have heard it said that now we have got on the verge of an export trade that the mining industry is of little importance, and that it can be done without. It is hardly necessary to impress upon those who have watched the developments of this country, the great advantage it is to the State to have a large number of persons employed. We are producing seven million pounds worth of gold annually, less than two millions of which is sent away, while something like five millions in ready cash is retained in the State, a sum of money which is used, to a great extent, in building up other industries.

Mr. Heitmann: That does not represent all the money that is sent away.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The greater proportion of the money retained in this State will be spent in wages. Of course we must send away for such things as gelignite and fuse, but I hope the time is not far distant when all the things which will be required in connection with our mining industry will be manufactured in Australia. I feel satisfied many items of our expenditure will be criticised; I will endeavour, however, to explain any matters, information in connection with which may be asked for by members of the Committee.

Mr. TROY: A good deal the Minister had said with regard to the mining industry had to be agreed with, particularly with regard to developments which had taken place recently, and which were so satisfactory as to bring into prominence many fields that we thought at one time had got beyond the stage of important fields. He (Mr. Troy), however, did not agree with the Minister with regard to the statement of the sympathetic attitude of the Government towards the mining industry. The Minister had referred to his own attitude to the industry. The fact should not be forgotten, however, that the Minister owed his political life in this State to the mining industry, and in view of that he should have shown it much more generous consideration than he had done during the past year. There was no desire to criticise unnecessarily, but it should be pointed out, while every possible consideration had been shown to the agricultural industry the same consideration had not by any means been shown to the mining industry. It had been necessary to draw the Minister's attention to the requirements of many of the mining portions of the State and to the disabilities under which the people laboured, and the Minister had pointed out what the Government had done in the past in connection with the building up of the industry, and given that as an argument to prove the sympathy of his Government in that respect. The mining industry had done more for this State, and more for every other industry than could be claimed that other industries had done for the mining industry. Were it not for the

gold-mining industry and the market it provided, and the encouragement it gave to immigrants, Western Australia would not be in its present position, and the agricultural industry would not be occupying its prominent and important position. The most important aids in connection with mining development were the provision of water supplies and the State battery system. They did more than anything else to build up the prosperity of the industry, but there had been a falling off in connection with these two aids during the past year. There was not that earnest endeavour made to provide water supplies for the development of the mining districts that existed in previous years. Credit was due to the Mines Department for the provision of water in past years, otherwise we would not have had those prosperous fields in our midst which were becoming more prosperous as the years went by, but the same consideration was not given now. While the Minister took every opportunity of pointing out what the Government had done in providing water supplies for the mining districts, the Government were doing the same in regard to agricultural districts, but were not asking from the agricultural districts the return they asked from the mining districts.

The Minister for Mines: The Government asked for them to be made a special charge on adjacent lands. That was passed the other day.

Mr. TROY: The Government were not asking from agricultural districts the same return for water supplies as they expected in connection with the mining industry. If the Government provided a water supply for any locality the people in the locality should try to make some return to the Government, but he objected to its being everlastingly pointed out what an obligation the mining people were under to the Government, when there was strict silence kept in regard to the provision made for the people in agricultural districts. He would be satisfied if the Government were prepared to pursue the policy of asking for a return from the people of the localities, but they were not doing it. He had found it

extremely difficult during the past year to have water supplies provided for many localities in need of them, and whose progress would be retarded until the water was provided. There was need for additional wells on the road between the rising goldfield of Youanme and its head centre, Sandstone, where all the mining business of Youanme was transacted. On the sixty miles of road there was only one well. The Minister knew it was an arid, dry stretch of country, and during the summer the people there would be labouring under great disadvantage on their journeys to transact their business at Sandstone if the water was not provided along the road. The department intended to supply the people of Youanme with water from the State battery there. The Minister had given assurance that if the people were willing to rent a supply and give the Government a small return, he would be prepared to establish a supply; but this should be done as soon as possible, because at present the supply at the public battery was not more than sufficient for battery purposes. There was a supply from the properties being worked by the companies that held certain leases under option, but that was not a public supply, and the time would come when either the mines would be taken over or they would fall back into the hands of the prospectors and there would not be that supply available. A water supply was an absolute necessity in the district before the advent of summer. He had asked the people there to give the Government some return on the expenditure incurred, but he wanted to see the Government act promptly and provide a water supply as soon as possible. Four or five years ago, on first coming to the House he had pointed out that if the Government were prepared to put down bores in the Youanme or Lake Barlee country in order to provide water, they would be encouraging prospectors to go out and open up the country. However the prospectors had gone out before the Government took action, with the result that they had opened up a field that in permanence and prosperity would be equal

to the adjacent field of Black Range. As he had said, the provision of water supplies and the State battery system were the foundations of the mining industry, but there had been a falling-back in this direction. Nothing stood more to the credit of the Mines Department than the provision of water supplies made throughout the State during the past twelve years, and great wrong would be done to the industry and its development would be retarded if the Government slackened their efforts in this direction. The Minister had not acted in the best interests of the people of the country in recently revising and increasing the State battery charges. Instead of securing the return anticipated, the Minister would find there would be a falling off in the stone supplied to the batteries and in regard to the development in many of the localities. The industry was not dependent upon the rich propositions mentioned by the Minister. They were all very well from an advertising standpoint and drew attention to a locality; they were satisfactory for the time being; but the development of a goldfield depended upon the lower-grade propositions; and in order to have our large lower-grade propositions worked and developed we must crush for the prospectors at a rate that would enable them to carry on. Any speculator honestly endeavouring to secure a property at the present time, nine times out of ten sought for low-grade propositions. The other day in Southern Cross he found people prepared to buy low-grade propositions, just giving a passing notice to those propositions spoken of by the Minister. In order to encourage prospectors to open up these large low-grade propositions, and in order to give some encouragement to the speculator when he came along, the Government must be prepared to crush at a rate that would enable the prospector to hold on to his properties and develop them. The new scale of charges that came into operation a few days ago would not do that; it would hamper and hinder the development of properties which did so much towards the development of the mining industry. The sliding scale which came into operation in February was the re-

sult of an agitation by the prospectors throughout the State. The Minister was asked for a sliding scale to enable the prospectors to work low-grade propositions, and under that proposition it was possible to have 7dwt. ore crushed at 8s. 6d. per ton.

The Minister for Mines: With rebates as low as 7s. 3d. per ton.

Mr. TROY: Yes, provided the tonnage was brought to the battery, but the actual rate provided for 7 dwt. ore crushing at 8s. 6d. per ton, while for 8 dwt. ore the crushing charge was 9s. per ton, and for 9 dwt. or 10 dwt. ore it was 9s. 6d. per ton. It was found, particularly in the Murchison, that the sliding scale enabled the prospectors to work propositions which previously they could not look at. The Minister said that the revised charge made was the result of a resolution passed by the prospectors' conference that sat in Perth last May; but while that conference represented many bona fide prospectors, there were people who, in the true sense of the word, were not prospectors yet had votes in regard to the resolution. The resolution was only carried by a few votes, and if it were to-day submitted to the bona fide prospectors who were customers of the State batteries it would not be carried under any circumstances. Of course it met with the approval of the Minister, who undoubtedly desired to see the rates increased; but members were given to understand that, when Mr. Dunstan was appointed Superintendent of State Batteries, instead of having the rates increased, there was a probability of the rates being decreased when Mr. Dunstan transformed the system allegedly so badly administered by his predecessor. Certainly there were decreases in the cost, but these were largely due to the fact that public money had been expended in bringing the batteries up to date so that the batteries had done better work. That was particularly proved in connection with the Menzies battery. The great body of prospectors on the Murchison opposed the new charges, and on the Murchison goldfields there were a large number of customers of the State batteries. While there was the strongest opposition to and condemna-

tion of the charges from the Murchison district and from other portions of the State, not one single voice was raised in approval of them, and even the prospectors' association, which had passed the resolution referred to, had since met at Menzies and not even approved of the Minister's new rates. There had not been a word uttered in approval of the rates brought in by the Minister. It was ridiculous to imagine that an impost, that meant an increased charge, would assist in the development of anything; it was going to hamper development. This applied to batteries in his electorate and throughout the Murchison. The Minister stated, furthermore, that both Mr. Holman and himself (Mr. Troy) were labouring under a misapprehension as to the promise made in his office. He (Mr. Troy) had already given his opinion as to the Minister's statement on that occasion, and he had already made public the promise which the Minister then made. He did not take back one particle of the statement as to the promise made to Mr. Holman and himself. We could not possibly have been misled in the answer given by the Minister, and we left his office with the distinct assurance that nothing definite had been decided on as to the State battery rates, and that we should again have an opportunity of discussing the charges. This opportunity was not given, and knowing what a disadvantage it would be, and what it would mean to the development of the mining industry, particularly on the Murchison, he (Mr. Troy) determined to move in the House for the purpose of having the matter discussed. That opportunity was denied him and he had to fall back on the discussion now. The increased charge which was brought about by the revised scale meant that many low-grade propositions previously worked would not be worked in the future. It was strange that one who alleged he had the interests of the mining industry at heart should bring in a charge to penalise the low-grade propositions and to confer an advantage on propositions which were richer. The raising of the charge from 8s. 6d. to 10s., and from 10s. 6d. to 11s. per ton meant that the present 7 dwt. stone or

under, and the stone previously charged at 10s. per ton for crushing would have to pay an additional rate owing to the increased impost, while 11 dwt. stone would pay 6d. a ton less than at present, and 15 dwt. stone 6d. a ton less; 30 dwt. stone 4s. a ton less, and 2 oz. stone would pay 5s. per ton less than it did under the sliding scale. It was not only the people who had rich stone who had free milling ore. There was a possibility that their stone would be just as hard as that from the low-grade propositions, and they would find it just as convenient to crush their ore at the crushing rate as those who had low-grade stone; therefore, under the new scale while low-grade propositions would be penalised, and these were the propositions under which the country depended for the development of the mining industry, the owners of the richer properties would be able to crush cheaper than they did 12 months ago. Since year by year the development of the mining industry depended on the low-grade propositions, any increased charge on these propositions would be to the disadvantage of the industry. That was where his objection came in to the Minister's proposal to increase the State battery charges. Instead of the department receiving the tonnage of stone by which they expected to make the batteries pay, they were going to close down the low-grade propositions which would deprive the batteries of a large body of ore that would otherwise make up the deficiency.

The Minister for Mines: It was curious that the tonnage was less during the last half year than in any previous half year.

Mr. TROY: The tonnage was bound to fluctuate. The deficiency in regard to the tonnage was in connection with batteries which had been operating in localities for a long time, and as a result the localities were worked out to a large extent. He (Mr. Troy) had taken the battery system on the Murchison particularly for 1908, and he had taken the Black Range, Boogardie, Lennonville, Meekatharra, and Nannine batteries, and he found for the year ending December, 1908, there was a profit on these batteries of £8 7s. 5d. There was not a loss so far as the Mur-

chison was concerned, on the State battery system for the year ending December, 1908. Again, since in this district there were most of the low-grade propositions, he had endeavoured to find out how the battery charges applied, and what it meant in regard to the profit and loss for the year ending June, 1909, prior to the revised scale coming into operation. On the Black Range the expenditure on the milling plant was £3,477, the receipts being £3,624, but there was a distinct gain in regard to the cyaniding which showed a profit of £700, with the result that there was a profit on the Black Range battery for the year ending June, 1909, of £846 10s 7d. At the Boogardie battery, one of those often quoted by the Minister, and where the stone was particularly of a low-grade nature, averaging only for the year $8\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. a ton, there was a profit of £125 6s. 5d. At Burtville there was a profit of £516; at Coolgardie a loss of £564 9s. 3d.; at Darlot a loss of £401 4s. 3d.; at Kalpini a loss of £99 11s. 9d.—the expenditure on this battery for the twelve months was £157 10s. 8d., and the loss, as he had pointed out, was £99 11s. 9d. Half the expenditure on this battery was incurred during eight months when the battery was not crushing one ounce of stone, for the battery was not working in October, November, January, February, March, April, May, and June of this year. The battery was not crushing one ounce of stone yet the expenditure went on merrily with the result that it amounted to £157 10s. 8d. As a result there was a loss on that battery. That could not be otherwise so long as the Mines Department were prepared to pay for management and other expenses on these batteries when the battery was lying idle. At Laverton there was a loss of £345 2s. 6d., and nearly the whole was incurred during the time the battery was lying idle. From August last year to June of this year not one pound of stone was crushed with the result that during the whole of that time there was a loss of £226 4s. 10d. due to salaries alone. That was were the loss on the public battery system came in. There was even a loss in connection with the cyaniding plant at this battery which

was due to expenditure incurred while there was no work. At Leonora battery there was a loss of £66 16s. 2d. The battery was idle for two months, and the expenditure amounted during one month to £71 13s. 9d. Linden, one of the two-head mills which was introduced by the Minister, showed a loss for the twelve months of no less than £1,946 10s. 1d. As far as Linden was concerned it was crushing the whole of the time. The loss on the whole system for the year ending June, 1909, was £4,000 altogether, the small two-head mill being responsible for nearly half that loss. At Meekatharra there was a profit of £1,511; at Menzies, owing to the fact that the battery had been brought up-to-date and thoroughly equipped, there was a profit of £2,189 for the year. At Mulline there was a loss of £43 13s. 4d. This was one of the batteries showing a loss, yet the ore averaged over one ounce per ton. This was one of the batteries at which the crushing charges would be reduced if the grade continued. At Mt. Ida there was a loss of £395 6s. 11d., and this battery also averaged considerably over one ounce per ton. At Mulwarrie there was a small profit of £53; at Nannine there was a loss of £297 10s. 6d.; at Niagara a profit of £113 3s. 1d.; at Norseman there was a profit of £280 16s. 6d.; at Pig Well a profit of £169 19s. 9d.; at Pinguin there was a loss of £276 3s. 9d. This battery did not work for three months, but although it did not work for those three months, the expenditure incurred during that time was £135 0s. 9d., nearly half the total costs. At the Siberia battery there was a loss of £450 1s. 4d. This battery did not work for seven months of the year, yet the expenditure continued merrily for those seven months and amounted to £384 4s. 3d. At Wiluna there was a loss of £274, whereas at Yarrie there was a profit of £494. Yerilla showed a very big loss of £964 1s., and the Devon battery a loss of £356 5s. 5d. At this battery the average per ton crushed had been considerably over an ounce. It had been pointed out that the Minister for Mines was satisfied that the two-head mills were a frost;

as a matter of fact the Minister had been satisfied on that point 12 months ago, notwithstanding which he had put in a two-head mill at Desdemona. There had been no necessity for this mill, because there were already two privately owned mills in the district. The two-head State mill at Desdemona had been put in in fulfilment of an electioneering promise, and this, too, notwithstanding that the class of mill had been proved to be nothing but a burden on the State. Already the mill had been showing a heavy loss, in fact the expenditure had been greater than the value of the gold won at that particular mill. This was the sort of thing that was keeping up the cost of the battery system and compelling the Minister to increase the charges. These two-head mills accounted for half the loss sustained by the State battery system during the last financial year. The Lennonville mill had shown a loss of £593 7s. 7d., and the greater portion of this sum, £439, had been incurred during a time when the battery was lying idle. That had been due to the maladministration of the Mines Department. The Minister had stated that some of the loss had occurred owing to the fact that the prospectors had not got out sufficient stone to keep the batteries going. But in the case of Lennonville this charge could not be laid against the prospectors, for in September of last year the battery had been lain idle owing to an injury to the boiler. Right up till the following February the Minister had promised to have the boiler repaired and, in fact, he had even sent round a useless oil engine from Coolgardie. From time to time the promise was made that the battery would be put in order. In the meantime a fire broke out and the battery was partially burnt down, while the plates were stolen seven days before the department became aware of their loss. After all the promises given, at last in February the Minister announced that the battery was to be removed. Here, indeed, the Minister had broken faith with the people and gone back on his promise, thus making himself an object of mistrust, not only to members of the House, but to the pro-

spectors of the back country. There could be no doubt that the reason why the Minister's word was so frequently ignored was that he had broken so many promises. In the case just noted, the prospectors of Lennonville had been induced to hang on and take out stone in anticipation of the restarting of the battery. But the Minister's promises had not been kept, and, indeed, when once the Minister had got into recess he notified his intention of going back on those promises and removing the battery. During the time the battery was idle the expenses were allowed to amount to £493 5s. 6d. To-day that battery, now leased to the prospectors, was in full working order, and the boiler which the Mines Department had said was of no value and practically incapable of repair, was now in the hands of the prospectors, who had been working it full time for the past six months. Another mad scheme had been that of the tramway surveyed between Lennonville and Boogardie to cost £90, a scheme that could serve no good purpose because the line could only be laid between one definite point and another, and all stone would have to be carted to the terminus. The cost of this scheme had been piled on to the public batteries as a result of which, together with other maladministration, the Minister had been compelled to raise the charges. One could spend the whole evening in pointing out the losses made on these batteries. The £1,946 lost on the Linden battery had been due entirely to the fact that the two-head mills had proved to be an absolute failure. While they were all right, perhaps, to develop a field in its initial stages, if the costs were not to be taken into consideration, yet if the battery system was going to be properly carried on and administered in order to give the best results to the prospectors, the two-head mill would have to be discarded. He might have spoken in palliation of the policy of the Minister had the Minister not followed up his blundering by installing the two-head mill at Desdemona, the loss on which would be charged on the prospectors of the State. If a district were not worth a five-head mill

it was worth nothing at all. The losses on the State battery system had been due largely to the fact that for six or seven months of the year the batteries were lying idle, notwithstanding which the expenditure was allowed to go on, with the result that in some places the total loss on the battery was found to have been incurred during the months of idleness.

The Minister for Works: What is the reason for that—shortage of stone.

Mr. TROY: Yes.

The Minister for Works: Well, you cannot work the batteries without stone.

Mr. TROY: There had been no necessity whatever for the Minister to keep labour employed at these batteries when they were lying idle.

The Minister for Mines: You must have a caretaker.

Mr. TROY: In some of the batteries the expenditure had amounted to £40 or £50 a month.

The Minister for Mines: There is some eyaniding to be done.

Mr. TROY: At the Laverton battery the expenditure had been considerable, although for eight months the battery was not working. Rather than see the increased charges he would be prepared to have the batteries closed down for a time, until the accumulated tonnage was sufficient to keep them going for a period. In localities such as Laverton, Yerilla, and other places in the Minister's electorate, where there was sufficient ore to keep the battery going, the battery should be closed down for a time.

The Minister for Mines: The manager at Burtville slips up to Laverton and crushes any stone when it is required.

Mr. TROY: The Minister had kept a caretaker at Lennonville battery, yet the Lennonville battery was burnt down and so far as he (Mr. Troy) knew, no inquiry had been held, nor had any effort been made to recover the stolen plates. What was the use of keeping a caretaker in those circumstances? The Minister had stated his intention of closing down batteries where there was not sufficient stone to keep them going full time, but it was to be remembered that even here injustice could be done. There had been no justification for the expenditure on these

batteries while the batteries were lying idle, but it would be every bit as wrong to close the batteries down for good, or even for months, as to keep the expenditure going on them when no stone was available. If it were found that there were 400 or 500 tons of stone available for the month the batteries ought to be kept going. If a battery were allowed to lie idle month after month, and up to 7 or 8 months, the obligation on the Mines Department regarding it should cease.

The Minister for Mines: There is bound to be intermittent working in connection with these batteries.

Mr. TROY: One case he referred to was that in which the battery had been idle for some eight months, and yet the expenditure was going on all the time. At the Siberia plant the loss was £450 for the year, and £384 of that was incurred while the battery was lying idle. In September the expenditure was £39 although the battery was not working, in November it was £136, in January £45, February £75, March £45, April £12, and May, £28. The same thing obtained in connection with the Pingin battery, Mulline, and Mount Ida, and with a great majority of the batteries which had shown a loss on the whole system, At Yerilla there had been a loss of £964 ls. The loss on the whole public battery system last year was incurred firstly on the two-head mills, and secondly it was due to the fact that expenditure had been incurred on batteries which were lying idle for five, six, and seven months. If this plan were pursued by the department any longer, it would not be possible for the system to pay. The batteries were lying idle owing to the fact that not sufficient ore was obtainable. The Minister had not rectified that position of affairs by the increased charges. Batteries could only be kept going by a largely increased tonnage. This increase would not come from the high-grade propositions, but was always the production of the low-grade properties. By increasing the battery charges the Minister had cut off what would have gone to the batteries and enabled them to keep going. The low-grade propositions could be worked under the

sliding scale. There were hundreds of tons of low-grade ore which could be put into batteries and the system could easily show a profit. By increasing the charges the Minister had gone the wrong way about securing an adequate supply of stone for the State batteries. Many of the batteries, particularly those in the Minister's own electorate, were in localities that unfortunately were being worked out. Take the Mulline, which had 20 head of stamps. It had crushed considerably less than the Lennonville battery for the year 1908; also the Mulwarrie, Yerilla, and Mount Ida batteries were unfortunately situated in localities where the supply of stone was insufficient.

The Minister for Mines: The annual report says that the Lennonville crushed 1,500 tons and the Mulline 2,500.

Mr. TROY: The figures he had been using were those for the three years ended June, 1909. He had made a complete table of the returns at the time the Minister was going to remove the Lennonville battery on the score that there was insufficient ore for crushing. He found that the Mulline, Mulwarrie, Pig Well, Burtville, Darlot, Yerilla, Devon, Widgiemooltha, and Siberia batteries, in addition to very many others, had crushed considerably less per annum than the Lennonville battery.

The Minister for Works: Lennonville was fortunate in having so much to crush.

Mr. TROY: The loss on the battery system was due to the fact that certain mills had been started which had been of no value.

The Minister for Works: What mills?

Mr. TROY: The two-head mills.

The Minister for Works: How many of them?

Mr. TROY: Two. The second reason for the loss was that expenditure had been incurred by batteries that had been idle the greater part of the year. These batteries could only be kept going by an adequate supply of stone which could only come from the low-grade propositions. Take Boogardie for instance: that was a low-grade district. the stone aver-

aging eight and a half weights, and yet the battery showed a profit of over £100 for the year. On the other hand in many localities where the average had been considerably higher, over one ounce, there had been a loss shown at the batteries. In the high-grade localities the revised scale gave a reduction, whilst in the large low-grade district the revised scale meant an increase in the crushing rates. During the time the Minister was fighting Mr. Campbell for the Menzies seat, he made several speeches on the State battery system, and on that occasion said that the loss for the year was only £2,000, which he deemed was very paltry. He then condemned the member for Guildford because Mr. Johnson proposed an increased rate in order to make up that loss. The Minister could say nothing sufficiently scathing regarding the conduct of the member for Guildford. The charges only applied to the North-West battery; but the Minister stated that Mr. Johnson's remarks applied to all the batteries. He said in one speech that the battery system showed a loss of £2,000 for the year, but that loss could easily be made up by better administration, also that there was no necessity for increased rates. He said further that even if there were a loss of two thousand pounds it was a mere bagatelle, and should go as a subsidy to the mining industry. What was the action of the Minister to-day when there was a small loss?

The Minister for Mines: A loss of £7,000 last year.

Mr. TROY: For the year ended June last the loss was £4,000. That loss was caused by maladministration in pursuing a system which was not advantageous to the batteries. There certainly had been a small loss, but had there not been a loss in connection with the agricultural railways? The Minister for Mines was also Minister for Railways. There was a loss on those railways of over £11,000, and did the Minister intend therefore to increase the charges over the agricultural lines in order to make up that sum? If not, why did the Minister intend to penalise the prospectors because through his own maladministration there had been a small loss.

on the public batteries? If we were on the eve of an election there would be a decrease promised in such charges. The loss on the public batteries was more than compensated for by the assistance which had been given to the State. It was not proposed to stop building agricultural railways simply because there was a loss as these railways were building up the agricultural industry. Yet the Minister was increasing the rates on the batteries because there was a loss on that system. Look at the localities opened up by the batteries. Mention might be made of the Black Range and Meekatharra fields. The former supported a population of over two thousand adults, who provided a market for the agriculturist. The department had received a great deal of revenue from the people in those localities, and there would have been no population there but for the battery. Take the field fifty or sixty miles south from Black Range, namely Youanme. The Minister must be given credit for the action he took in providing a battery there. The existence of the battery at Youanme had attracted the attention to that district of people who had taken options over the very big propositions. He was hopeful that these propositions would be taken over with the result that there would be as important a locality there 60 miles south of Sandstone as was to be found in that district. With regard to Meekatharra, and other promising fields in the State, a great majority of them were the result of properties being located and opened up because the prospectors were enabled to crush at the State batteries, and although the State battery system had been of great advantage to the State, it was found that the Minister for Mines was now making increased imposts which would prevent prospectors developing the low-grade propositions which might turn into promising properties, and assist mining development in many important fields. If the member for Kalgoorlie were in his seat the fact might be mentioned that when he was fighting Mr. Johnson at Kalgoorlie, he condemned the Labour Party because Mr. Johnson proposed to increase the charges. He said the

Labour Party tried to increase the battery charges in order to run the battery system on business lines and condemned the party for that action. That was the very thing that the Minister for Mines said he was doing to-day, and the member for Kalgoorlie was prepared to support him now. There was no doubt that the Minister for Mines would be found, when the next general elections were approaching, touring the length and breadth of the State promising reductions.

The Minister for Mines: You are not justified in saying that.

Mr. TROY: The Minister for Mines had done that frequently. There had not been a general election when the Minister for Mines had not done it, but his promise had not been kept. He (Mr. Troy) was justified in making the assertion that the Minister had been most prolific with regard to his promises in the past, and would do the same thing in the future. The manner in which the Minister was treating the mining industry was deserving of condemnation. He was pursuing a niggardly policy with regard to the water supply and other matters in connection with the development of the industry, while on the other hand there had been lavish expenditure in connection with agriculture.

The Minister for Mines: Why do not you give some instances?

Mr. TROY: On taking up the Estimates it would be found that 90 per cent. of the votes were devoted to agricultural centres, while 10 per cent. went to the goldfields centres.

The Minister for Mines: Are you dealing with water supplies?

Mr. TROY: An effort had been made to secure a water supply between Youanme and Sandstone, but it could not be obtained. Whenever the Minister got into recess it was a very hard matter to get anything. It was difficult to get to his ear at all with regard to the development of the mining industry. The Minister had not been in to the member for Mount Magnet, and the Minister's clerk had told a deliberate lie in order to shield the Minister. When that officer's salary on the Estimates was reached it was his intention to move that it be reduced. There

was evidence in the House that he (Mr. Troy) endeavoured to get the Minister for days on the telephone, and the clerk told a lie by stating the Minister was not in. He had rung up the Minister on the telephone five minutes after another member of the House had spoken to him at his office, and yet had been told that the Minister was not in.

The Minister for Works : Was the other member on the telephone at the same time?

Mr. TROY: The other member spoke to the Minister, and he (Mr. Troy) was standing by.

The Honorary Minister: How did the other member know what the clerk said to you?

Mr. TROY: He would have been dense indeed if he had not gathered from the conversation what was said.

Mr. Bolton: It was previously arranged.

Mr. TROY: The Minister had put him (Mr. Troy) off week after week and had forced many people to live through the Christmas holidays without a penny in their houses because he would not crush their ore. On another occasion a deputation from Day Dawn was so disgusted with the reception that they got that one member determined that on the first opportunity he would see the Premier and bring the Minister's conduct under notice. There were dozens of such instances, and it was well known that when a Minister got into recess members could expect little consideration from him regarding matters pertaining to the mining industry.

The Minister for Mines: Give some instances.

Mr. TROY: The Minister had been asked for a well for the Youanme district, and the reply had been that there was a report to the effect that there was a sufficient supply at the battery. It had since been found that there was insufficient water there even for battery purposes. There was a population at this place of 100 people depending upon a small bore for water, and they could not get anything like an adequate supply during the summer months. The small

loss which had been incurred by the battery system should not be used as a reason why the charges should be increased; rather should the same consideration be given to the mining industry which was given to agriculturists in the case of spur railways. It was his intention to deny that there was a real loss in the battery system. For instance, the Government had thousands of tons of slimes lying at the State batteries for which they would get a handsome return. Some of these slimes were paid for and some were not, but they were all claimed by the Government, and when they were treated it would be found that there was no loss to the battery system; rather would there be a handsome profit. In connection with the payments made for the prospectors, the Government paid only £4 per fine ounce while the value of the gold per fine ounce was £4 4s. 11d. There again the prospector had 4s. 11d. deducted from what was his due. Again, the Government paid on a basis of 75 per cent. on the assay value of the samples, whereas the Minister himself claimed that the department recovered more than 80 per cent., and up to 90 per cent. In all these methods the prospector was not being liberally treated by the Mines Department. In connection with the mining industry there was not that consideration given to it which had been given in previous years. There had been a great advance made in agriculture and no one in the House had denied a vote for the legitimate development of that industry, and no one quibbled because there had been a slight loss in connection with some of the avenues utilised for the development of that industry; still it could not but be held that the mining industry was being absolutely sacrificed to the other industry. The Estimates proved that conclusively, and there was no doubt that there the people until there had been a change in connection with the administration of the department. Members were told that Mr. Dunstan was going to revolutionise the system, and that the prospectors would derive a great advantage. For every conceivable loss Mr. Dunstan's predecessor was blamed, and yet Mr. Dun-

stan's own administration had been most faulty. He had been found wanting, and instead of making reductions the Minister had been compelled to increase the charges.

The Minister for Mines: I have pointed out two or three times that there have been reductions.

Mr. TROY: There had been an increase lately, and an increase imposed on the people who were struggling on low-grade propositions. The Minister's sympathy was not with the holders of low-grade propositions. He had shown it to be with the man who had high-grade propositions, and who was not struggling previously under the sliding scale. By increasing the charges to the low-grade property holder and decreasing the charges to the person who had a high-grade property the Minister showed he had no sympathy for the poorer worker. The result would be, that instead of there being an increased tonnage at these batteries there would be a decreased tonnage in the future. The Minister stated there had been an increased tonnage during the past half-year, but he had forgotten that there were more batteries in operation. There were batteries which had been erected in new localities, and in such places these would be always kept going full time at the outset, and an increase in tonnage could be expected in consequence. There was no desire to labour the question. There was an absolute necessity for the provision of water supplies on the goldfields in order to enable prospectors to open up new fields, and provide markets for those people engaged in the agricultural industries. He desired to urge upon the Minister to retrace his steps regarding the increased battery charges because he was not going to do the system any good. He would do a great harm to the industry, and he would penalise a great number of prospectors and drive them from the holdings they had occupied for years past. There were prospectors struggling for years and, under every disadvantage, endeavouring to open up their properties, and hanging on to their shows with the hope that they might get a little ahead: but

the increased charges had given the death knell to their hopes, and the result was that they had to abandon their properties, and the mining industry received a setback in their localities. There was a journal which always supported the Minister, that callously remarked that the prospector was little good if he threw up his property because he was unable to hang on owing to the increased rates; and this journal asked "why not give the increased rates a chance"; but these people who had held on to their properties for years, just making tucker, knew perfectly well from their past experience that they would not be able to hang on and pay their way with the increased charges. The increase meant their bread and butter, and if they could not earn bread and butter they had to go on the tramp. That was what the Minister would bring about by these charges. The Minister was not giving to the prospectors the same consideration he, as Minister for Railways, was giving to the agriculturists. He was not giving them a hand to get along and open up their properties and bring about the development expected for the mining industry; and although tonight physically unfit he (Mr. Troy) raised his protest against the increased charges the Minister had made in the State battery system.

Mr. HUDSON: It was not very long since the subject of the State battery system was thoroughly discussed by members, and a great deal of criticism was offered as to the methods pursued by the present Minister. Shortly afterwards the Minister, with the consent of the Government, thought fit to appoint a board of inquiry into the State battery system. That was an admission of weakness on the part of the Minister or of want of confidence in his officers. At a cost of over £2,000 the board reported and made certain recommendations, but it was understood none of these recommendations had been given effect to, so the attempted whitewashing of the department by the board resulted in absolute failure. It became necessary about this time to appoint a successor to the then Superintendent of Batteries, and

although the inquiry board had not quite completed its operations there happened to be a gentleman named Dunstan out of employment. This gentleman came from the management of a smelter to the general management of the State batteries of Western Australia. Some better recommendation should have been offered as to his capabilities. However, members were led to expect great things, but Mr. Dunstan had now been in charge for a considerable time and what was the position? There was just as much dissatisfaction among the prospectors as there was when Mr. Dunstan took charge. One innovation that was going to revolutionise the system was shifting about the State battery managers. The superintendent thought that to change the battery managers around it would reduce the charges all round, but it turned out that men were taken away from batteries where they were making successes and others were put in charge who had made failures in other places. At any rate that was something that could not be appreciated by the prospectors. One manager who had been making a success of his work, and against whom the department had no complaint, declined to be shifted. The removals were supposed to be made for economy, but where was the economy in shifting a man, say, from Nannine to Norseman, a matter of 600 miles, especially if the man had been making a success at Nannine, or a success at Norseman, as the case might be? Was it any wonder there were losses in connection with the system when such a state of affairs existed? It was not the proper thing for the Minister to make an alteration of charges in connection with the crushing at State batteries. The Minister proposed to increase the cost against the person least able to afford it, the person with a low-grade proposition. The Minister, of course, would say that the person with high-grade ore might not have the width of ore, and might have to get all his gold out of a narrow vein, and might have to take out a lot of mullock to get it; but, notwithstanding those isolated instances, the scale of charges enforced up till lately should be given a further trial. The present proposal had

been practically sprung upon the prospectors, and as it evidently did not meet with the approval of the latest prospectors' conference the Minister should reconsider the proposition before putting it into effect. In regard to the Ravens-thorpe smelter be (Mr. Hudson) had made some drastic remarks with regard to the sale, saying that it was not in the interests of the prospector. The effect had certainly increased the output of the copper by one company, but it had not increased the number of prospectors. In fact, it had an entirely opposite effect, and drove them out of the district to seek fresh fields and pastures new, so less new country was being opened out and there was less likelihood of permanency in the output from the field. When the Minister visited the field in June last, he promised the prospectors there, those who were left, that they would be given an opportunity of sending their ore away at a reasonable rate. It was one of the explanations given when the smelter was sold that the Government were going to build a railway so that the prospectors could get their ore away; and the Minister was asked by the prospectors to give provision for cheap cartage and wharfage and for ramps at the station. The Minister promised these things, but up to the present none of the promises were fulfilled.

The Minister for Mines: Did you not get cheap rates?

Mr. HUDSON: They were not put into operation. It was said they were going to be given, and that the cheap wharfage was to be given; and though he had asked until he was tired of asking, it was only the other day he found there were not sufficient trucks to carry the ore, and that the ramps had not been provided.

The Minister for Mines: You know the difficulty that we had; they took all the material on to Esperance.

Mr. HUDSON: A long time had elapsed since the applications were made and the promises given. Surely it did not take five months to put things into operation? At any rate a fortnight ago the timber had not arrived for the construction of the ramps. Application had been made for a reward by a man who claim-

ed to have discovered the Norseman goldfield. The applicant was an elderly man and was destitute, but was told it was too late now and that the application should have been made at an earlier date. He (Mr. Hudson) now urged upon the Minister the advisability of reconsidering the matter, to see if, as was done in other cases, some recompense could not be made to the man who was the pioneer of the district. If further inquiries were made he (Mr. Hudson) was confident the Minister would feel justified in granting an allowance or reward to the man who claimed to have discovered the Dundas goldfield. It was left to the generosity of the Government as to what reward to make. He hoped due inquiry would be made into this case. He did not desire any favour to be shown to any individual, but he hoped the Minister would give the matter favourable consideration during recess.

Mr. HEITMANN: The prospectors of the State were not receiving the encouragement they deserved from the Mines Department. Whether it was the Minister for Mines who was to blame, or whether the Minister was dependent on officers who were not in sympathy with the industry, or whether it was bad management right through the department, he did not know; but he would point out that while we heard the Minister throughout the State, particularly when speaking to farming audiences, telling the people how much he was prepared to do for the genuine prospector of the State, we found many prospectors were not receiving the consideration they were entitled to. A good deal of interest would be taken in the House when it became known how the money under the prospecting vote was being expended. Personally he found it most difficult to get any assistance for prospectors. On one occasion a genuine man applied for a loan, yet most ridiculous reasons were advanced for refusing the individual assistance. This man had spent every penny he had to open up his show. He had bought machinery to the amount of £500; he had timbered the shaft down to 80 feet, all with sawn timber costing something like one pound a foot; and when he asked

the Mines Department for a loan to sink further, giving as a security the lease and the machinery—this new plant—he was told that the shaft had been sunk too near the old shaft therefore the request was refused. As one who had done a little mining, he had come to the conclusion that the objection was ridiculous. This man, who was a practical miner and who had employed on each shaft practical men, sought the advice of the practical men in the district and it was found that the place in which he had decided to sink the shaft was the most suitable. Yet we had the officers of the Mines Department going to the place, paying very little attention to this show, but they refuse the loan. This man obtained a loan, paying something like ten per cent. to the bank for the money. The department should relieve the genuine prospector of the State from going to the banks for money.

Mr. Monger: What bank was charging ten per cent?

Mr. HEITMANN did not know.

The Minister for Mines: It would be about eight per cent.

Mr. HEITMANN understood this man was paying ten per cent. Although this man had received this set-back, other cases in his district not so worthy of consideration had received assistance. At the time that this individual of whom he had spoken applied to the Mines Department for assistance, there was being spent, 60 or 70 miles from Cue, money obtained from the Mines Department, not in development work, but in breaking out stone worth over one ounce to the ton. The system in existence at the present time was not as satisfactory as it should be, and he (Mr. Heitmann) suggested that mining boards should be appointed in the various districts of the State similar to the Victorian boards, then greater satisfaction would be given. At present there was too much dependence on men who might be well up technically but who had very little practical knowledge of mining work, especially from a prospector's point of view. If boards were appointed, with the warden of the district as chairman, and a representative of the Prospectors' Association on the board, and, say, the mining inspector, to deal

with various applications received from prospectors, greater satisfaction would be given, at the same time preventing loss of time to the prospectors. Then those deserving encouragement would receive it. Prospectors would not be forced to wait an extended period to get money. He (Mr. Heitmann) had asked for an extension of the State battery system to his locality, and this request had been preferred for a number of years, but had been met with all sorts of replies. The last in his opinion seemed to be most extraordinary. After due inquiry had been made by the officials of the Mines Department, on the first occasion it was said that not sufficient encouragement would be given in the district to warrant the erection of a battery, but after it had been proved by the prospectors of Cue that they could be depended upon to keep the battery going, the Minister replied that he would refer the matter to Cabinet for consideration and decision. If the Minister thought the people were impressed with that reply, he was mistaken. The Minister for Mines was practically the only mining man in the Ministry, in fact he was the only mining man who sat on the Government side of the House. When a recommendation was sent to Cabinet for consideration, it was generally accompanied by a recommendation from the Minister, and when the Minister sent along the request for a public battery for Cue for Cabinet decision he must have sent a recommendation with it. He (Mr. Heitmann) would far rather have the Minister tell the applicants straight out that he would not give a battery to Cue as the batteries there were sufficient to deal with the output of stone in the district, rather than go a round-about way of refusing the request. The people of Cue had waited a long time for a battery, and although it was true that the charges there were not as high as in some parts of the State the Minister knew that the trouble was not the charges but the general treatment the prospectors received at these batteries. Private considerations played all too important a part in the Mines Department, particularly when it came to the erection of a

public battery. He felt sure that if the Minister were to erect a battery in Cue in a short time, instead of there being a population of 700 or 800 people there, the population would be doubled within two years. There was another matter he wished briefly to touch on, that was the old-standing sore as to the ventilation of mines. Every year since 1904 he had touched on this matter, and he had asked that better ventilation be given to the mines in the State; and he had asked that better conditions generally might be given to the miners in Western Australia. Members had not considered it necessary that the miners in Western Australia should receive that consideration which was given to the workmen in other industries. The Government had at last decided to take steps in the matter, and had promised to appoint a Royal Commission, but the personnel of that Commission would play an important part. He was not speaking out of school, for he had had a conference with the Minister and did not wish to disclose anything that might be private, but he believed that the State Mining Engineer would be appointed on that Commission, and that was as it should be. From a technical standpoint that officer had a deal of knowledge of mining from various standpoints. On this Commission to deal with miners' phthisis, the Minister would be wise to appoint one or two—he did not know how many members would be on this Commission—practical men to inquire into the condition of the mining industry. No matter what technical knowledge a man might have, or how many examinations he had passed in a school of mines, unless he had gone through the actual experience of working in mines, particularly in deep ground and with machinery, it was impossible for him to pry into the conditions of the miner. He was pleased that the Government had at last after speaking on the question of miners' phthisis for a number of years recognised that phthisis was assuming very serious proportions and should be taken in hand. When last he (Mr. Heitmann) spoke on the question of miners' phthisis, the Minister instead of reply-

ing in the Chamber went to the Press some days afterwards and replied to the statements there.

The Minister for Mines: I made no reply here as I would have been out of order if I had done so.

Mr. HEITMANN: There was plenty of opportunity for the Minister to reply in the House. When the Minister did reply it was not in regard to the conditions of the miner, but rather with the hope of showing that the member for Cue was exaggerating and speaking without his book. He (Mr. Heitmann) had replied to the statements, and had proved to all fair-minded men that there were a great many cases in Western Australia of miners' phthisis. The Minister had again replied with the same object of trying to deprecate the statements made by a member of the Opposition. It seemed extraordinary that the Minister did not quote the report of Dr. Blanchard, who had been specially commissioned by the Government to inquire into the conditions at Day Dawn. That report should have been made public by the Government. Dr. Blanchard had pointed out that there were many cases of phthisis in Day Dawn, that the complaint was increasing to a large extent, that it had been more prevalent among the foreigners, and that there must be something very bad with the ventilation in the mine. But instead of quoting this report the Minister had quoted the *Statistical Abstract* and the abstract from the books of the Cue hospital, and had endeavoured to show that he (Mr. Heitmann) had been exaggerating. The Minister had sent Mr. Montgomery to Day Dawn to inquire, and it was clear that the State Mining Engineer could not have paid attention to his duties, seeing that he had arrived at the conclusion that there was only one case of phthisis in Day Dawn. Either Mr. Montgomery had been instructed to bring in an adverse report, or he had not inquired in the proper quarters.

The Minister for Mines: He would not bring in a report opposed to his findings.

Mr. HEITMANN: Probably Mr. Montgomery would refuse to do anything of the sort.

The Minister for Works: He did not go up specially for that work.

Mr. HEITMANN: No; but Mr. Montgomery had been specially asked to inquire while there. When he (Mr. Heitmann) went to Day Dawn last February there was an outcry through the whole of the district in respect to the number of cases of miners' phthisis appearing in the town. To-day he could go to Day Dawn and pick out ten or a dozen men suffering from phthisis—men who three years ago had been strong and hearty. As a matter of fact, almost every week for a considerable period he had gone to the Medical Department begging that some of the miners might be allowed to spend a little time in the sanatorium at Coolgardie. He had gone to the Colonial Secretary and asked if it were not possible to get a miner into the sanatorium at Coolgardie, and the Colonial Secretary had indignantly replied, "No, the place is overcrowded as it is, and miners are flocking to Coolgardie from all over the State in the hopes of getting into the sanatorium." On the other hand the Minister for Mines had repeatedly declared that there were very few cases in Western Australia. In view of this conflict of opinion, what was one to think? He hoped the time would come when the Minister would consider the lives of these unfortunate men, if not from a merely humane standpoint, at least from the standpoint of economy. It would be true economy to save these men to the State instead of allowing them to be buried, and their wives and children to be thrown on the bounty of the State. It was to be hoped the Royal Commission promised by the Minister would be appointed as soon as possible. When a medical man was sent to the deep mines it would be proved that there were hundreds of men suffering from lung trouble in its various stages. That it could be cured, that it could be almost eradicated from the State, he (Mr. Heitmann) was perfectly sure. As far as he was concerned even the mining industry itself,

regarded as a whole, was not to be considered as against the lives of the miners.

Mr. GOURLEY: Not one word had been spoken this evening in favour of the State battery system. He was not going to compliment the Minister on his administration; he wanted to say there had been a vast deal of bad management so far as batteries were concerned. One could not help approving of the system itself, because there were no better means in Western Australia of developing the industry than the State battery system. Prior to the system being introduced into the State a very high charge had been made for crushing in the Menzies district. At that time prospectors were paying £2 a ton without recovering either sands or slimes. Eventually the charges were reduced to something like 25s. a ton, but even then the prospectors were not paid for sands or slimes. When the State battery system was introduced the charges fell to 15s., and the prospectors were paid for their sands, although not for their slimes. As far as the slimes at the Menzies State battery at present time were concerned, he trusted the Minister would see his way clear to paying for this property. Numerous complaints could be levelled at the various State batteries. In some instances it was due to bad management, to the fact that frequently the managers appointed had failed to attend to their duties. A great deal had been said in regard to the high cost at some of these mills. At the Menzies State battery there had been employed a manager, an assayer, an amalgamator, and an assistant amalgamator. That there was no necessity for the assayer or for the assistant amalgamator was shown when the new battery manager took charge. That officer had straight away dismissed the assayer and the assistant amalgamator, thereby saving at least £9 a week. This in itself went to suggest the cause of the high costs existing at the present time. While in favour of the battery system he had very little to say in favour of the management of many of the mills.

Mr. Angwin: Do you believe in wiping them out altogether?

Mr. GOURLEY: It was an absurd question to ask. Because he had spoken of bad management it did not go to show that he was in favour of abolishing the State batteries. Good management could be obtained, and it was the duty of the Minister to secure good management. He was pleased that the Minister had at least realised that the two-head mills were a failure. As regards the Desdemona mill he (Mr. Gourley) desired to bring under the notice of the Minister the fact that prospectors very often were only able to obtain 11dwts. over the plates, while 26 or 27 dwts. were left in the sands. Because of this many of the prospectors at Desdemona were in the unfortunate position of being scarcely able to pay their way, whereas if the Minister would pay them for the gold in their tailings they would be comfortably situated. Certainly the Minister should pay these prospectors for their gold or make them some advance against it in one way or another. He (Mr. Gourley) had spoken to the Superintendent of State Batteries quite recently. He had occasion to think that the Superintendent of State Batteries had but very little sympathy with the prospectors, and that the Superintendent of State Batteries should never have been appointed to the position, for the reason that he did not know his duties sufficiently well. If the Minister was so desirous of assisting prospectors by erecting two-head mills that had proved failures so far as the prospectors were concerned, owing to the fact that nearly the whole of the gold was in the tailings, the Minister should also assist them by erecting cyanide plants or by advancing on the tailings. There were numbers of complaints that the prospectors had to wait actually a week before they could get their assay values. In some instances prospectors brought their ore to the mill and had it cleaned up on Saturday or Monday and in some instances there was a low value over the plates, and they were anxious to know whether the tailings carried any value before attempting to work their shows again; but though a special day was set apart for the assaying of tail-

ings, for some reason or other they were often compelled to wait for a week to get the result. There should be a regular system of having some particular days, say Wednesdays and Saturdays, for the purpose. Again, if a man took a crushing to the mill he had to wait two months before being paid for the tailings. In some cases it was three months. He had known instances where a prospector had paid a bank £15 to cash his tailings voucher. The sum of £10 was paid in another case, and there were other instances where the prospectors paid publicans or storekeepers £1 to £5 for cashing their vouchers. If the Minister was desirous of assisting the prospectors, why should he not pay within fourteen days? Of course the Minister would say he had no money, but the Minister should endeavour to find the money. It was too long to wait two months. One could find fault with many matters in connection with the State batteries, but on the whole one must speak with some favour in regard to the initiation of the scheme. The batteries had accomplished a wonderful amount of good for the State; and if there had been the enormous amount of expense, as mentioned by the member for Mount Magnet, it was due to the fact that there was very little stone brought to the mill. There was a profit in other instances owing to the fact that the battery was worked, as in the case of Menzies, full shifts, and also on Sundays. Much could be said about the fact that there was a higher cost in some cases, but in other instances a profit was shown. Word had not come from the Leonora district, or the Eastern Goldfields, protesting against the increased charges for crushing, but the tiddly-winking with the State battery charges caused a considerable amount of dissatisfaction amongst the prospectors, and a considerable amount of unrest. If the Minister wanted to devise a scale of charges he should devise one once and for all and let it remain at that, but this everlasting tiddly-winking with the charges was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. The Minister knew that some months ago when it was decided to increase the State battery charges another

battery came into competition at Menzies.

The Minister for Mines: They started a good deal before that.

Mr. GOURLEY: It was stated this was due to the fact that the Minister increased the charges. There was a 20-head mill in competition at Menzies, and the Dreadnought company, which had previously crushed at the public battery, were now crushing at the new mill. Had these increased charges not been made the Dreadnought people would have been crushing at the State mill still, also numerous others who were crushing at the private mill. The result would be that the Menzies battery, instead of showing a profit of £2,000 a year, would eventually show a profit of £1,000 or £1,500, the decrease being undoubtedly due to the increased rates, and if this applied in the Menzies district, it would also apply throughout other districts.

Mr. Angwin: Are the other people doing the crushing cheaper?

Mr. GOURLEY: They are crushing down to 5s. a ton, I believe.

The Minister for Mines: We are doing it by time at 4s. a ton.

Mr. Angwin: What do they do with the slimes?

Mr. GOURLEY: The Minister paid for the slimes on a 75 per cent. basis. This company was advertising that it was going to pay on a 90 per cent. basis, so there was a difference in favour of the prospector of 4s. on the crushing and a high percentage on the slimes. If a private company could crush for the prospectors at 5s. a ton and could pay a high value for the slimes, surely the Minister could compete.

Mr. Angwin: The general expression in the goldfields districts is that they are not content with the returns from private companies.

Mr. GOURLEY: Financial assistance was given to local syndicates, and individuals had been favoured. He did not know why these individuals should have been favoured with assistance from the mining development vote. The department had not been recouped for the outlay in some instances. However it was almost impossible for the legitimate pro-

spector to obtain any assistance from the Mines Department in the matter of this vote. More good could be rendered to the industry if genuine prospectors were assisted from the vote. The Minister was always willing to assist little tin-pot companies that came into existence, often with the idea of getting assistance from the Government to work points, and then died out; but assistance should be given by setting apart a sum of money to be granted to genuine prospectors to assist them in developing. As a rule they worked their shows to 100 feet where the country got hard, but they could offer no security to the department in the event of the money not being obtained from the lease. In every instance assistance sought in this direction had been refused to prospectors, who prospected year in and year out and existed on a few shillings a week. These were the men opening up the goldfields, but they received the scantiest assistance from the Minister. It was to be hoped the Minister would give more assistance to genuine prospectors than had been given in the past.

[Mr. Daglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There was no system introduced in any State that had done so much to help the mining industry as the State battery system had done in this State, but with better management much more could be done. The success of the system was a question of management. We were not paying the Superintendent of State Batteries the salary to obtain the services of a man competent to fill the position. The duty of this officer should be to attend to the batteries and to travel round and examine the works and workings of the batteries, instead of sitting in his office in Perth depending almost entirely on the reports of his managers. He (Mr. Underwood) was opposed to the position taken up by the Minister in regard to the State battery charges at the request of the prospectors' association. He held the opinion that the meeting of the prospectors' association, which drew up the resolution requesting the Minister to revert to a fixed charge in preference to a sliding

scale, was a packed meeting, a meeting of men whose prospecting consisted of prospecting in other people's pockets. There were a great number of St. George's terrace miners at that meeting. There was a fairly strong argument on the other side of the question. That was to say there were many men working fairly high-grade propositions from which they could raise only a limited amount of stone. It seemed unfair, perhaps, that they should have to pay a higher price than in some cases more fortunate men with larger bodies of ore of lower values. It had to be remembered, however, that these large bodies of ore kept the batteries going. If it were not for them the men with the richer and smaller veins would not have a State battery to crush their stone at. Therefore, it was the duty and the best policy, of the Minister and the batteries department to encourage, as far as possible, the opening up of the large ore bodies. If it could be done by differential rates, or by a sliding scale, that course should be followed. However, the House did not appear to be paying much attention to him so he would conclude.

Mr. BATH: The member for Mount Magnet had dealt exhaustively with the question of the administration of State batteries, and in view of the fact that his district and those of one or two others representing mining areas were more affected than those representing populous mining districts, he had no intention of dealing at length with the question; but the hon. member, in pointing out the great losses sustained at Linden and Desdemona, by the erection and running of two-head mills, had practically destroyed the arguments the Minister had used in order to justify the raising of the rates for crushing. The Minister had quoted him (Mr. Bath) with the object of inferring, evidently, that because at some time or other he had said that loan expenditure should return interest and sinking fund that was an argument for raising the rates for crushing at State batteries. It was a good financial rule to restrict loan expenditure as far as possible to reproductive works, but

he was not content that such a rule should be applied to one body of producers in the State, and not to others. If it were going to be applied it should be applied to all sections of the community, and one body should not be made to suffer while others were not compelled to submit to the rule. Members who had referred to these two-head mills seemed to labour under the delusion that it was only after their erection that the Minister discovered the mistake, and that the erection was entered upon in all good faith. The report of the batteries inquiry board would have saved the Minister from making the error if he had but adopted it. That board dealt not with the two-head mill, but with a similar type, the unit statap mill, and they told the Minister after a trial that those mills were not suitable for the requirements of the State Batteries Department. In the light of that report the Minister had sufficient to prevent him from involving the country in the losses sustained from the working of these mills. The mining districts which had been supporting the State batteries and had been making them profitable concerns now had to suffer, not because the State batteries were unprofitable, but because the Minister had made a mistake as to two mills and was making the whole of the industry pay for his mistake. A vital mistake was made, first, by practically throwing into the waste paper basket the report of the inquiry board, and in the second place by the appointment of the present Superintendent of State Batteries. There was sufficient evidence in the first place in the fact that the Government had been involved in a loss by the sale of the smelters at Phillips River, for this should have prevented them from appointing the officer to take charge of a much wider sphere. If that gentleman, in the more limited capacity as manager of the State smelter, did not know enough of his business to realise that there were values higher than the Government secured for the smelter, in the matte and slag on the dump, he had no right to get the position.

The Minister for Mines: He had nothing to do with the sale.

Mr. BATH: Surely if he had been managing, as he was, the State smelter, the Minister would have consulted him before the sale was made. Any man, even though not a metallurgist, who had had a few years' practical experience as foreman in smelting works, would know the values of the dump.

The Minister for Mines: Someone else was managing them.

Mr. BATH: The officer was managing immediately before the sale of the plant. Even if he had not done an hour's smelting he should have known, if he were the man he was represented to be, the values. The fact that he did not know was *prima facie* evidence that he was not the man for the higher position. Since then, the fact that reforms had not been carried out, that at the present time there was such a slimes plant as existed at Norseman, and the fact that the reduction in the cost of treatment had not been brought about, was convincing testimony that this gentleman was not a competent person to fill the position. There was another thing. This officer had practically made it impossible to carry out reforms in the administration of the department, because in every respect, and on every occasion he had identified himself entirely with the interests of the Minister. One could not get reforms, changes or improvements where an officer took up that attitude. It was that he complained of, and it was that attitude which was evidenced during the campaign of Menzies, and it was that attitude that was going to prevent the proper management of the State batteries. The member for East Fremantle had asked a question in a doubtful tone as to whether we could get proper management of the State batteries.

Mr. Angwin: No, I did not.

Mr. BATH: Then the hon. member did not make himself understood. What were we keeping such an institution as the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie for, if it were not going to turn out competent persons to manage the State batteries; or any other mining undertaking in Western Australia. If we could not do that it would be better to shut up the institu-

tion as not fulfilling the functions for which it was started. As to the prevalence of phthisis, more commonly known as miners' complaint, there was reason to complain of the attitude of the Minister. When the Estimates were under consideration last year he (Mr. Bath) had referred to the question in the following terms:—

"He wished to refer to something which was fast becoming a menace to a large number of honest citizens of Western Australia, namely, the dust nuisance and the lack of adequate ventilation in the deepest mines, which was increasing the harvest of deaths under the dread disease known as 'miners' complaint.' This was a scourge which should arouse the attention of every man interested in the welfare of his fellow men. The disease was the product of unfavourable circumstances underground, which sapped the health and even the lives of the men working there. Except steps were taken to remedy the conditions this harvest of deaths would increase year by year."

When making those observations he had known precisely what he was speaking of. He had worked with men who to-day were lying in their graves, or who were in the sanatorium, or had been forced to seek other occupations. He had known them, and had refused when employed in a mine, to work in the same place and earn the same money, for he knew he would go the same way as they did. What did the Minister do? He took action, not with the purpose of trying to find out whether one-half he (Mr. Bath) had said was true, or whether the statements made by the member for Cue were true, but he set to work to try and disprove the statements. A sort of inquiry was held, but how could a mining inspector, by a cursory examination of a man, give in a report submitted in a day or two, a proper account of a matter of this kind, or disprove the criticisms that had been passed upon the question. It was necessary that a man should follow the occupation for years or know those who were following it. It was not every day that the miners were subjected to the same conditions, but it was true that on re-

peated occasions they had to go into dust-laden air, which undoubtedly led them to contract the disease which inevitably threatened their lives. Since then there had been proof forthcoming of the statements of other men which had led the Minister, and the Government as a body to realise that there was seriousness in the statements made, and to appoint a commission of inquiry to ascertain how far the disease extended and what steps it was necessary to take to minimise the disease, and it was hoped, stamp it out. There was one other matter he wished to refer to and that was with regard to the assistance which was rendered to mining development. The Minister had stated that as far as the mining vote was concerned and in the provision of water supplies, a great deal had been done to assist the mining industry. As far as the great bulk of the money that had been expended in assisting mining development was concerned however, it had not been expended in the right direction, nor by the right people, and until the Minister was relieved of the responsibility which rested upon him, or was relieved of the autocratic right which he had in the distribution of the money, and until he could call to his assistance the advice of those who had practical knowledge of mining requirements, there was not going to be a change for the better. This had been urged before, and it would be better not to vote money, especially from loan fund, until we had a better assurance that the money would be spent with greater wisdom and greater recognition of the advice of those on the spot who knew the different districts, and who were in a position to give advice which was worth following. He had offered these suggestions because he was interested in seeing the mining industry flourish, and notwithstanding an apparent decline in the gold yield and the number of men employed, he believed from the reports we heard and from the optimism expressed not from the man in the street or the mere Press reporter, but optimism of the men engaged in the industry, that we were in for a revival in mining. The Minister had said that there were those who criticised the State bat-

tery system and said that the system was not in the best interests of mining development. He (Mr. Bath) wished to dissent entirely from that view. One had only to compare the production of a field like East Coolgardie, where the bulk of the mines were owned by foreign capital, with the gold yield from a district like the Murchison, where the mines were owned by local people and companies, and compare the number of men employed winning that gold, and it would be seen that the smaller yield was proportionately much better for the State than the yield from a field like East Coolgardie, where the bulk of the returns went outside the State. Under these circumstances the battery system should be such as to foster local development and enable the local companies to work their shows. It would be in the best interests of the State and in the interests of members of the House to see that the system was properly administered and placed on a proper and systematic basis.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply): If no other member desired to speak generally, he would say a few words with regard to the points raised and the statements made that very little consideration was being given to the prospector, and that the action of the Government showed it to be more in sympathy with the agricultural than the mining industry. He defied any member to point to any State in Australia where the same work and the same expenditure was being carried on for the purpose of assisting the prospector and those who tried to develop the mineral industry, as was the case in this State. He defied any member to point to any country in the world where the same expenditure was being carried on for the purpose of opening up back country. It had been said by the member for Mt. Magnet that we had expended a considerable sum of money and that we had got but small returns. It was as well that members on the Ministerial side of the House should know how the mining industry had been treated.

Mr. Newman: There are very few there to listen to you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That could not be helped. In connection with the water supplies since 1901 we had spent over £238,000 in the back country putting down wells, bore wells and dams and finding water supplies generally. The working expenses and administration in connection with that, without asking for interest, totalled £115,000 and the revenue derived was £66,000, so that £50,000 was lost in that period with regard to working expenses alone without asking any return other than an indirect return, and any person could estimate how valuable the indirect advantages were. The same thing did not apply to the agricultural industry where the Minister for Lands had proposed certain money should be expended to construct dams; he had just passed legislation that the cost of this work should be a charge on the adjacent holdings. Mining had no security of that sort. With regard to batteries, there had been expended £270,000, and the Government had never yet asked that the batteries should pay one penny interest or sinking fund. There had been a loss of £20,000 on working, and the Treasury had asked that there should be shown a small surplus over working expenses.

Mr. Bath: A good lump of that was spent from revenue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That did not matter; it was capital expenditure in connection with the work. As far as the charge in the Treasury against the development of mining at the present time, which, of course, included the telegraph line to Wiluna and the construction of roads and dams in the old days, was concerned, there was £1,400,000 charged up to the development of gold-fields for which there had been no return except an indirect return. Since the days of Sir John Forrest the State had done all that it possibly and legitimately could to assist the mining industry, and he could not but believe, if hon. members opposite were in office, they would pursue the same policy, and recognise the indirect advantages of expenditure of this money, and they would be only too pleased to give money to whoever had

the portfolio of the Mines Department, to assist in the development of these arid yet auriferous belts. In connection with our battery system, it was to be regretted that the leader of the Opposition should have thought fit to endeavour to introduce some hidden meaning into the question of Mr. Dunstan's association with the smelter at the time that it was sold, Mr. Dunstan at that time being in charge of it. Mr. Dunstan, the superintendent of batteries, was chosen by the hon. member's own colleagues, and did not smelt 100 tons at Phillips River. He went there and his first recommendation was that a new smelter should be erected and he was engaged on its erection when it was decided to sell the smelter. In connection with this work it had been said that Mr. Dunstan's work had been disadvantageous to the community, that we had losses, and because the Minister had made a small increase in the charges, it reflected against the administration. It had already been pointed out that the revenue the department were receiving per ton under the old sliding scale before Mr. Dunstan was in charge, was 11s. 4d. per ton. Feeling satisfied that by good administration it would be possible to bring about the treatment of a larger tonnage of stone by reducing the cost, the charges were reduced during 1908 to 9s. 3d., or 2s. 1d. less than they were the year before. In addition to that, the department did not previously pay their customers for slimes. That system was introduced, and last year there was paid to the department's customers between £15,000 and £16,000 more for sands and slimes than was paid in the previous year. Reductions were made in the costs for the year on the basis of the 2s. 1d. per ton, and the charges were reduced to those who used the State batteries in 21 months by no less than £16,625. That was the effect of the administration of Mr. Dunstan, who had been spending a large sum of money trying to bring these plants more up-to-date. Last year the department spent £3,400 of its revenue in building up and perfecting those plants, and he (the Minister) felt quite satisfied that each year we would be able to show bet-

ter returns than had been shown in the past. It was found incumbent on instructions from the Treasury to make a small increase. There was no need to go through all the arguments again. The member for Dundas had drawn attention to certain promises made in connection with Phillips River. These people had the cheap freights from the coast which were promised, and instructions had been given that the ramps should be instantly built, and the Railway Department had ordered the timber. Unfortunately this timber had been carried to Esperance or Israelite Bay, and in consequence there had been delay. The hon. member knew the difficulties in connection with carrying out works in a place like that. It was desired to be careful in connection with Phillips River. Although he (the Minister) was satisfied that the district was going to be a big one, and although the returns so far had been very satisfactory, the department anticipated a revenue of £20,000 a year as against an expenditure of £11,000, and that amount probably would be exceeded according to reports. So far he felt assured that there was going to be a big trade there. The people were demanding more trucks, but there was very great expense involved in sending trucks down to Phillips River.

Mr. Hudson: The trouble is the smelters are lying idle for the want of ore.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Anyhow sufficient trucks had now been sent to satisfy them. In connection with the question of wharfage he had told the deputation that this was a matter affecting the whole State, and that he could make no promise. In order to give every facility for getting the low-grade propositions treated as fairly as possible he had sent a recommendation to Cabinet that in connection with ores no wharfage charges, outward or inward, should be made. The member for Mt. Magnet had drawn attention to a number of things. He (the Minister) was not going into the question of any promise made by him to the hon. member on the occasion of the hon. member's visit; but he had written to the hon. member, and he would again ask could the hon. member, or any other sane person conceive what object he (the Min-

ister) would have in deliberately deceiving the hon. member, and making an enemy of him in connection with this matter? It would be a most foolish thing to do, for it could achieve no possible object. The hon. member had had a great deal to say in regard to the manner in which he had been treated, but he (the Minister) would like to remind him that when the district of Youanme was opened up he (the Minister) had sent the water supply people into the district and, at the solicitations of the hon. member, had sent the Government geologist into the district to make a report as to the advisability of putting in a State mill. That officer had reported that he regarded the district as a worthless one. The hon. member was acquainted with the contents of that report, and he knew also that he (the Minister) had gone 60 miles out of his way to visit the district, and had inspected the mines up till 10 o'clock at night, in consequence of which he had recognised that there were chances before the district, and that if the Government did not do something in the way of putting a mill there, every man in the district would have to clear out. The Government had put the mill in, and the mill had justified itself, and it was now satisfactorily proved that the district was going to be a good one.

--Mr. Troy: And I have given you every credit for it both in the House and in the district.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Owing to representations made by the hon. member and by Inspector Lander that a battery should be put in at Messenger's Patch, the battery had been put in, and the man in charge had been crushing for the past few weeks. Now it had just been learnt that the district had crushed out, and that it would be necessary to send a caretaker to take over the battery. It was unfortunate for the hon. member and for himself (the Minister) and it was to be hoped that some new discoveries would be made. It only went to show the hon. member how easy it was for him to make mistakes as well as for him (the Minister). The hon. member could not say that he (the Minister) had not been solicitous for his (the hon.

member's) district. He (the Minister) did not admit that the two-head mill was a mistake. He thought that on a prospector's show the two-head mill would be a magnificent proposition. On the last quarter the total loss at Linden had been only £21. The men who brought their stone to the two-head mill should feed the mill, when the expenditure would be very small indeed.

Mr. Taylor: It would increase the cost of crushing to the prospector.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That would depend on the man. He did not think the prospector would be able to crush it below 12s. or 14s. per ton. However, he would not build any more two-head mills. The Government were putting in a five-head mill at Mount Sir Samuel, and a five-head mill at Marble Bar, with producer gas plants at each of them. The State mills were beginning to reach a condition of perfection hitherto unapproached. Many mistakes had been made, but these were inevitable. It had been said the Government ought to pay for the sands within two months. Hon. members knew that the department had not the necessary capital. The cash had first to be obtained before the department could pay its customers.

Mr. Collier: But that does not cause a delay of three months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It meant a delay of two months. Some time ago the department had been very short of cash and the prospectors had to wait nearly two and a half months.

Mr. Collier: I have a letter stating that they have waited three months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was scarcely so. It was necessary at times to wait for the assay values and effect an agreement as to those values. It had been made compulsory that the assayer and the battery manager should have their assay values at the one time. If they did not do that the customer had to accept the battery manager's assay value. There might be some delay in securing the agreement of assay values, but as a rule two months from the time of crushing was all the department required. The difficulties of treating the ore had to be

considered. For instance, in a district like Menzies with its oxides, sulphides, and all sorts of complex materials everything might be going nicely at the treatment works when some unexpected mineral would get into the sands and sicken the cyanide solution, thus bringing about a considerable loss before the staff had any knowledge of it. These were treating difficulties, in addition to which the best of managers was liable to make a mistake. Mistakes had been made, costing hundreds of pounds. Again, every man who had sands thought his material was of the greatest value of all at the battery. So when all things were taken into consideration it would be admitted that the number of complaints arising from the battery system were very few indeed.

Mr. Collier: It should not be necessary to wait so long, considering that the gold is won.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The department had not the capital with which to pay cash. The department had to get the gold from the mint before it could pay its customers. It had been thought that the batteries should be established as a trading concern, and be allowed to work on a trading account. He would be pleased indeed to see the system placed on that basis. He had had a very exhaustive report from the inspector, which showed that for the first time for many months the battery system disclosed a profit of a little over £500 on the last quarter, while at seven batteries the crushing charges were paying expenses. For the first time in the history of the battery system the crushing returns had paid the costs. Last year the cost of crushing was 12s. 1.99d. per ton. For the third quarter of this year the cost was 10s. 4.4d. per ton. The improvements in the past 12 months were showing results, and he hoped at the end of the year we would be able to show particularly good results. He was hopeful of it, but at the same time his instructions were to make working expenses. The increase was very small. He had considered the sliding scale would bring about more tonnage, but though for the three years prior to adopting it

95,000 tons per year were crushed, the result of the sliding scale, advocated by the member for Mount Magnet and others was that, instead of the tonnage increasing, it decreased. Although the batteries were increased in number, the total tonnage was on the average less than previously.

Mr. Troy: Will you explain how you think you are going to make the tonnage up by making an increased rate?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would pay expenses and there would probably not be certain shows such as the Sirdar crushing. The Sirdar had an enormous quantity of dirt, the actual cost of treating which was over 10s. a ton. but they were getting it treated at 7s. 3d. a ton. Now they would have to crush by the hour at the actual cost or at the rate of 10s. a ton. Arrangements were made by which people with higher grade stone would pay extra charges. He hoped the explanations given would prove acceptable and that members would see their way to pass the Estimates.

General debate concluded; Votes and Items discussed.

Item, Clerks (34), £5,391:

Mr. TROY: Mr. Shapeott, one of the clerks who received £234, had told him an untruth and it was due to the Committee to punish this officer. For Mr. Shapeott he had previously held every respect, and he had thought him a capable officer. In fact Mr. Shapecott had always treated him with the greatest courtesy and respect, and against Mr. Shapecott there was previously no complaint on his part, but this officer had told him an untruth. In the interests of his constituency he had endeavoured to get the ear of the Minister week after week, but was denied the opportunity. He rang up Mr. Shapecott on several days only to be told that the Minister was out. On one day he rang up several times and again Mr. Shapecott said the Minister was out; but happening to hear another member in conversation with the Minister over the telephone, he immediately rang up Mr. Shapecott and Mr. Shapecott replied that the Minister was not in and had not been in all day, and that he did not know where the Minister was. Other members

of Parliament were amazed when he told them of the occurrence. An officer who did this was not deserving of his position. Certainly the officer was wrong in giving the statement over the telephone. Had the officer spoken the truth he (Mr. Troy) would have been content, but he objected to being told a lie. Therefore he moved—

That the item be reduced by £334.

The MINISTER FOR MINES knew nothing whatever of the circumstances in connection with what the hon. member had said. The clerk had been eight years in the office, and was one in whom he had the most unbounded confidence. He was satisfied also that those who knew the officer appreciated him, and he could not understand the circumstances detailed by the hon. member, because he (the Minister) was always prepared to tell any hon. member he had no desire to receive that he was engaged, or something of that sort. The committee should not take the amendment seriously. Mr. Shapcott was a most useful officer especially in recess, and particularly during the Premier's absence when it was often necessary to have him back in the office at night. The officer had never refused to work overtime, and had never failed his Minister in that regard, but had not received sixpence overtime for all the work done for the department.

Mr. Heitmann: Then you are not paying him enough.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was not the fault of the Minister; the salary was fixed by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for Mount Magnet had no desire to censure the officer if the officer was not responsible; and after hearing the Minister, the hon. member would probably not go further so far as the officer was concerned, but would ask the Minister for an explanation in connection with the matter. Apparently someone was responsible. No doubt the circumstances detailed by the member for Mount Magnet were correct. Either the Minister had instructed Mr. Shapcott to tell the member for Mount Magnet that he

was not in his office, or Mr. Shapcott had taken the responsibility upon himself. The Minister had unbounded confidence in Mr. Shapcott, and so had every hon. member, but evidently Mr. Shapcott did as he was told to do. He was not the only public servant who did that sort of thing. Ministers instructed their clerks that they were not in to anyone. It was unfair that Ministers should ask those clerks to tell deliberate lies to members and other visitors.

The CHAIRMAN: The member must not say that Ministers did that.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was no use saying anything else.

The CHAIRMAN: The member must not say it.

Mr. SCADDAN: Would the Minister deny that they had not informed their clerks to do such a thing.

The CHAIRMAN: The present item was Item 6.

Mr. SCADDAN: Would the Minister say he had not informed his clerks to say he was out when he was in? Did the clerk act on his own responsibility in giving that message, or was it under instructions from the Minister?

Mr. BATH: The statement made by the member for Mount Magnet was correct, for he had heard a member ring up the Minister for Mines and speak to the Minister. The member for Mount Magnet then asked whether he had spoken to the Minister, and on the reply being in the affirmative, had rung up and was told the Minister was out and had been out all day.

Mr. JOHNSON: When a Minister desired to get through his work it was a practice for him to instruct his clerk that he must not be disturbed; but it was distinctly unfair and wrong for a Minister to say he could see some people and not others. If one member could get an interview with the Minister others should do the same. Why should the Minister have objected on the occasion in question to have the interview with the member for Mount Magnet? It was important that an interview should be given to that member, who represented not only his own dis-

strict but, as secretary and whip to the party, represented frequently other members as well; he should receive more consideration than any other member. On the contrary, however, the Minister refused to concede to that member the same recognition he had conceded to some other member. Mr. Shapcott deserved all the praise the Minister had given him, and it was wrong to condemn him because he carried out the Minister's instructions. During the Menzies election he was at the station, and was asked by another member what Mr. Shapcott was doing there, and was subsequently told that he was sent there by the Minister to see how many Labour members were going to Menzies that night. On that occasion several Labour members left Perth for Menzies, and Mr. Shapcott happened to be on the platform, taking particular stock of what was going on. The point was this, that the officer was evidently sent there by the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: He was not.

Mr. JOHNSON: He was sent there to watch and see what Labour members were going away. The confidential clerk of a Minister would be disloyal unless he carried out the instructions of his Minister. The Minister had no right to use the clerk to do work of this description. If he had a political objection to a particular member he should carry out such a duty himself. The clerk deserved the eulogy which had been spoken by the Minister, and at the same time it was not fair to place him in a false position.

Mr. TROY: There was no desire to be vindictive with regard to this officer, but it might be explained how the incident came about. In September last the Minister promised in connection with the Lennonville battery—

The CHAIRMAN: That had nothing to do with the item.

Mr. TROY: It referred to the Minister's clerk. When the House was in recess he (Mr. Troy) desired to find out from the Minister what decision had been arrived at with regard to this battery because the people affected were in an impoverished condition. Repeated in-

quiries for the Minister were made, and the reply always came that the Minister was not in. The clerk could not be blamed because it was known that he was acting under instructions, but it was a miserable plan when one had not the courage to do such a thing himself to delegate it to someone else. As Mr. Shapcott had been a victim of circumstances there was no desire to press the motion. With the permission of the House he would withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Item, Inspecting Surveyor and Chief Draftsman, £330:

Mr. HEITMANN: Was one person filling this position; was he connected with some other branch of the department?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Formerly there were two officers, Mr. Farlee who was draftsman and Mr. Breen who was inspecting surveyor. Mr. Barrie had been transferred to the Taxation Department and Mr. Breen was now carrying out the duties of both offices.

Item, Wardens, £4,088:

Mr. HEITMANN: There seemed to be a good deal of difference in the salaries paid to wardens. Would the Minister state what salary was being paid to the wardens of the Murchison district?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In his classification the Public Service Commissioner provided for one warden at a salary of £700. Warden Troy's salary was £700 but it had been reduced to £600. The reduction would be a gradual one. Of course, there were allowances there. Many of the wardens were having their salaries reduced.

Mr. Heitmann: Who is receiving £700?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Warden Finnerty; Warden Troy was next with £600.

Mr. WALKER: The Public Service Commissioner had been visiting some of the mining townships and making investigations at the wardens' offices. Was the proposal to reduce the salaries of wardens coincident with an intention to do away with certain courts in these goldfields towns?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The hon. member could rest assured that no proposition of such a nature was before the Government at the present time. The Commissioner was continually making recommendations, and had visited the various goldfields districts with the view of ascertaining whether all the offices were justified. No report in any shape or form had, however, been made to the Government. If there should be any attempt on the part of the Government to reduce the number of offices the hon. member would be informed as far as his own district was concerned.

Mr. Collier : You did not do that in my case.

Mr. WALKER : Mr. Jull had only just returned from Broad Arrow, and he (Mr. Walker) had received intimation that it was his intention, expressed at Broad Arrow, to make the recommendation. The recommendation had not yet had time to reach the Government. He was anxious that this recommendation should be nipped in the bud as early as possible. He was afraid that, supposing a resolution should be arrived at to take away the utility of the Warden at Broad Arrow, and he (Mr. Walker) was taken into the confidence of the Minister the confidence might be a confidence that might have no utility in avoiding a danger. The information might come too late.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : It would be impossible to give the hon. member any promise. The idea was that where it could be done with anything like reasonable expense justice should be brought to the people, rather than that a large expenditure should be forced on the people before they could get justice. The hon. member could rest assured that no action would be taken in his constituency which would not equally affect his own (the Minister's) constituency and that of the member for Mount Margaret ; nor would any action be taken without notification to the hon. member. Until the report was received from the Public Service Commissioner stating the reasons for making such recommendation, it would be impossible

for him (the Minister) to pledge himself to any definite action.

Mr. HEITMANN : While entertaining every respect for the Public Service Commissioner he thought the officer might have done better in his classification of the Wardens. In Warden Troy, the one Warden whose salary had been reduced, the State had an exceedingly fine officer. Warden Troy had worked himself up from the bottom rung of the ladder, and having been practically all his life in the service, now that he was getting on in years his salary was decreased, and his duties added to. The Minister for Mines had always shown his loyalty to those under him, but on this occasion he might have defended his officer better than he did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The classification applied to the position and not to the individual. He (the Minister) could speak just as highly as could Mr. Heitmann of the officer in question, yet when the position was classified, Ministers had no recourse but to come down to the salary fixed.

Mr. JOHNSON : It was wearying to hear the Government protecting themselves behind the contention that the Public Service Commissioner had recommended this or that. If the Government did not agree to the Public Service Commissioner's recommendation, then they should object. If the Minister had not agreed to it in this case, why had he not objected to it and refused to adopt it ?

The Minister for Mines : Did I say I objected to it ?

Mr. JOHNSON : That was all right, so long as it was clearly understood that the Minister concurred in the recommendation. It was not necessary for the Government to accept the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner. If in the instance mentioned by the member for Kanowna the Minister agreed to adopt the Public Service Commissioner's recommendation, then it would be idle for the member for Kanowna to attempt to move the Minister in the matter. Thus it would be seen that the sole responsibility in such a matter lay on the Minister himself.

Item, State Mining Engineer, £800 :

Mr. HEITMANN : It was about time the Minister gave an idea of what duties were performed by this officer. After reading many of the reports and examinations of mining fields made by the State Mining Engineer he (Mr. Heitmann) had come to the conclusion that Mr. Montgomery might be an ideal officer as a School of Mines man. As a matter of fact Mr. Montgomery was appointed after passing some severe examination in New Zealand, and particularly on account of his qualifications for dealing with copper. However, the office was altogether unnecessary. There were various officers who could do the work now being performed by the State Mining Engineer. Moreover, much of the work was done from the head office in Perth. Recently inquiries were made about a prospecting vote at Davyhurst, and the State Mining Engineer, without visiting the locality, deprecated the statements made by the prospectors, and said that the shaft had probably fallen in ; but this shaft was sunk through country that cost £10 a foot to sink through, so Mr. Montgomery's conclusion in that regard was very improbable. However, we should know what the duties of the officer were.

Progress reported.

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

The Council having disagreed to one amendment made by the Assembly, the reasons for the same were now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair ; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER : There seemed to be misapprehension in connection with the matter. Some thought this amendment introduced a new principle of legislation ; but, as a matter of fact, the wording of the amendment was exactly the same as a similar provision in the Mining Act. Even if it were inadvisable the principle of employing only white labour in Australia was generally

recognised. It was incorrect to think the amendment would in any way affect the pearling industry. Matters would go on just the same as before in connection with pearling. He moved—

That the amendment be insisted on.

Question passed ; the Assembly's amendment insisted on.

Resolution reported, report adopted ; and a Message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : As there is a possibility of my being away on Friday I propose moving the second reading of this Bill now in order that I may get the measure on without any unnecessary delay. I shall not occupy more than a few minutes, and if members object I shall not proceed. The Bill is exactly in the terms of the Act of last year. As hon. members are aware, it is necessary to give authority to collect the tax for the current financial year and to prescribe by a Bill of this nature the rates of the land and income tax. The Assessment Act provides the machinery and the method of collecting but it does not prescribe the rate in the pound. The rates prescribed in this Bill are exactly those which have been in force since the introduction of the measure in 1907, except that half rates only were collected for the first assessment. The same provision as Section 2 is included as appeared in the Act of last year, the object being to suspend the operation of Section 56 of the Assessment Act by which taxes are made payable in two moieties instead of one. The financial year for which the taxes are imposed commenced on the 30th June, and the basis upon which the taxes are collected ends in December of this year, therefore, it is impossible for the Commissioner of Taxation to collect a reasonable amount of the taxes by the 30th June, if the ratepayers are given the privilege of paying in two moieties. When the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill was before the House towards the end of 1907, no exception was taken to it on account of its permanent nature.

It will represent the views of the Government of the day on all questions in regard to the method to be adopted and the exemptions to be allowed in connection with the collection of the land and income tax, whatever might be the amount of those taxes decided upon by any future Parliament. When the Assessment Bill was passed objection was taken to it because it was asserted that in its present form these taxes pressed unduly on the small income earners of the State. The leader of the Opposition when speaking on the tax said, "The Government have introduced a measure of taxation which helps these people to do as they have done in the past, to shift the burden on to the working community." And again, "I guarantee that between 5,000 and 6,000 of the men employed on the Kalgoorlie mines will be assessed under this tax." Again, "Here it was proposed to raise £66 out of every £100 from incomes under £300 and only a little over 33 per cent. from incomes exceeding £300." That argument was used largely in view of the forecast made by the Commissioner of Taxation when the Bill was being discussed? This line of argument was generally adopted last year when the Taxation Bill was opposed on the ground that the incidence of the tax was not yet apparent. The idea evidently very largely prevailed that a large part of the money raised under the income tax was contributed by the earners of small incomes. We have before us the first report of the Commissioner of Taxation for the 18 months ended 30th June, 1909, and it very closely demonstrates that, in so far as these arguments are concerned, the fears were altogether groundless, for it shows without doubt that generally speaking the bulk of the taxes raised are obtained from those in the best position to contribute. It is shown that 76.2 per cent. of the amount raised by that tax was contributed by these in receipt of an income of £500 a year and upwards. This report enables us to get a fair idea of the incidence of the tax. As to the revenue collected during 1908-9, the land and income tax amounted to £71,716, of which £32,829 came from the land tax and

£38,889 from the income tax; of the total sum £62,479 related to the second assessment and £19,237 represented the arrears under the first assessment. The Commissioner of Taxation estimates that the revenue this year which will be collected from the 30th June under the third assessment, inclusive of the arrear under the first and second assessments, will be £70,000; namely, £33,000 land tax and £37,000 income tax. The arrears to the 30th June last were not so large as at the end of the previous financial year, hence the revenue estimated for the financial year is not quite so great as that actually collected during the previous financial year, namely, £71,716. Of the £70,000 for the current financial year £13,000 has been collected already. The figures as to the revenue expected to be received by the Commissioner are based upon the conservative side, for the result of values made through the State reveal the fact that they are much below those placed upon the properties by departmental valuers. In one estate the valuation has been increased by the present valuers by £12,000 against the unimproved value put in by the land owner. There is every prospect that the amount from the land tax will be very largely in excess of that forecasted by the Commissioner. The report of the Commissioner gives details showing the incidence of the taxes for the first and second assessments. I will draw attention to Table D, which shows the extent to which the incomes have been relieved from taxation. The general exemption of £200 when applied to incomes which exceed £200 remitted in incomes under the first assessment £18,561, and under the second assessment £26,839. Similarly a deduction of £10 for each child under 16 years of age relieved during the two years from taxation incomes amounting to more than £225,000. The abatement allowed by Section 17 of the Assessment Act, by which a deduction was made from income whenever the land tax was paid on the land which produced the income, had the effect of remitting during the year £6,746 to income, and it will be observed from the table that on the whole during the two years the incomes re-

lieved from taxation by the special exemptions amounted to nearly £4,900,000, and the incomes remitted by the exemptions amounted to £58,700, or on an average during the first assessment the remissions of income amounted to £2 3s. per taxpayer with income exceeding £200, and for the second assessment similarly an average of £4 8s. 2d. Reference to Table E of the Report shows that the taxpayers with incomes from £200 to £300 (representing 47 per cent. of the whole of the taxpayers) paid 6 per cent. of the income tax; taxpayers with incomes from £300 to £1,000 (representing 46 per cent. of the whole of the taxpayers) paid 44 per cent. of the income tax, and taxpayers with incomes exceeding £1,000 (representing 7 per cent. of the whole of the taxpayers) paid 50 per cent. of the income tax. These ratios agree very closely under each of the two assessments. The whole of the assessments for 1908 not having been completed when the figures were prepared the final result of the second assessment is not shown in the figures. A valuation of all the lands in the South-West district of the State is now being undertaken and will be completed by the end of next month, and available for the third assessment. The land tax will very largely exceed that anticipated. We have obtained the services of inspectors of conditional purchases in various districts. They are in a position to know the value of the land, while in the metropolitan area we have had the advantage of the services of an experienced officer of the Lands Titles Department, Mr. Hogarth, who is *au fait* with all matters connected with the subdivision of land and values in the suburban areas. We have also the services of other officers of equal experience, and as the result of the values we find that in nearly all cases, especially in those of country lands, the values have been increased very considerably. In New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand the legislation resembles that adopted in this State in regard to the Assessment Act being separated from the Act prescribing the rate of tax. In these three States as well as in Western Australia it is necessary to bring up

for approval of Parliament each year an Act prescribing the rate for the next financial year just as in the case of municipalities and road boards the rate in the pound to be levied comes up for revision by these local bodies once every year. In the remaining States, namely South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, the rate of tax is contained in the same Act or Acts as the one which prescribed the machinery provisions. It is always regarded as a distinct disability when customs tariffs are frequently altered that is to say, the inclusion of new articles or the exclusion of articles therefrom, has the effect of materially disarranging trade. Similarly any alteration of the system of assessing incomes for taxation would embarrass and give a great deal of trouble to taxpayers—especially business men. Under the present circumstances taxpayers keep their books in such a manner as to be able to furnish the returns required by the Taxation Department, and any alteration of the system of taxation would in many cases cause such taxpayers a great deal of trouble. An opportunity for annual revision of the rate of tax enables the Government each year, if thought advisable, to increase or decrease the rates for the next financial year according to the needs of the Treasury, and it is a distinct advantage to be able to do this without bringing up for discussion the many debatable questions which are to be found in the Assessment Act. Further it takes some years for the legal interpretation of the Act to be finally established on many difficult questions which can only be done by taxpayers appealing against assessments to the Court of Review, and such matters being decided either finally by the Court of Review or by a higher court on appeal. It necessarily takes some years for decisions to be given on all the questions which arise incidentally in the working of the Act, especially in regard to questions on which decisions have not been given in other places, and on questions where the Act in this State differs from the Acts in other States. There should be, so far as possible, uniformity in the method of taxation from time to time

apart from the rate imposed, and to bring up for revision the Assessment Act every year would be simply inviting alteration of an experimental nature in the incidence of the taxes which would prevent the results for one year being compared with the results for another year. The cost of the working of the Act would be greatly increased, and considerable embarrassment would be caused to taxpayers. After they thoroughly understood the Act for one year, the knowledge gained would be of no use to them in the preparation of their returns for the next year seeing that the Assessment Act or method of taxation might in the meantime be materially altered. Taxpayers have now become accustomed to the Land and Income Taxes, and philosophically comply, in most cases, with the requirements of the Act, and large numbers recognise that the taxes afford them an equitable means of assisting the revenue according to their ability. It is anticipated that during the coming year several questions will come up for legal decision by the Full Court or a higher court. When these decisions have been received it will be an opportune time to consider any necessary amendments which are shown to be advisable thereby; also when that time arrives it may be advisable to consolidate into one Act the machinery provisions for imposing Income Tax and Dividend Duty, the latter being clearly of the same nature as Income Tax. At present there is a discrepancy between the two; the income Tax is 4d. in the pound, whereas if one derives an income from an investment or shares, he has to pay 1s. in the pound. This is a matter which must be given consideration in the near future. I do not know that I can give hon. members more details, but should the occasion arise, I shall be pleased to do so at a later stage.

On motion by Mr. Bath debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.46 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 1st December, 1909.

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

QUESTION—CRIMINAL TRIALS, GOLDFIELDS.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Have any instructions been given to justices on the Goldfields North of Kalgoorlie to commit prisoners for trial at Perth instead of at Kalgoorlie? 2, Do the Government meditate giving such instructions? 3, If it is the intention of the Crown Law Department to change the venue of the following criminal trials from Kalgoorlie to Perth:—Dennis Maher, absconding bankrupt; Wilson, arson; Robustilli, murder. 4, If so, why?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, The matter has not been considered. 3, An order has been made changing the venue in the case of Rex v. Maher from Kalgoorlie to Perth. No such order has been made or applied for in the cases of Rex v. Wilson and Rex v. Robustilli. 4, In the case of Rex v. Maher, the trial was adjourned to enable additional documentary evidence from Ceylon to arrive and be made available. The venue was changed to Perth on order by the Judge after hearing counsel for the Crown, and the prisoner, for the purpose of avoiding a delay till March next. Maher's bankruptcy proceedings are suspended pending his trial, and several witnesses reside at Perth or Fremantle.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Registration of Crown leases granted before the commencement of the Act: