

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 2, Timber Workers.
- 3, Western Australian Aged Sailors and Soldiers' Relief Fund Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "by" in line 1 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—
 "Provided also that—(i) no aboriginal native of Australia, Asia (except British India or Ceylon), Africa or Islands of the Pacific (except New Zealand), or person of the half blood, shall be entitled to be registered unless he is a person who was registered as an elector prior to the thirty-first day of December, 1933, but the disqualifications created by this paragraph of this proviso shall not apply to any person who is a naturalised subject; (ii) no elector possessing more than one qualification within a province shall be thereby entitled to be registered more than once for that province; (b) adding the following paragraph at the end of the section:—'In this section "naturalised subject" means a person who has obtained a certificate of naturalisation under the laws of the United Kingdom, or under the laws of the Commonwealth, or any State of the Commonwealth, or under the laws of any of the British Dominions, and whose certificate of naturalisation is still in force and has been in force for at least twelve months before making the claim.'"

This Bill and the Bill we have just been considering are practically inseparable. The idea of another place, when the Bill was introduced there, was to extend the full franchise of this House to British Indians. As the Constitution now stands, a British Indian can only exercise the franchise of this House by virtue of his being naturalised and being a freeholder. My object is to enlarge the franchise by providing that any person qualified to be registered as an elector for the Legislative Assembly can be enrolled as an elector for this House pro-

vided he holds the necessary qualification as a holder of freehold property, a rate-payer, a business leaseholder, a Crown leaseholder, qualifications possessed by an ordinary citizen. The Constitution at present provides that no aboriginal native of Australia, Asia or Africa (not any of the islands of the Pacific) shall be entitled to be registered as an elector. I could never see any reasoning in that other than that when the Electoral Act was framed in 1907 the matter was overlooked. There is every justification for the amendment I have submitted.

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

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 5.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 23rd October, 1934.

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

QUESTION—STOCK ROUTE, NORTH-WEST WELLS.

Mr. WELSH asked the Minister for Works: In view of the very prolonged delay and the most urgent necessity for the work being commenced immediately, will he state the approximate date when the

Government propose to commence repairing the wells along the North-West stock route, ex Meekatharra?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: There has been no prolonged delay. The road board having refused to continue to maintain these wells, even though annual grants were made, I directed that the stock route be inspected. The report was received on the 4th September and is now under consideration. I will certainly not commence any work until the board has refunded the unexpended balance of the grants that have been made by the Government.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WHOLE MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. North and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Timber Workers.
 - 2, Western Australian Aged Sailors and Soldiers' Relief Fund Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 18th October.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.35]: I am sorry this Bill was not delayed until after we had disposed of the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill. We should then have had some idea of the Government's proposals for assisting those engaged in the wheat industry. I am also sorry that we have not before us the annual report of the Industries Assistance Board for last year. We have the previous year's report, but do not know what the transactions have been since that was issued. It is not easy to discuss intelligently a Bill of this nature without knowing upon what the board have been engaged during the past year. The Minister says it is not proposed to add to the activities of the board, but I understand that during the year, although very little new money has been found, a considerable amount has been re-advanced to those who are operating under the Act. During the last few years there has been very little need for this legislation, and the general

desire of members has been to remove it from the statute-book as early as possible. This year, however, I am afraid it will be extensively required. If reports are true concerning the northern parts of the State, most of the crops there have been damaged by rust. This has been disturbing not only the farming community, but the commercial people of Geraldton, and others. I have received copies of resolutions that were carried at Geraldton asking the Government to procure sufficient seed wheat from the area to make sure of crops being put in next year. I should like to know from the Minister whether anything has been done about that. If it is true that the damage has been so extensive that many farmers may not harvest even sufficient seed wheat, quite a lot of money will be required to assist them in that and other directions. I do not know how it is possible to go to their aid except through the Industries Assistance Act. The legislation we shall be dealing with next week makes no provision for any assistance of this kind outside the ordinary channels which have been allowed under the Act. The Minister might tell us whether it is proposed to find any new money under the Industries Assistance Act, and whether it is intended to give necessary assistance to those engaged in the industry. Although the Minister for Agriculture has come back from a visit to the eastern areas of the State, and has made glowing reports on the wonderful crops there, I tell him definitely there are very few good crops. Many farmers will not get off sufficient wheat to ensure their being able to carry on this year, unless better prices are obtained. In the eastern part of my electorate, and around Beverley and Pingelly, wheat crops have been badly affected. The same thing applies to the Lake Brown district. Further south the position is better.

The Minister for Works: There are many worse districts than yours for poor crops.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If that is so, the Government will have many problems to face. I do not know how assistance can be rendered to the industry except through this legislation. Perhaps the Minister will obtain reports from the Agricultural Bank officials showing what the actual position is, so that we may have an opportunity while the House is in session to find the necessary money with which to carry on those who will require assistance during the year. The Minister said it had been difficult to obtain com-

mercial credit for the miners' settlement, probably due to the restrictive legislation that has been passed during the last few years. If that is so, it will be difficult to obtain it for other settlers. The amount of advances to the miners' settlement has exceeded £2,000, and the Minister is asking for a continuance of the Act so that he may find an additional amount. He told us there were 69 operative accounts in the miners' settlement. I find from last year's report of the Industries Assistance Board that there were 85 miner settlers in the Southern Cross area who were operating under the Act. Perhaps the Minister will tell us if there is any reasonable chance of those men making ends meet. Year after year we have been pouring money into the district. If we do exceed the £2,000 allowed under the Agricultural Bank Act, and find additional money for those people, we shall only be building up accounts for the purpose of writing them down. It is time we took stock of what we are doing. It is no use pouring money continuously into this concern. We have had experience of the group settlement, where we spent millions of money and then boasted about writing down the properties. The people cannot continue doing that sort of thing.

The Minister for Lands: Under your administration—

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister had better not talk about that.

The Minister for Lands: I will talk about it later on.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I shall have something to say, and some figures to quote, too. The Deputy Treasurer has put up figures in a very concrete form showing where the money went.

The Minister for Lands: Bosh!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Are we going to do the same with the miners' settlement? It would pay handsomely to take those settlers off their blocks and keep them in Perth, rather than pay out £300 or £400 a year without any hope of getting it back. The Industries Assistance Board, in the last report we have, stated that very little new money had been found, but that the refund of proceeds amounted to £25,552. The amount of new money advanced last year was £1,028. The other money was made up of re-advances. Recently an investigation was conducted into the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board, and in

the report that was made the mistakes that have been occurring were pointed out. The Government now come along and ask that those mistakes be perpetuated and not rectified. I am anxious to help these people as much as possible, but we can only do so within the limits of the money that is available. I do not know how much will be forthcoming out of loan funds for the industry. The Minister said this was an avenue in which the Commonwealth Government might assist if they could find the money, but I am afraid we shall get very little help from that quarter to enable us to carry on the industry, if we are going to adopt the policy of advancing money for the purpose of writing down the indebtedness later on. It would be preferable, with the money that is available, to take these settlers off their blocks. It would cost the country less to do so, and we could direct the men into other avenues, or actually keep them out of work. I do not know what assistance they might get under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. They were certainly sent there to give them an opportunity because of the disabilities they had suffered arising from diseases incurred while working in the mines. I do not know what the state of their health is or what is the actual position at the moment. We cannot continue building up these debts under such circumstances.

Mr. Warner: You would not suggest taking them off their holdings when there is a chance of a rise in the prices of their products?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is all a question whether we can afford to keep these men on their holdings. If they have built up liabilities in excess of the £2,000 provided for under the Act, and the Minister tells us it is necessary for the Industries Assistance Act to be continued in order that the liabilities may be maintained and provision made accordingly, the position is pretty hopeless. I trust the Minister will delay the passing of the Bill until we see what it is proposed to do under the new legislation, and until we have the report of the Industries Assistance Board dealing with last year's operations. If there is a reasonable chance ahead of these men, I want them to get it, but, on the other hand, it seems a very bad business proposition just to make funds available under the Industries Assistance Act, with a view to writing

the amounts off later on. I shall not raise any objection to the passing of the Bill. I am sorry the Minister is not delaying it in view of the fact that he is to hand over the activities of the board, together with other undertakings, to the commissioners who, it is proposed, will be placed in control of the Agricultural Bank. I hope members will realise what we are doing, and will consider how far it is possible to find the money necessary to assist the settlers without continually writing off portion of their indebtedness.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [4.47]: It is a matter of great regret that it becomes necessary to continue this legislation from year to year. When it was initiated in 1914, the year of the drought throughout the agricultural areas, it was hoped that in the course of a very few years it would be possible to wind up the legislation, and that the settlers assisted would be carried on in the ordinary way as clients of the Agricultural Bank or clients of other financial institutions. Owing to the position with which we are confronted to-day, it would appear that there will be more necessity, unfortunately, for assistance to certain clients of the Agricultural Bank under this particular legislation than during the past year or two. We have had varying reports as to the state of the crops in the main eastern agricultural belt. I hope the report by the Minister for Agriculture is the correct one, and that the more pessimistic reports we have heard are not accurate. I know from authentic reports I have received, that the depredations of rust in the northern areas have been very bad. I am afraid there are many farmers in those districts who will not be able to carry on without assistance in some shape or form. I do not know whence that assistance can emanate unless it be from the Government under this particular legislation. It has been reported to me that one jute merchant in the metropolitan area, who trades mostly in the northern areas, has had cancelled more than 50 per cent. of his bag orders from those parts. That is a serious state of affairs. Several of the principal varieties of wheat in those areas are so badly affected by rust this year that great care will have to be taken to secure the provision of seed requirements for next year. Unless some assistance is rendered

those farmers, I am afraid they will not be able to carry on at all. I trust the Government at no distant date will make some announcement, through the Minister for Lands, as to what can be done for the farmers who have scarcely any harvest at all. Many men have grown good crops and, in the course of a week or two, the crops have disappeared. The rust has wiped them away just as though a bush fire had swept through the holdings. The Minister said the other day that there were 1,393 farmers carried on under the Industries Assistance Act. It is a great pity that the number should be so large. The liabilities at the 30th June, 1934, were given as £645,896, and interest owing £147,149. I am afraid that, under existing conditions, there is little prospect of those accounts being reduced this year. I do not know how the Minister will be able to collect the ordinary current interest, let alone arrears. I am afraid the farmers are in for a very difficult time, and that they will have to fall back on someone for assistance. I am wondering if this is not an opportune time for a decision to be arrived at with regard to the small percentage of farmers dealt with under this legislation who are not worth carrying on. There are a few square pegs in round holes, and those men have never made a success of their farming operations. Western Australia cannot afford much longer to carry on those men. It is not fair to the good farmers, nor is it in the interests of the State. The small amount the Government have available for assistance should be devoted to the good farmers. The inferior type should be weeded out, and the good men should reap the benefit of what assistance is available. It is with great regret that I am forced to agree with the Minister that nothing can be done at present to wind up this legislation, or until those farmers who are operating under its provisions are, by virtue of more fortuitous circumstances than obtain to-day, placed in a more satisfactory position.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [4.53]: I would not have risen to participate in the debate had it not been for the fact that my district is the one chiefly affected by the rust trouble. The Minister has stated that he does not intend accepting any new accounts under the Industries Assistance Act, but I think it will be found necessary

to provide some method of assistance for many of the farmers. Resolutions from the Geraldton Chamber of Commerce dealing with this matter have no doubt been read by the Minister. It is stated that, in view of the prevailing conditions, some organisation will be required to retain sufficient good seed wheat in the district for the requirements of the following season. In 1915, when there was a rust epidemic in my electorate, I had 600 acres of good crop but the greater part of it was reduced to a failure. This year somewhat similar circumstances exist. I notice that the W.A. Wheat Pool estimate the average crop in the northern districts at five bushels. When it is remembered that those districts have always returned the highest average for the State, members will appreciate what a difference the rust has made to the crops there. It has been said we are to receive a certain amount of financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Wilson: It has only been said.

Mr. PATRICK: If that assistance be granted, the effect of which will be to bring the return for wheat up to 3s. a bushel at the siding, it will be of no value to farmers who have no wheat to sell.

The Minister for Works: It could be distributed on an acreage basis.

Mr. PATRICK: That would be the only way in which it could be of assistance. The other way it has been suggested the assistance could be used, is in writing down past debts. That would be of no great value to farmers who require seed wheat for next year's cropping. It is of little use to them to write down past debts if they have no wheat with which to carry on. I hope the Government will find some way out of the present difficulty. It has to be remembered that in the northern districts in former years we used to grow varieties of wheat that were discarded on the recommendation of the Agricultural Department. Now this year we find those new varieties have suffered worst from the rust. In those circumstances, the department are morally responsible for some of the trouble experienced. If we had continued growing some of the varieties formerly used there, such as Gluyas, and Marshall No. 3, the effects might not have been so disastrous.

The Minister for Lands: But the department have been responsible for good as well.

Mr. PATRICK: That is so, but in the northern districts the farmers were encouraged to use new varieties that have not withstood the rust. Therefore we must place a certain amount of the responsibility at the door of the department. I trust the Minister will be able to provide some Government assistance for farmers in the districts I have mentioned.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—in reply) [4.57]: In the course of his remarks, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the miners' settlement, and said that there were 69 miners' accounts on the books of the I.A.B. He said there did not appear to be much use carrying on the settlement if there was no hope of success. There is always hope of success. The miner settlers are in no sense distinct from the other 1,300 settlers who have been carried on under the I.A.B. since 1915.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The miners' debt has been built up during a period of some five years.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can quote instances of settlers who have incurred liabilities with the bank amounting to upwards of £8,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But those liabilities have been incurred over a period of 20 years, not five years.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: What hope is there for men who in 20 years have built up such a load of debt? Am I to understand from the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition that the position of the 1,300 farmers also is hopeless? Why stress the 69 miner settlers, when there are 1,300 other farmers who have been under the board for a much longer term and whose liabilities are so much greater? I have not inspected the miners' settlement since last I was in office. From what I can gather, it seems to me that the settlement has slipped back a bit. The miners started quite well, but I am given to understand that a number of them have not been provided with plant. I am concerned to know why they have not been provided with plant during the past three or four years. It is perfectly hopeless to ask settlers to farm without plant, and the question arises as to why so many of these settlers were not provided with the equipment necessary if they

were to make progress. There may be reasons for it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Could they run sheep and stock?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but I was talking about plant.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If they could run sheep, it might help them a bit.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am told some of them have not water supplies, nor have any teams. I intend to find out how many could have been supplied with teams and were not supplied with them. They cannot be expected to make good if they are farming without equipment. I do not know of any farmer in the country who could succeed in those conditions; in fact, I am sure that none could. I do not know why they have no equipment, but I am going to investigate the position before apportioning the blame. Those settlers made a very fine start, but in my opinion they have slipped back during the last three years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They could not help slipping back in a year like last year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the Ghooli State farm is a very good indication of what that country is capable of producing. The result from that experimental farm shows that it is an excellent farming area when properly farmed.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is not the best of the land, either.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it has a mixture of land. The miners' settlement is, in the main, particularly good land, better than that at the Ghooli farm, but I am afraid the settlers have slipped back during the last three years, and I do not know what has been responsible for it.

Mr. Patrick: Even if they farmed well, could they make wheat pay at 2s. per bushel?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, they could not. In any event they cannot make good the way they are going now.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Some of them are not in the best of health.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is true. In addition to which, I am told, they have not teams nor equipment, which must be a great drawback. I do not know why they have not equipment, but I am going to make inquiries about that. We have to keep on with these men. The whole of the agricultural districts are being carried on to-day in the expectation that prices will

improve. Without that expectation, agricultural settlers would have no hope at all. The great majority of the people believe that prices will improve and that the present is merely an unhappy experience.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And a pretty costly one.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. But it must be remembered that when good times come again they may be followed once more by bad times. A settler cannot escape that kind of thing, unless he is very lucky. I hope this unfortunate experience will not last much longer, and that it will be followed by brighter times. The Leader of the Opposition referred to group settlements. I am not sure that it was not under his personal administration that the Government of the day put a number of settlers on holdings which, under my administration, had been abandoned. Although they were written down and eventually abandoned, they were sold again for the value of the buildings, and the settlers occupying them have received advances of up to £300 or £400. I find that one settler was offered a place for £400 and subsequently got an advance of £400. That is a policy I have always condemned, namely settling people on useless abandoned blocks. I am asked to give an opinion as to what the Government propose to do about the rust difficulty. Whenever a crisis occurs business men, men in commerce, want to know where the Government come in.

Hon. C. G. Latham: At all events, we should see to it that there is enough seed retained in the district.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think there will be enough seed. I do not think any settler will fail to get seed, probably more than seed. It would be premature for the Government to step in and say, "We are going to buy this or that," for when the time comes we might not have the necessary resources for the purpose; in fact we know that we have not. Certainly in the light of the rainfall the position is not as satisfactory as it might be. But this is not the first time we have had rust in the northern areas. We have all experienced rust; I, like others, have experienced it, yet we have all got sufficient seed, and this year also no doubt we shall get sufficient seed.

Mr. Patrick: There are individual settlers who will not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know who they are. I have had a look at the crops, and I think the settlers will get all the seed they want. I have asked for a report on the position, so that we shall have some facts to go upon. It is not being overlooked. It would be premature to say what ought to be done under this Act, but I do think that before resolutions are passed by various bodies people ought to harvest their crops, so that we might see what they get. Then we would know definitely the actual position. Some question has arisen as to whether it is advisable to sow wheat that has been harvested from crops affected by rust. Some people will say no. I remember that in 1915 they said yes. In 1915, 1916, 1917 and again in 1918, we all sowed rusty wheat and got crops from it. Personally, if my wheat has any substance in it I will sow it again. However, I am going to have the position investigated.

Mr. Patrick: It is a good thing to get out of it if the wheat is badly affected by rust.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The position will be investigated. I cannot say just what will have to be done; everything will depend upon the resources of the Government. I think the great majority of the settlers will have seed wheat and a bit to spare. I do not agree that the department is responsible for the settlers growing those wheats. Whenever the department thinks of something good and it turns out wrong everybody says the department is responsible. If we say grow more wheat, we are responsible, and if we say grow this or that variety, again we are responsible. But the settlers are all free agents. I as a farmer can please myself what I grow and so, too, can any other farmer. Those wheats which are now showing rust, previously gave us a great return, up to 10 and 11 bag crops.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: They increased the State's average by bushels per acre.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course they did. We have prided ourselves on them and their results. Wheat breeding by the department has been of material advantage to the farmers. Wonderful wheats have been produced.

Mr. Wise: This State is the luckiest of all in regard to rust.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have to thank the department for many benefits in regard to wheat, and we are not going

to abandon those varieties because in one year an unfortunate condition prevails. As for the Bill, the Agricultural Bank in future will be administered by new commissioners, and so we hope there will be no further necessity for a continuance of this legislation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1934-35.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 13th October; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister; Hon. S. W. Munsie in charge of the Votes.)

Vote—Chief Secretary, £13,867:

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.16]: The Minister representing the Chief Secretary should be able to give us some valuable information of the work of the several divisions. I should like to know whether hospital and financial emergency tax collections are having any effect on the membership of friendly societies. The Minister might also inform us whether a teacher has been appointed for the printing class at the Fremantle prison and whether, in addition to instructing in printing, ruling, and book-binding, the appointee is required to do sentry work.

The Minister for Works: There are very few lodgers in the institution now.

The Minister for Mines: There is no provision on the Estimates for such a teacher.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the teacher is required to do sentry work and those duties necessitate Sunday work, it is too much to expect of any man. I should like to hear how the Hospital for the Insane is faring in these bad times; whether the arrangement made some time ago for a supply of fruit for the inmates is being maintained or whether the patients are being deprived of fruit as part of their diet.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.19]: On the Moore River near Mogumber is a native settlement consisting of 12,000 or 13,000 acres, and unfortunately the whole of that country is poor sandplain. One of the difficulties experienced by the management is that of growing crops owing to the poorness of the soil. Recently an Agricultural Bank farm almost adjoining the settlement has become vacant. The farm contains some good country, and I urge the Minister to take steps to acquire the farm for the settlement. The superintendent of the settlement is a first-class farmer, and I know of no man in the State who could put that farm to better use. If it were acquired for the settlement, much of the produce needed by the inmates of the settlement could be grown there. It would be suitable for dairying and for raising fodder crops. I hope the Minister will give the matter consideration at an early date before the farm is acquired by anyone else. I understand that it is vacant at present.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [5.21]: I should like to direct the attention of the Minister to the need for undertaking survey work on the North-West coast. The situation that has developed at Onslow is rather alarming. Vessels are now making a practice of not approaching within ten miles of the roadstead. Until five or six weeks ago they anchored about half a mile from the shore. One steamer met an obstruction that pierced one of her plates and she had to go to Singapore for docking, and the "Koolinda" has twice grounded on the bank. I believe the practice of lying far off the port is to be adhered to until a survey of the locality is made.

The Minister for Mines: I believe a boat has been sent up there to make a survey.

MR. RODOREDA: I doubt whether that is correct. The boat that it was intended to use is occupied in lightering cargo and is available only when there is no lightering to be done. The conditions render it almost impossible for the lighter to be available because of the time occupied in handling cargo and waiting for tides in order to get to the jetty. The matter needs urgent attention as the lighters cannot effectively work a vessel anchored ten miles out. I have been advised that 6,000

bales of wool have accumulated at the port. The Government approached the Commonwealth authorities to make their survey ship available for the work, but were refused point blank. The Commonwealth survey boat had time to travel from Darwin to Fremantle in order that two or three ratings might be tried for alleged insubordination. Five or six weeks were wasted on the trip and then the boat had to return to Darwin. The survey work in hand at Darwin was ordinary routine work and would not matter if it were held up for 12 months. That indicates the treatment we receive from the Commonwealth. The conditions at Onslow are bad enough ordinarily, but with this additional handicap, it is becoming impossible to handle cargo. The master of the "Koolinda" has also refused to take his vessel into Balla because of having met an obstruction there. I have been informed by lightermen that the "Koolinda" was off her track at the time. The officials of the Harbour and Lights Department say there is not sufficient trade to warrant expenditure at that port. Since the master of the "Koolinda" refused to take his vessel into Balla, two other vessels have entered safely and lifted cargo. The "Koolinda" and other boats have been calling there for many years and had previously experienced no trouble. I consider that the master of the "Koolinda" should not have refused to call. He is there to help the people, but his main consideration seems to be to look after himself. He has not shown consideration for the people on the coast, especially at lighterage ports.

MR. MARSHALL: Who is the master of the "Koolinda?"

MR. RODOREDA: Captain Buckeridge.

MR. MARSHALL: At one time he was very good.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [5.26]: I regret that I cannot give detailed replies to the questions raised by members. The requests made by the member for Irwin-Moore and the member for Roebourne will be forwarded to the respective departments for consideration. I cannot inform the member for Swan regarding the questions raised by him. There is no item on the Estimates and no reference in my notes to the probable effect of the hospital tax on

the membership of friendly societies. A report has been tabled, however, and the hon. member may find the information there. Regarding gaol printing, I do not know that there is any need for an instructor other than a warder who is always on the job. For all the printing that is done, he is capable of giving the necessary instruction. The number of persons detained in mental homes last year was 1,331, of whom 872 were males and 459 females. At Point Heathcote there were 82 patients, 41 of each sex. It is noteworthy that the inmates of mental institutions represent one to every 331 of the population, which makes Western Australia the second lowest of all the States.

Mr. Sampson: Our proportion has increased during the last year or two.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not a bad record. The various points raised will be brought under the notice of the Chief Secretary.

Item, Correspondence Despatch, £327:

Mr. SAMPSON: Will the Minister inform me what saving has been effected by the correspondence branch compared with what the expenditure would have been had all correspondence gone through the post?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot give the hon. member the information he seeks. The department was established in 1914 to save money on correspondence, if possible, and to give quick despatch to communications between departments within the metropolitan area. During the past year its operations have extended to Esperance, Waroona, Yarloop, Coolgardie and Wiluna. Arrangements have now been made with the Railway Department for the establishment of this service in many other country centres.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Aborigines, £11,438—agreed to.

Vote—Registry and Friendly Societies, £9,771:

Mr. SAMPSON: I still think we should be afforded information in respect to the effect of the hospital taxation upon friendly societies. When a tax of this nature is imposed, it is likely to result in a decrease in the number of members of these societies. I hope such is not the case, but I would like

information on the subject. What effect has the hospital tax had upon friendly societies? Has not the depression cast a heavier burden upon them as well as upon hospitals?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the depression on this question.

Mr. SAMPSON: It must have had an effect upon friendly societies, which do so much good in the community.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Gaols, £25,939:

Mr. SAMPSON: I regret that the Minister is not in touch with these votes. I understand that an instructor has been attached to the gaols for some time past. The late Mr. Edwards was an excellent official and a first-class tradesman. When he died, Mr. Alford took his place, but subsequently vacated the office. I disagree with the Minister when he says that a warder has filled the position. It has not been the duty of a warder, in the strict sense of the term, to act as instructor, although I am advised that the instructor is expected to spend part of his time on sentry work. If this official is required to work sometimes on Saturday and Sunday, life is being made altogether too strenuous for him. It is sufficiently distressing to be in the Fremantle prison for any length of time without having a lot of extra work to do.

The Minister for Employment: We will take your word for that.

Mr. SAMPSON: No doubt the Minister knows something about it. An instructor should not be called upon to act as a sentry. I hope the Minister will see that only reasonable duties are expected of the instructor, such as would be assigned to a man in an ordinary factory.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbour and Light and Jetties, £19,477—agreed to.

Vote—Lunacy and Inebriates, £99,209:

Mr. SAMPSON: Will the Minister give me some information with respect to the rations issued to the inmates of these institutions? In the stock world, a balanced ration is required. It is important that the inmates of our hospitals should get fruit. Many years ago, several acres of fig trees were planted at the Hospital for the Insane at

Claremont. I should like to know whether these have been cared for, and whether the patients are receiving the fruit.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: I do not know anything about the fruit trees. For the last 12 months more vegetables and other produce have been grown at the Claremont Asylum for the benefit of the inmates than at any other time in its history. Not only has sufficient been grown for their own requirements, but a good deal has been supplied to other institutions.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Observatory, £1,583—agreed to.

Department of the Minister for Mines (Hon. S. W. Munsie, Minister):

Vote—Mines, £112,533:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [5.43]: I am pleased to be able to report that last year not only was the progress continued in respect to the output of gold, but there has been a definite increase compared with the previous year. I doubt whether the figures for the current year will show as great an increase over the output of the year just closed, but there will still be an increase over the previous year, indicating steady progress in the industry. It is easy to explain this situation. Last year saw the completion of two very up-to-date treatment plants. Naturally the companies concerned did their utmost to provide the greatest output they could get, with the result that for the year the increased output was considerably above that of the year before. This year, the companies are continuing in the same good way and are slightly increasing their output. The new plants, however, have not had time this year to make themselves felt in relation to the output. The production for the third quarter of the current year has been in excess of the production for the third quarter for many years past. I confidently anticipate that that feature will be repeated in this year, 1934. If it is, we shall be in a highly favourable position as to output of gold. Seeing that the industry has done so much for Western Australia, and indeed for the whole Commonwealth, it seems worth while, even at the cost of iteration, to give the figures of

Western Australia's gold production. The aggregate gold production of this State up to the 30th September, 1934, is—

Fine ounces.	Par Value.	Australian Currency.
40,485,766	£171,972,583	£181,788,829

In 1930 our gold output was 416,369 fine ounces; in 1931, 510,572 fine ounces; in 1932, 605,561 fine ounces; and in 1933, 637,307 fine ounces. The increase in 1931 over 1930 was 94,203 fine ounces; in 1932 over 1931, 94,989 fine ounces; and in 1933 over 1932, 31,746 fine ounces. For the first nine months of this year the output has been 483,696 fine ounces, of a par value of £2,054,613, or in Australian currency £4,097,480. If we assume an equivalent production for the last quarter of this year, we can add to those figures 120,924 fine ounces, of a par value of £513,653, or in Australian currency £1,024,370. This would give us for the year 1934 a production equaling 604,620 fine ounces, of a par value of £2,568,266, or in Australian currency £5,121,850. That is on the present value of gold. My personal belief is that the price of gold will go still higher. I have reasons for making that statement, but there is no necessity to express them here. I do not mind saying that one of my reasons is the turmoil in Europe. The mere thought of any nation going to war is sufficient to make all nations endeavour to acquire as much gold as possible. I believe that if there should be another war of any magnitude, no country would supply any other country with materials unless they were paid for in gold. Every nation is seeking gold to hoard. Therefore I believe that the price of gold will go still higher.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: The nations will borrow from one another.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: It is not customary to lend gold.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: The nations will lend it to fight one another.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: Unquestionably mining investments in Western Australia have proved fairly profitable during the last 12 months. I acknowledge that there is a boom, and that a great deal of money is being subscribed for company flotations; but the actual dividends paid by established mines during the year ended 31st

December, 1933, total £534,681, comprising—

	£
Lake View and Star	270,000
Great Boulder Proprietary	65,625
Sons of Gwalia	48,750
Boulder Perseverance	37,438
South Kalgurli Consolidated	31,250
Associated Gold Mines	29,768
Golden Horseshoe (New) Ltd.	27,500
North Kalgurli (1912)	18,750
Princess Royal	5,600

In addition to these figures, the South Kalgurli Consolidated Ltd. paid a bonus of £31,250 and made a return of capital to the same amount, £31,250. These amounts, added to the dividends already quoted, show a profitable return to investors of £597,181. Again, many of our mines are only now beginning to reach the dividend-paying stage—North Kalgurli and Wiluna, for instance. There has been a fairly large increase in the number of men employed in the industry. The exact number employed is not readily ascertainable, though the department have asked for returns from the mining registrars throughout the State. It is easy enough to arrive at the actual number of men employed on wages, as each employer has to furnish a list of the men so engaged. However, there are thousands of men working in partnership—two men or perhaps four men working on a show. Such men are not included in any wages sheet. Up to the end of March last there were 10,730 men employed on mines above and below ground, besides 295 known to be working on alluvial gold. These figures give a total of 11,025 men. Thus there are fully 11,000 men now directly interested and employed in the mining industry, whereas three years ago the corresponding total was less than 5,000. This shows what the mining industry has meant to Western Australia and its people. I will go further and say that within the next 12 months the total number working in the industry will be at least 1,000 greater.

Mr. Marshall: On the Murchison alone there will be that increase.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the increase there will be quite as great as that figure, although I hope the hon. member will be proved right.

Mr. Marshall: There is not much doubt about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If we get another 1,000 men employed on the

Murchison, there will be an increase of at least 2,000 in Western Australia as a whole. The more the merrier. If we can find profitable employment in the mining industry for that additional number of men, all the better for the men and all the better for the State. As regards the prospecting scheme inaugurated some 18 months ago, I am more than satisfied with the results up to the present. The actual amount of money returned to the Treasury has not been too great, but nevertheless the scheme has meant a wonderful benefit to our people, and especially to our young men. There were in Western Australia hundreds of young men, particularly in the metropolitan area, without any experience whatever of mining, and with, seemingly, no possible outlook. There were no jobs offering, except for an odd one here and there. If a vacancy was advertised in the Press, there would be 60 or 70 applicants for the job.

The Minister for Works: Sometimes hundreds.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know that an advertised vacancy for an ordinary unskilled labourer in one instance produced 70 applicants, and in another 80. I can state that from my own personal knowledge. The Mines Department and I were criticised because, it was said, we had sent men without experience out prospecting. Let me frankly admit that we sent out hundreds of young men, and probably over 1,000, who were without experience. Wherever it was possible, though, for us to do so, we sent out an experienced man with a couple of inexperienced young fellows. We did our best to observe that rule, irrespective of the home town of the young fellows. I freely acknowledge that we were beaten in some instances. We were told all manner of tales as to mining experience. In various instances we found that supposedly experienced men, when they got on the job, were incompetent. I do not complain of that. More power to young men who would do everything possible to achieve some good for themselves. They are the class of men who, in my opinion, eventually make good. They want to do something for themselves. That being so, I am even proud that in some instances we were beaten. The officers of the department did their utmost to ensure that one man of experience went with every party.

Mr. Marshall: It is a pity you did not apply Section 66 of the Police Act to some of those fellows!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In several instances experienced men were not available. The total number of prospectors assisted since the inception of the scheme is 2,992. The number of men receiving assistance, up to four days ago, is 1,000. Members may ask how the difference of 1,992 is accounted for.

Mr. Warner: Have they made good?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not all of them. Many of them have made good in two ways. Many of them are accounted for by the fact that after gaining some knowledge on the field, they were able to obtain work in various avenues. Hundreds of them have done that, and I do not object to it. The prospecting scheme was inaugurated for the purpose of providing these men with an outlook in life, and to get them away from the city, where there was no hope of their securing work. At least 1,000 of them have got work. A percentage of the men did not meet with success and, becoming disgusted, returned within a month or two. However, the crushings put through by men who have participated in the scheme—I am not talking about those who obtained help and paid back their sustenance—totalled 12,550 tons, and the results of the crushings gave 5,100 fine ounces. I regard that as an exceptionally fine performance. People said that we sent out men with no experience, and yet they have been able to produce that much gold. Then the men who were assisted, but have since been able to carry on by themselves, put through 5,000 tons for a return of 2,400 ounces. These figures give a total of 17,550 tons for 7,500 fine ounces of gold. That is a fine performance, something of which we ought to be proud. The amounts refunded to the department by men who were successful totalled £6,005 to the end of September last, and the gross expenditure on the scheme to that date was £58,368, representing a net expenditure of £52,363. Estimating the value of gold at £7 10s. an ounce, which is a low average—it would average much more than that since the scheme has been in operation if we included present values—the gold produced by these men represents £56,250, which has gone into circulation. Although the Government

have incurred an expenditure of £52,363, we have a fair quantity of assets yet. Some of the equipment has worn out, but a considerable portion of it is still of value to the department and represents an asset for the money spent. But when we have £56,250 worth of gold produced, as against a net expenditure of £52,363, members will agree that the scheme has been successful. When we realise that over 400 men who were, practically speaking, down and out, have been sent out under the scheme and have made good, have paid back the sustenance they received from the Government, and, on top of that, have produced 5,000 tons of ore for a return of 2,400 ounces, and have repaid to the department no less than £6,005, what the scheme means will be appreciated. But that is not the end of the achievement. Those men have established themselves and are prepared to go on with the work. In two instances I know of, men have given options over their shows and one man received £7,000 in cash. The scheme has given these men an outlook in life, and it has proved a godsend to them, besides being, in my opinion, a godsend to the Government and to the country. The majority of the men who went from the metropolitan area would have had to receive sustenance from the Government for which they would give nothing in return, and in many instances they were becoming almost demoralised. It is a godsend to the community that the scheme has panned out so well.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do you intend to send out any more men now?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not prepared to say what we shall do until we can secure some definite result from the Loan Estimates. When I am in that position, I am confident that we shall be able to send out some more men.

Mr. Cross: You should send out 500 more.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is a good occupation for young men.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some time ago I offered to send more men out, and left it open for one week. I was prepared to provide for between 300 and 400 men, and we had 890 applicants. It will be seen, therefore, that there are still a good many young men who are prepared to accept the conditions, and I hope we

shall be able to do something more in the near future.

Mr. Piesse: Can you tell us what proportion of the men assisted were married?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I have not those details. I gave the figures last year but I have not the present percentage of married and single men respectively. As to the gold mining industry generally, that is not all this State has done to assist. For many years past there have been men who have discussed the position regarding the north of Western Australia and of Australia itself. It has been stated that those parts represent a menace to the Commonwealth. Personally I do not believe it; I say that quite candidly. The people have referred to the large empty spaces there, and regard them as a menace. People have talked about the wonderful potentialities of the North and what it is possible to do there. Despite that fact, during all these years no one has been able to place a concrete scheme before us to indicate what could be done in the North. The Commonwealth Government, together with the Western Australian and Queensland Governments, have decided to carry out an investigation to ascertain what possibility there is for developing the mineral areas of the North, and the extent of those areas. At a conference I attended in Melbourne, the three Governments concerned agreed that £150,000, to be spread over a period of three years, would be made available for the purpose of carrying out an aerial geophysical and geological survey of Northern Australia. Of that amount the Commonwealth Government are to find £75,000 and the Western Australian and Queensland Governments £37,500 each. That scheme is in operation now. An executive committee has been appointed and two conferences have been held. It was agreed that, first of all, an observational air survey should be made to ascertain the most likely localities where a complete aerial survey should be undertaken. That observational survey has been completed, and the aeroplane landed back in Melbourne yesterday. The idea is to secure an equal area, if possible, in each of the States and the Northern Territory, and to select the most likely 10,000 square miles of country in the north of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Northern Queensland for the

purpose of having an aerial photograph taken of the country. After that work is carried out, the photographs will be examined by geologists and geophysicists on the ground. I was kept in touch with the progress of the work every third day from the time the 'plane left Cloncurry, even when the observations were made in Queensland and the Northern Territory. I have a considerable amount of detailed information regarding the observations made in Western Australia, but I do not think it necessary to read the reports because they are fairly technical and provide descriptions of the various rocks and formations sighted. It is not the intention of the Government to carry the survey right up to the Kimberleys. The 10,000 square miles in this State will be lower down, and I may just as well explain the reason for that. There is supposed to be a large belt of mineral country in the Kimberley areas, but at present it represents one of the reservations of the Western Mining Corporation. I could not see the advisability, or necessity, for the Government surveying that territory, seeing that we know, for a positive fact, that the company intend surveying the whole of it. Under the concession the corporation obtained from the State, the Government are to receive a complete aerial map of all air surveys made by the company in Western Australia. To date the company have not derived any direct benefit from the air survey, and they have not got their plant complete, nor has their geologist gone over the area as a result of the aerial survey. The map is being compiled, and I have had opportunities to inspect it during its preparation. When it is completed and made available to us, the map will be worth tens of thousands of pounds to this State.

Mr. Marshall: I hope you are right, but I have no confidence in that sort of thing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps I could say that, at the start, I had probably less confidence in it than even the member for Murchison. If the member for Murchison could have the opportunity of perusing the map and could hear the experts discussing it and pointing out various phases, I think even he would be satisfied that there are big possibilities in aerial surveys. The map will be the property of the State. The territory that will be surveyed by the Government will probably be from Marble Bar

and the Nullagine up to the Ashburton River. That is as far as I know at present. I do not know the exact locality, but in all probability 10,000 square miles of that part of the State will be selected for the aerial survey. The increase in prospecting activities has given a wonderful impetus to the operations of the State battery system.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The results from the State battery system are particularly interesting. They suggest that when the new mines reach the production stage the increase in the State's gold yield will be very marked. I anticipate that this year the State batteries will handle a greater tonnage than ever before in their history. The estimated yield for the financial year ended the 30th June last, including premiums, was £516,950, or approximately 10 per cent. of the total value of the State's production. Making a comparison over the last few years, in 1928, with mining at its lowest ebb, the yield was only £72,931, whereas last year it was more than seven times as great as in 1928. No new batteries were erected last year, but all batteries were kept fully employed. Two erection officers are continuously employed re-modelling and increasing the efficiency of existing plant. A further five-head is nearing completion at Kalgoorlie, with provision for still another five-head. There are 21 State batteries under full departmental control, and four additional batteries are leased by the State. A number of privately-owned batteries also have been put into commission and cartage subsidies applied to nearly all of them. No less than 90 per cent. of prospectors' ore has been brought by cartage subsidy within reasonable distance of a treatment plant. A complete new tailings plant has been erected at Payne's Find, where the tailings are refractory and low-grade. Twenty additional vats have been added to existing tailings plants, with a capacity of 600 tons per week. Tailings treatment was persevered with during the winter months. It was not altogether economical, but we were getting behind with the tailings treatment and so, where possible, we worked right through the year. That increased our costs a little, but it was attempted with a view to enabling prospectors to obtain premium payments at

the earliest possible date. Additional tailings plants supplied during the year give expectations that batteries will be well up with the treatment of accumulated tailings by next winter. An additional well was brought into commission at Peak Hill to augment the existing water supply. Crude oil engines were supplied to several batteries for pumping, these replacing old petrol-driven engines. Each of the State batteries has been completely lit by electric light. When I took over office on the last occasion I made a trip through the goldfields, and at every centre I met a deputation from the Prospectors' Association requesting that the batteries should be better lit. In the majority of cases they were lit simply by hurricane lamps, which is not an altogether satisfactory lighting for the working of three shifts at State batteries where our customers are putting through their ore. So, having regard to the increased activity in the industry and the increased revenue received by the department, I decided that every battery should be supplied with electric light, and that has been done for all the State batteries. Weighbridges have been erected at Laverton and Sandstone, and most plants are now thus equipped. We have also established a fitting shop at the Kalgoorlie State battery. Another alteration beneficial to the prospector which has been made during the 12 months is that the Government increased the tonnage on which tailings have been purchased from 85 per cent. to 90 per cent. Of course the conditions of the State battery employees have been improved, and they are now back to the 44-hour week instead of the 48-hour week they were working previously. The result of State battery operations for the year ended 30th June, 1933, as compared with the previous year was as follows:—Milling, 95,107 tons as against 79,745 tons; tailings treatment, 87,223 tons as against 66,351 tons. Each year shows an increased tonnage treated, and also increased tailings. The figures show an increase for this year's comparison, as follows:—Milling 2,179 tons, tailings 3,080 tons. That was the increase last year over the previous year. The total production from State batteries since the inception of the system to the 30th June last was, milled 1,805,781 tons for 1,588,194 ozs. Tailings treated have been 1,120,998 tons, for a yield of 241,606

ozs., making a total value of £7,171,901. Apart from gold production the State also, during part of that time, treated tin ore at Greenbushes. As a result black tin was produced to the value of £93,833, and residues £572. The total value of the system from all sources therefore aggregates £7,266,307. To the end of 1933 the estimated value of the premium on gold treated at State batteries amounted to £466,539, and to the end of June last approximately another £115,510 can be added. That is a very satisfactory result from the State batteries. For many years those batteries had to draw largely on Consolidated Revenue. They were never inaugurated in the belief that they would be a payable proposition directly. They were instituted more for the purpose of testing fields in the interests of the mining industry and to give prospectors a chance to test the various mines. There has also been a fairly big increase in the activities at the Government laboratory; with the increased activity in the gold mining industry the laboratory has been exceptionally busy. We have done more sampling this year, both at the School of Mines and at the laboratory at Kalgoorlie, than ever before during the last 17 years. I had intended to say a good deal in regard to mining reservations, but in view of the motion moved by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) I will reserve all that for my comments on that motion. So I have little more to say on the Mining Estimates. I hope and trust that the improvement which has been going on for the last three years will continue. If it does, the mining industry will almost solve our unemployment difficulty. My ambition from beginning to end is to offer, where possible, facilities for the prospector; but the main object I have in view is to get capital into the country for the purpose of finding profitable employment for the average man. In doing that we are on the right track. I have pleasure in submitting the Mines Estimates for 1933-34.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [7.40]: In my opinion the items under this heading of expenditure will probably be the best investment to which the revenue received during the year can be put. Some of those items cannot be increased, particularly those which refer to the salar-

ies of officers who, under the Government, have responsibilities in the mining industry relating to the conditions of the men working in the mines. It is always a great incentive for a man to do his work thoroughly that he shall receive an adequate remuneration commensurate, not only with the responsibilities of his position, but also with the knowledge he has had to acquire in order to attain that position. In my opinion many of our officers with those responsibilities are underpaid. That is indicated by our finding that we are losing some of our best men, and that we have difficulty in securing qualified inspectors for the remuneration which the Government offer them. The figures given by the Minister with reference to production in the industry and the value of that production illustrate that we have in the mining industry a prosperity in marked contrast to every other industry. We realise that that prosperity is largely due to the increased value in currency terms of the gold production, but when we take into consideration the vast inflation that occurred during the war period, and the vast amount of debts contracted in terms of the inflated currency, the question arises whether the price we are receiving for our gold is the correct value for the production. What should be the price of a commodity such as gold, a commodity that is not consumed, that is dug out of the mines by miners at the risk of their lives, and, after being sampled in bullion, is placed in another hole in the vaults of the banks? We are told there is a scarcity of gold in the world, that there is insufficient gold to finance the exchanges of industry. If there is a scarcity of a commodity for which there is unlimited demand, what should the price of that commodity be if the price were not artificially controlled? Since many nations have gone off the gold standard and since their currencies are not now tied to that standard fixed by Act of Parliament determining the weight of the sovereign and the fineness of the gold content, industry everywhere has been stimulated. The further they have departed from the gold standard, the greater has been the productivity and activity in every industry. Does not that indicate that the measure of stagnation still existing in industry, notwithstanding the departure from the gold standard, is due to the fact, not that the price of gold is too high, but that it is not

high enough? During the last four or five years the world could not have stood up to a perpetuation of the pre-war valuation of gold and debt in terms of the currency. The maintenance of gold as a basis of exchange—it is still the measure of all value—has been made possible only by expanding the value of gold in terms of the currency and artificially correcting the amount of debt that a given quantity of gold would liquidate. Through such expansion artificially controlled, national and individual indebtedness has been brought within bearable limits, but fixed claims in the shape of debts still vastly exceed in terms of useful commodities the value that attached to them when they were incurred. It is through the use of gold as a basis of currency and through the control of gold that the industrial conditions and welfare of the people have been controlled, and that the people are coerced and compelled to endure conditions that are not commensurate with the measure of the indebtedness they are rightly entitled to assume in the terms of commodities. Because of that we are to-day confronted with poverty and unemployment, and every industry in languishing. We congratulate ourselves upon the fact that gold in the terms of currency is twice its former price, but its price in the world to-day, wherever it is expressed, is governed by certain irresistible economic conditions that have forced up the price in the terms of currency, and have compelled the measure of justice that respective Governments have meted out to debtors. Thus we find in France that gold is five times its pre-war currency value, and it has less evil influence on the economy of the country than has manifested itself throughout the British Empire. Not until gold in the British Empire is five times its price in sterling as compared with the pre-war price will debtors and creditors with debts expressed in terms of inflated currency get justice, or industries now languishing experience a revival as industries producing essentials to existence. The Minister has told us of the vast quantity of gold produced in this State. According to the mining report, the quantity of gold exported and minted in 1932 was 605,561 fine ounces valued at £2,572,260, while in 1933 the figures were 637,207 fine ounces valued at £2,706,683 calculated at £4 4s. 11.45d. per ounce. Consequent upon the increase in the

price of gold, producers received an additional £1,831,383 in 1932 and £2,179,571 in 1933. Nearly double the standard value was received during the year 1933. The increase in the price of gold has brought lodes of much lower value into the profitable zone of mining. The average value of the ore mined in 1933 fell to 34s., compared with 38s. in 1932, calculated on the gold standard basis. We have reason to congratulate ourselves that in this State is a vast auriferous area from which we can produce such large quantities of gold. There is reason for congratulation also on the assistance that gold production has afforded towards financing government, towards creating employment in the State, and generally towards relieving economic difficulties. But there is another side to the picture of gold mining. I refer to the conditions that prevail in the industry. While we may congratulate ourselves upon the vast amount of production and the large number of men employed in the industry, as well as the avenues it has opened up for new employment, the industry nevertheless is of a very hazardous nature. In that respect it is not altering. Statistics bear out that the hazards in the gold-mining industry are as great to-day as ever they were. The report of the Mines Department shows that during last year there were 22 fatal accidents in mines, of which 21 occurred in gold mines, and the verdict in each of the 21 cases was that no blame was attachable to anyone. Those fatal accidents in the gold-mining industry were either preventable or inevitable. If we are to be guided by statistics and by the verdicts of coronial inquiries, we can come to no conclusion other than that they were seemingly inevitable. We can say, therefore, that the inseparable characteristic associated with the production of gold in this State is that more than two men in every 1,000 employed in the industry will lose their lives each year. More than two men in each 1,000 employed in it this year are either dead or will be dead as a result of fatal accidents during the year. The accident death rate has not altered in the last five years. In 1929 it was 2.13, when there were fewer men employed in the industry than now. In 1933 the death rate was 2.06. As the number of men employed increases so does the fatal accident rate increase. In 1929

5,159 men were employed in the mining industry, and 11 fatal accidents occurred during that year. In 1933, 10,690 men were employed in the industry, double that of 1929, and 22 fatal accidents occurred, or double the number in 1929. The serious accident incidences of the industry show the same comparative results. In 1932 when 8,695 men were employed in the industry, 380 accidents occurred. In 1933 when 10,690 men were employed 546 serious accidents occurred. This serious and fatal accident rate raises the question whether these accidents are avoidable or inevitable. We should at least strive to make them avoidable. To that end the shift bosses and foremen employed in the industry should give evidence of their qualifications for the positions, and show that they can instruct men to come here and go there. Experience no doubt is the best school in which such men can qualify, but some responsible officials in mining today, holding positions in which they can direct men into places which possibly endanger their lives, have not even qualified in the school of experience. I know of one man who was a shift boss in the industry, whose previous experience was gained in the cooking department of the Great Western Railway. It is a question that should seriously be considered, that of the qualifications of shift bosses having power of direction.

The Minister for Mines: I am already doing that by amending the regulations which provide for the qualifications.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is long overdue. If the fatal and serious accident rate in mining is inevitable, and cannot be avoided by putting qualified men into positions of control, those men who face the hazards of the industry, who work in it, have not had the hazards recognised in the remuneration they receive. Another aspect of the gold mining industry, and one that is of very serious consequences for those employed in it, is that of dust and ventilation. There has not been much improvement in that connection. The annual report of the Mines Department on that subject for last year discloses the following—

The careful attention given by our staff to the ventilation and sanitation of the mines during the year has resulted in improved working conditions. The improvement effected in ven-

tilation has been due firstly to getting the air under better control, and secondly to the regulation of firing times. All development ends are ventilated by means of blowers as now required by our regulations. These blowers and the regulation of firing times have materially assisted in keeping the working faces free from dust and film. Nevertheless, Mr. W. Phoenix, our senior inspector of mines, has drawn attention to the fact that the volume of air passing through the mines at Kalgoorlie in recent years has been decreasing rather than increasing, whereas on the Rand Mines the volume of air entering the mines is now $2\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than in 1926. He quite rightly urges that the principal deep mines should now give serious consideration to the question of increasing ventilation by mechanical means.

This statement is an indictment of the mining industry and those who control it in this State. I do not know that it is not an indictment of the mining regulations. Apparently they do not provide for improving the conditions in this connection. I know that some reference to the subject is made in the mining regulations. In each place in which it is referred to it is merely stated that an adequate supply of pure air shall be provided. It says this air shall be made to circulate from and into shafts, winzes, levels, underground stables and all working places of such mines, and travelling ways to and from such places, in such quantity as will maintain the same in a fit state for working and passing therein. There is nothing definite about that regulation. The question whether an adequate amount of air is passing through will always be a contentious one under such conditions. There will be differences of opinion as to whether an adequate amount of air is passing through. From personal experience I do not know whether this adequate supply of air is maintained or not. The report of the inspector can lead one to no other conclusion than that in South Africa the matter has been dealt with more effectively than it is here. If we look at the regulations applying to South Africa in connection with air, we find that the provision is very much more definite than it is in this State. These regulations were in force in 1926, the year referred to by Mr. Phoenix in his report. They say—

In every mine included in the list of mines framed under Section 2 of Act No. 19 of 1912, the quantity of fresh air supplied for ventilation purposes underground shall be such that for every person employed underground not less than 30 cubic feet of air shall be sup-

plied per minute during the full period of the 24 hours.

Mr. Phoenix tells us that since that date when these regulations applied in South Africa the air is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than it was then.

Mr. Lambert: Their mines are a couple of thousand feet deeper than ours.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I realise that. One big mine on the Rand sank a shaft purposely for ventilation. On the City Deeps in South Africa before 1922 the management sank a shaft at the cost of £10,000 for no other purpose than to ventilate the mine. Our mines are also getting deeper, and as they go down the conditions are likely to become worse. Inspector Gibbons in his report on the Lake View said—

An extensive programme of development work has been planned for 1934, and the end of the year should see the Chaffers shaft down to 3,000 feet below the surface. This level will be the greatest depth yet attained in West Australian mining, exceeding that of the Patterson shaft, Ivanhoe mine, which has reached a vertical depth of 3,640 feet.

It is obvious that the deeper our mines go the greater necessity there must be, if the conditions are to be improved, for effective ventilation. Having in mind the fact that there is legislation in this State to control the conditions in factories, and to ensure that people employed in workrooms have an adequate quantity of air and proper ventilation, I venture to say that if the best conditions in mining were paralleled in the factories, there would be a hue and cry throughout the State against such conditions in factories. Apparently these conditions are to a great extent inseparable from mining. It is known and recognised that the conditions of mining are such that they militate against the health of those employed under them. That was recognised when the Bill was introduced in the first place for the regulation of mines, and Parliament provided, although there was an industrial arbitration Act in force at the time, for 48 hours' work in the mining industry. The hours laid down by the Arbitration Court in those days were 47 per week. That provision in the Mines Regulation Act was a recognition that the hours should be controlled in the gold mining industry by Parliamentary regulation. It was a recognition of the fact that the conditions pertaining to the industry were not comparable to those of any other in-

dustry. Since that date we have obtained much fresh experience of those conditions. As a result of examinations undertaken by the laboratory, the vast extent of the silicotic and other diseases incidental to the industry has become known to us. I see no reason why we should not as a Parliament, in view of the experience available to us, in view of the statistics relating to disease and the incidence of disease in the industry that are at our disposal, fix the hours of work at a much lesser scale than that prevailing in other occupations. But what do we find? That the hours underground are 44, the same hours for miners working all day in silicious dust which is making insidious inroads upon their health, as for a man digging a pipe line for the Water Supply Department. In the hours fixed by Parliament there should be a recognition of the conditions of men working in the mining industry, a recognition of the fact that the work is of such a nature as to justify a considerable reduction of hours relatively to those prevailing in other industries. In every other part of the world that fact is recognised. Only recently Czecho-Slovakia came to a general agreement that its industries, with but few exceptions, should work 40 hours per week. In the lignite mines of Germany only 40 hours per week are worked. In the French coal mines the hours are only 40 per week. In English coal mines $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours per shift are worked, being slightly in excess of the hours worked in our mining industry. However, the Federation of Coal Mine Employees recently carried a resolution to use every means in their power, both nationally and internationally, to reduce the hours to seven per day, and ultimately to six. This practice of reducing industrial hours, and particularly the hours of men employed in industries deleterious to health, is being followed in every country. It is high time that a more humanitarian outlook was adopted in Western Australia with regard to hours in the mining industry, and that parliamentary recognition was given to the fact that the men working in the industry are deserving of a lesser number of hours than that prevailing in any other industry. The results of the last examination, which for some reason or other seem to be excluded from the Mines Department's report on this occasion, show that the incidence of the disease in the mining industry is still a considerable fac-

tor. The silicosis early cases were 11.2 per cent; the silicosis advanced cases 1.8 per cent.; silicosis plus tuberculosis cases .4 per cent.; and tuberculosis cases .1 per cent. Having regard to the fact that there are now more men employed in the industry, we have to realise that this .1 per cent, which refers to simple tuberculosis, still represents one in every 1,000 of the men employed in the industry during 1932, who at the beginning of that year, with the aid of improved plant and radiographis technique at the Kalgoorlie laboratory, were declared to be normally free from disease. Yet at the beginning of 1933, when the examination I refer to took place, it was found that one in every 1,000 of the men had during the intervening period contracted tuberculosis. I have heard it said in this Chamber that one can get tuberculosis in any industry, that men with tuberculosis are to be found in all industries. But it is to be remembered that the men I speak of had 12 months previously been submitted to examination and found to be normal. Nevertheless, in 12 months' time they have contracted the tuberculosis germ, which is so easily contractable in underground work. The early silicosis cases showed an increase last year. In 1932 they were 8.7 per cent, and in 1933 11.2. In South Africa that kind of case, notwithstanding all that has been done there to improve conditions in the mines, is still occurring at the rate of about 300 per year. The fact that we had an increase of early silicosis cases in 1933 as against the proportion obtaining in 1932 seems to indicate that there is much to support the contention of Mr. Phoenix that the air supply in the mines of the Golden Mile is decreasing whereas it should be increasing. I do not find much cause for encouragement in the figures of the 1933 examination. I know that they reflect an improvement as compared with those of 1925, but we have to bear in mind that in that year there was the first examination, that many of the miners were withdrawn from the industry in that year and subsequent years, and that since then many new men, with clean records of health, have gone into the industry, and that to-day some of them are numbered amongst the early or the advanced silicosis cases. There is not much encouragement in the figures, after all, because the improvement shown might

have been expected from the fact that the general standard of health of men employed in the industry was better as the result of the engagement of new men, who had been examined by the laboratory and found to conform to the standards set up. The only other matter I wish to refer to is in connection with the Miners' Phthisis Act and the Mine Workers' Relief Act. When the latter was before the House, I referred to it, with not the best choice of language, as the most stupid piece of legislation I had ever heard of. I have not now much cause to modify that statement. I still consider that a great deal of stupidity is indicated in legislation which differentiates in the amount of compensation to men who have become afflicted in the mining industry and who have similar claims to compensation. As the result of the Mine Workers' Relief Act, men who are prohibited from working in the mining industry because of having contracted tuberculosis, receive less compensation than those similarly prohibited under the Miners' Phthisis Act. Obviously, that fact gives rise to dissatisfaction and complaints—in my opinion, justified complaints. Under the Mine Workers' Relief Act a married man who is prohibited from working in the mining industry gets half wages for himself and gets nothing for the wife; or the proper way to put it would be, that he gets nothing for himself as the result of having a wife dependent on him. On the other hand, under the Miners' Phthisis Act such a man gets half wages for himself and £1 per week for his wife. It is easy to understand the resentment which must be felt by the man prohibited under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. It is also easy to predict, when legislation of that kind comes forward, that such differentiating circumstances will be set up and will give rise to dissatisfaction. In my opinion, the whole question of miners' compensation needs to be faced, with a view to being put on a proper basis.

Mr. Marshall: It cannot be argued that that is compensation at all. The miners produce the fund themselves.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: It is questionable whether even the mining companies are getting a fair deal under the proposition.

Mr. Marshall: I do not know about that.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: It is questionable, too, whether the Mine Workers' Relief Fund

will ever be able to bear the vast liabilities that have been placed upon it under that Act. It is quite evident that the Act aimed not at ameliorating the conditions of men who, because they were afflicted with disease in the mining industry, had to be compensated, but at relieving Consolidated Revenue of some payments under the Miners' Phthisis Act; aimed at getting hold of some of the vast accumulations of money that had accrued to the State Insurance Office under the Third Schedule to the Workers' Compensation Act. That, apparently, was the intention of the measure, and the sole objective that was considered. As a result, the Act has been a piece of legislation most difficult to administer and most difficult to understand. As to its provisions, these were misrepresented in this Chamber when the legislation was introduced. Certain amendments have since had to be made to effect necessary alterations. The trouble is that no one seems to understand where they are under the Act, or what is the meaning of many of its provisions. The layman puts one construction upon them; members of Parliament place their construction upon the provisions of the Act, and then the legal fraternity say they mean something else. For instance, I understood that under the Act provision was made for the re-admission of men who showed signs of early silicosis only—men who had worked five years in the mining industry—and that they could be insured under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. I found that was not the position. A man in Kalgoorlie the other day told me he had been admitted to the mining industry on a re-admission certificate that lasted for 12 months only, and that he would have to go up again for re-examination before another re-admission certificate would be issued to him. He also said that he had signed some declaration that he was not eligible for compensation if he contracted any of the diseases incidental to mining operations.

Hon. J. Cunningham: That is not on a re-admission certificate.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: That is what he told me. Under whatever certificate he was re-admitted, the fact remains that deductions are made from his pay every week for the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. So we do not know where we are under the

provisions of the Act, and, in my opinion, it is time the State faced the position. There are possibilities of the gold mining industry extending and of large numbers of men being employed in it. The question arises as to whether it would not be better to have the mines scheduled as they are in South Africa and so relieve the smaller mining propositions, in the earlier stages of their existence, from the cost of insuring under the Miners' Phthisis Act. I recognise the problem involved is a big one but it certainly seems to me, after reading through the report furnished by Hon. J. Cornell, M.L.C., on his return from South Africa in 1922, that if the conditions have not altered in South Africa since then in regard to compensation for diseases contracted by men employed in the mining industry there, then the basis upon which compensation is paid in that Dominion represents an improved system compared with that prevailing in this State. I trust that during the present Parliament, or at any rate during the term of office of the Government, the whole question of compensation paid in respect of diseases incidental to the mining industry will be investigated with a view to framing legislation that will put it upon a much more equitable and efficient basis than at present, without reducing the measure of compensation that is provided for such cases under the Miners' Phthisis Act.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [8.35]: It was pleasing to hear the optimistic speech by the Minister in submitting the Mining Estimates whilst most members were exceedingly interested in listening to the informative and well-considered speech by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. To have in this Chamber a man so intimately informed upon the working conditions in the mining industry, particularly with regard to ventilation and sanitation, is of advantage even to those who represent wholly or partially mining electorates. I do not intend to traverse the ground covered by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe regarding the causes that led to the inflation or deflation of gold, nor yet to consider the question whether the movements have operated to our benefit or otherwise. Some time ago I read a well prepared book that was sent out by the secretary of the Empire Parliamentary

Association. It made rather tedious reading, and I do not know that after I had read and digested its contents, the position was made very clear to me. I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that, after three weeks or more of hard tedious reading, I discovered the fact that right down from the middle ages there has been inflation and deflation associated with the whole of our metals. Correspondingly, right down the ages, commodity prices have been affected. For instance, right from the tenth or twelfth century to the time of Henry VIII., whenever a monarch required more money with which to wage wars, he merely cut the currency in two. He recalled the existing coinage and instead of having one sovereign, he issued two. That obtained until gold was standardised about the sixteenth century.

Mr. Needham: Australia did a good deal of that during the last war.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is so, and if any member is interested in the question of the inflation and deflation of metals and the corresponding relationship to commodity prices, he will find in the library a very fine work dealing with that phase. It traces the position right down from the middle ages. Reverting to the speech delivered by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, particularly with regard to the working conditions in our mines, it is necessary that a watchful eye be kept on the health and welfare of the workers in that industry. The position on the goldfields can be compared with that obtaining on the Rand in South Africa. Within the next two or three years some of the mines at Kalgoorlie will reach a depth approximating that of the Rand mines to-day. Most members will agree that the best possible conditions and the strictest supervision should apply in our mines. A monument to the stupidity, or possibly to the neglect, of those who earlier controlled the mines of this State, is to be seen to-day in the sad spectacle at Wooroloo. We do not desire a repetition of that. With our mines getting down to such depths, there will of necessity be enforced upon the employers the need for lowering the hours of work in the deeper levels. The price obtained for gold to-day would justify that attitude on their part. I want to draw the attention of the Minister to some particular items in his Estimates. I am constantly in

touch with officers engaged in the different activities grouped under the Mines Department. I certainly think it is time the Minister reviewed the salaries paid to the Under Secretary for Mines, the State Mining Engineer, the Government Mineralogist and Analyst, the Assistant Government Analyst and Toxicologist, and the Principal Mining Registrar. Those officers have experienced a lean time for some years, although they have been carrying out very important and progressively extending work. Now that the mining industry is in a much more prosperous condition, I hope the Minister will consider the advisability of raising the remuneration of the officers mentioned to sums more in keeping with their duties. For instance, the Under Secretary for Mines is in receipt of £768 a year. He is probably the lowest paid Under Secretary in the Public Service. I understand Mr. Calanchini performs many other duties. The State Mining Engineer and Chief Inspector of Mines receives £480, which is not £10 a week.

The Minister for Mines: But that is for part of a year only. His salary is £650, although I admit that is too low.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am pleased to have that admission from the Minister. In view of the increased mining activity and the augmented revenue derived from it, I think it is time some of the senior officers were given increased salaries. Certainly their work should be recognised in some more tangible form than is expressed in the Estimates. Generally speaking, the administration of the Mines Department has given great satisfaction. There are some who find fault with its operations, and in respect of some of the problems, they are reasonably debatable. Nevertheless the policy inaugurated by the present Government has given general satisfaction, not only to the mining industry, but throughout the State generally. With regard to the position of miners who were advised to leave the mines in the interests of their own health and that of others working underground, some of those men were settled in the Yilgarn district and some in the Cue district. After spending the better part of their useful lives in mining operations underground, they have been settled on the land. I readily admit that the Government of the day felt the men were fittingly recompensed on account of the disease they contracted arising out of

their former occupation. I hope the Government will amend the Miners' Phthisis Act with a view to giving these men some adequate compensation. They are not fit for the work on their agricultural blocks, and unless the Government can afford them some solace for the remaining years of their lives, their lot will be a sad one indeed. Even if the proposed tax on gold profits were to be slightly increased so as to give these men commensurate compensation, I do not think the big mines would make the slightest objection.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.46]: I desire to thank all the officers of the department for their courteous treatment of me and my transactions during the period under review. They are all experts in their line, and I have never found them wanting either in advice or sympathy in their administration of the department. They have treated me with every respect and courtesy, and I wish to thank them one and all. I propose to start on a subject raised by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith). I would request him not to refer to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund as compensation. It is not compensation, as is demonstrated by the fact that the men have to contribute their quota of the cost. It was an anomaly that crept into the amending legislation introduced by the previous Government. When the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act was introduced here, the argument advanced by the Minister for Works was that a man injured in the course of his employment was just as much entitled to compensation as was any other individual who had suffered an accident. But the Minister did not say that when an injury to health was brought about by employment, the person who suffered an immediate accident was contributing 9d. per week to the funds from which he was deriving compensation. What he said was that a man injured suddenly in the course of his employment was entitled to compensation because the industry had inflicted the injury upon him, and so the industry should carry the compensation for the injury inflicted. That was quite right; but when the Minister introduced the Third Schedule he still argued on those lines and said that if a person were injured in health as a result of his employment, he also should be compensated. But when the Act was amended

and the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Act, the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act, and the Miners' Phthisis Act were amalgamated, the whole aspect of compensation vanished, and introduced suddenly in the measure was a policy of insurance, not compensation at all. That was the chief point on which I opposed the measure, namely that it was no longer compensation, and that we were calling upon sufferers injured in industry to pay into a fund to compensate themselves. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe was quite right in the remarks he made about the discrepancy now transparent. It is pathetic to think that when in Opposition we should have permitted the measure to go through without a more vigorous fight than we put up. I join forces with the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe in the hope that the Government will take the earliest opportunity to reconsider the whole of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Act, with a view to amending its conditions so as to let those suffering injury from their employment know exactly what compensation they will get, and let us see to it that each individual is compensated in proportion to his injuries. I do not know whether the Government will do that, but I hope they will. It is not fair to ask a man who contracts a disease peculiar to the industry in which he is working to contribute towards his own compensation. And it is mean that a sufferer from chest complaint due to long service in a mine should get less compensation per week than a man who suddenly finds himself with an injured finger, and is paid half wages, whereas a man suffering from T.B. may receive only 25s. per week and, in course of time, may get even less, his payments being regulated by a board. I hope that anomaly will be apparent to the Government and that they will take steps to overcome the difficulty. Why should a man who has suffered occupational injury have to contribute towards his own compensation, while the victim of an immediate accident contributes nothing? An injury inflicted by industry should be an obligation on industry to pay, no matter what the nature of the injury may be. I do not know whether the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe has been employed underground in a mine, but from his remarks I should think he has not. The suggestion that the shift boss or foreman should be a qualified, experienced man be-

fore he takes that position is quite good; but I may inform the hon. member that that will not reduce accidents in any degree whatever, will not render the slightest protection to the workers. Because all shift bosses, and men of equal responsibility, are engaged solely in placing men, allocating their work and generally travelling at high pressure to see that the work of the mine is being done. All the shift boss can say to a man is, "Go there and do such and such a thing." He has no more leisure than has any other man in the mine. What is actually happening is that our goldmining industry is being Americanised, everything is becoming a task with a view to speeding-up, and no regard whatever is being paid to the men. I happened to take a special interest in one or two coroner's inquiries in a certain town, having been delegated by the A.W.U. to represent them. There is not the slightest doubt that in one fatal accident the victim was absolutely murdered. The usual verdict was given, compensation was paid, and there the matter ended. No shift boss, experienced or inexperienced, could have averted that fatality. For a time the management, in order to minimise accidents, fatal and otherwise, put on a safety gang. In that there was some virtue, for the shift boss, noticing a dangerous place as he went about his routine work, could call upon the leader of the gang to proceed immediately to that place because it was dangerous, and see about protecting the men there. That was quite good, but seemingly it was too expensive for the company, and so the safety gang was abolished. Here is the position: Unsuspecting individuals, many of whom have never previously seen a gold mine, are chosen because of their appearance and physique, and are set a task in a certain place of which they have not the slightest knowledge as to whether it is safe, dangerous or very dangerous. They know nothing whatever about the work, and their superior officers are not concerned about it. They set those young fellows a definite task, and say, "You do that, and if you are fatally injured it will be your bad luck." The Mines Regulation Act could well be amended in many different ways; first of all, by the shortening of the hours, and then by stringently forcing every mine manager to make it the leading policy in the conduct of his managerial position that

safety shall come first, and the production of profits next. One approaches these Estimates with considerable satisfaction. Gold mining is the one industry in this State that is thriving and enjoying full prosperity. If we could have locked our doors against all migration when the price of gold commenced to rise, I do not think there would have been one unemployed person in the State to-day.

Mr. Patrick: You think a lot of people have come from the other States?

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course they have. The number of people who have come from the Eastern States—unfortunates who had been unemployed for years—and have entered the gold mining industry is astounding. We are pleased to see them here. If my father had not migrated here years ago, I would have died of starvation. Western Australia is doing the same thing for the Eastern States to-day—saving many of their people from starvation. We are all pleased to be able to assist the other States in that way, but it is a great pity that many of our city people do not go to the goldfields where profitable employment can be obtained, instead of looking for Government jobs on sustenance. I am astonished at our own people allowing others to come in and take the cream. I suggest that it would be better for many of them to forsake the meagre pittance offered by the Government—the best obtainable in the circumstances—and accept in lieu a good livelihood on the goldfields. I admit that life there is not as comfortable as it is in the city, but some reward is to be had for the sacrifice made, and men get something like reasonable compensation for their labour.

The Minister for Mines: You know there are some unemployed on the goldfields now.

Mr. MARSHALL: And there always will be. Migration from the other States is continuing. I have been astounded at the number of new arrivals in my electorate from the Eastern States. I hope that our own people will secure their share of the good that the goldfields have to offer. I disagree with the Minister—I seldom speak without disagreeing with him on something—regarding the expenditure on aerial surveys. I cannot accept the theory that a man flying at great height and speed and taking pictures of the country below can, on examining the pictures, discern much that will be of

value. I might be wrong, but I think time will prove me right. I would rather have the money expended on good practical prospecting or boring on known lodes and deposits that were badly managed in the old days, such as those at Peak Hill. I would rather have surveys made by a geologist with his feet on this planet. He has a greater chance of telling where gold might be found if he has his foot on the lode than has a man a thousand feet in the air. Like many of the present-day fantastic ideas, they may be all right from the theoretical point of view, but they are costly and give very little result. I shall watch with great interest the results of the aerial survey, but I feel sure that in the course of years the aeroplane will be discarded for the horse and cart, and the old prospector will do the job that the aerial men fail to do. I would rather have a diamond drill doing practical work at boring and have practical prospectors examining the country than spend such a large sum of money on what I consider is an experiment. Anyhow, I would let someone else try it first. I would have waited to see what results were obtained by the company. I believe they are operating from Jimblebar. I wish them success and hope they will be rewarded tenfold for their expenditure, but I shall be surprised if they are recouped for their expenditure by any discovery made from the air. One of the most important needs of gold mining is crushing facilities for prospectors. As one who has had lengthy experience in the treatment of ore, I tell the Minister, although his expert advisers will disagree with me, that the State batteries are just about in a disgraceful condition, at any rate those in my electorate. I make that statement because everywhere in my electorate there is a demand for increased crushing facilities. Prospectors everywhere are waiting. I am told by the expert adviser—the Superintendent of State Batteries—that there will be only two months' delay. A two months' wait means that two months' more credit must be given by other people to the prospector, provided he is not under the Government scheme, but if he is, another two months is too much. Although the expert advisers of the department contend that the State batteries are equal to many of the private batteries, the fact remains that better results could be obtained if more up-to-date and efficient plant were maintained. Our batteries are allowed to deteriorate. Whether

this is due to rivalry between the managers or to shortage of funds on the part of the Government, I do not know, but the battery at Peak Hill and the battery at Cue, practically a new one, are not all that they might be by a long way. I am told that the cam shafts that have broken at Peak Hill were second-hand. I do not care whether they were first, second or third hand; the fact remains that they were broken in 18 months. The battery facilities for repairing such breakages are primitive, and instead of the repairs taking 2½ hours at most—if the work took longer on a big battery, an explanation would be demanded—it takes eight to ten hours. That means eight to ten hours of crushing lost. I could go on pointing out anomalies in the State batteries in my electorate. I want the Minister to get a liberal vote and put the batteries into a really efficient state, so that every minute can be devoted to the crushing of ore.

The Minister for Mines: Do you know of any battery in the world that can go on crushing year after year without sustaining breakages?

Mr. MARSHALL: No.

The Minister for Mines: Neither do I.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not arguing that point. I am contending that our batteries are allowed to fall into such a state of disrepair that they become inefficient.

The Minister for Mines: That was the position, I admit.

Mr. MARSHALL: They are not too good even now. If the money were available, not much would be required to effect a substantial improvement. Another point is the housing at remote State batteries. Men are conveyed out for hundreds of miles and there is no home for them to go to. They have to get the battery ready to operate, and no hut is provided in which they can camp. That is hardly fair. The Minister expects a man to give him efficient service, and yet treats him in a manner that makes efficient service impossible. What with having to scramble to get food and to get a place to sleep in, and at the same time get the machinery ready for crushing, no man can render efficient service. The sooner the Minister wakes up and ensures that the men are properly housed, the better. Many years ago I argued that it was foolish policy on the part of the State to permit a battery, once installed, to be removed. I have always argued that it would be worth while to close

a battery down temporarily, save for an occasional visit to see that it was all right.

The Minister for Mines: They would be stolen, lock, stock and barrel.

Mr. MARSHALL: Almost any State battery could be stolen now, even while it was being worked. The stealing part to which I am referring was done by the department. They stole the Mt. Keith battery to keep the Wiluna battery going, and they stole the Mt. Egerton battery to keep Peak Hill going. Now we are to have a battery at Mt. Egerton and another at Mt. Keith. There would be more men on those fields to-day if the batteries had not been removed. The prospectors cannot make it pay when they have to cart their ore 80 or 90 miles. The necessary part of the battery was not stolen, as the Minister suggested, though sheets of iron and tanks might have vanished. The essential part of the battery remained intact until the department removed it. Now there is a demand for batteries at those places. When I first entered this Chamber 14 years ago, I argued that it would be sound policy to leave the batteries where they were until they were again required. Quinn's is another battery in my electorate that has been removed, and prospectors have had to cart their ore for distances up to 45 miles. The few batteries that remain are just holding together. They are now taxed to their limit. Prospectors are leaving the district because of the lack of crushing facilities. If a few pounds had been spent upon the batteries, the men at those places would have been satisfied. The Government have not profited to the extent of a penny by taking the batteries away. I do not suppose the officials know what has become of them. When the Egerton battery went to Peak Hill I do not suppose £10 worth of value went with it.

The Minister for Mines: Oh yes, it did.

Mr. MARSHALL: A battery at Mt. Keith would be the salvation of the district. The prospectors are all the time calling out for crushing facilities. The Minister should devise some scheme for improving the output of the State mills. Everywhere on the Murchison the batteries are months behind, with the exception of that at Wiluna. Every district outside Wiluna is over-taxed. Meekatharra is kept going all the time. The position at Cue and Peak Hill is the same. The batteries cannot be stopped for a minute. As it is, the pros-

pectors have to wait their turn. That is injurious to the district. It is no use paying them 15s. a week to go prospecting, for if they find something worth while they may have to wait two or three months before getting a crushing through. Many men go away in consequence of that, and goodness knows what they have left behind. The Minister should call upon his officers to devise means to increase the tonnage dealt with at State batteries. If he would have the batteries put into a better state of repair, an improvement in the situation would soon be manifest. Even that would scarcely be sufficient to cope with the rapidly increasing demand for the services of these batteries. Men are coming into the districts from all over the Commonwealth, and spreading out everywhere. I have never seen so many men in search of gold, even during the days of the boom. They are naturally calling for State battery facilities, so that their stone may be crushed, but these batteries are failing dismally to cope with the situation. They are doing the best they can, but all the time are pushing Peter on in order to pay Paul. To relieve the battery at Meekatharra, prospectors are obliged to cart their stone an additional 26 miles and then to rail it for another 40 miles. A few years ago there were 20 prospectors out from Nannine, and to-day there are hundreds. Probably there would be more but for the reserves. There is a State battery at Tuckenarra. I visited it quite recently. It has been leased for many years. It is neither fair nor right that the prospectors of the Tuckenarra district should be penalised because the State battery is leased, compared with others who can send their ore to a State-owned battery that is also a State-controlled battery. The Tuckenarra district is growing rapidly, but there is a shortage of water for the State battery. The present lessee has spent about £200 in boring for water, but has failed to get it. He has only a tenure from day to day, and I have told him it is not his job to create a State asset. If water is necessary, then the State should provide it. If a cam-shaft breaks, the State should put in a new one.

The Minister for Mines: If a man is prepared to lease a battery, he should keep it in repair.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, having regard to fair wear and tear. A cam-shaft, or the

stemming, is liable to break at any time. The lessee should not have to replace such parts, nor should he be obliged to create assets for the State. Why should he put in a new cam pulley when a new one is required because of fair wear and tear? The officials at other State batteries do not tell the prospectors they must pay for a new cam pulley. It is very fortunate for the Government that they can lease this battery. They are saved any further trouble and annoyance, and on the basis of 1s. per ton for all ore crushed, they do well. I am told the Government have refused to assist the lessee of this battery to obtain a water supply. He tells me that if he could get the Government to find water, he is prepared to add another five-head to the battery. He has the framework there ready and the pumps are ready for the water. I told the lessee it was the duty of the State to supply the water. I hope the Minister will give the matter his immediate attention. The battery is a good revenue-producer for the State. The lessee pays so much royalty. Nearly all the State-worked batteries are losing propositions.

The Minister for Mines: Not last year.

Mr. MARSHALL: All the concessions that were given prospectors have been taken away. The Government still maintain the two-grain rate for treatment. That is a good price having regard for the value of gold. Then there is a 75 per cent. extraction, and the deduction for moisture and wastage of 10 per cent., so that the Government are on the right side. They can afford to be more liberal in the money they spend in the upkeep and maintenance of State batteries. There is no need to have ramshackle batteries that are constantly falling to pieces.

The Minister for Mines: They are not falling to pieces.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know more about the batteries than the Minister does. I have seen them in my electorate.

The Minister for Mines: You do not know more about batteries than I do.

Mr. MARSHALL: I could lose the Minister on that subject. The Peak Hill and Cue batteries are not a credit to anyone. I care not what the superintendent or the Minister may say; they are not in a state of efficiency because they stand so much in need of repair. I have just seen them my-

self. I am not satisfied about the batteries in my electorate. The prospectors in the Tuckenarra district are paying more for their crushings than others are. The Minister should see that that district is given a sufficient supply of water, so that the ore may be crushed when necessary. The Government ought to be well satisfied with the revenue they get from the battery, and should provide those things that are necessary to keep it going. I join with the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe in declaring that it is time Parliament reviewed the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and that some consideration was given to a readjustment of hours for miners on the goldfields who work underground. I thank the officers of the department for the manner in which they have treated my requests, and I also thank the Minister for the sympathetic manner in which he has received requests I have made to him personally.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [9.28]: I thank members for the manner in which they have received these Estimates.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And you should thank those who have kept quiet.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. I desire to reply only to two or three points. I will go into the matter of a water supply for the Tuckenarra battery as early as possible. I do not know exactly the condition under which the lessee is working. The department spent more money last year in repairing and renovating State batteries than was spent in the previous five years. In the case of four batteries, one of which is in the electorate of the member for Murchison, the department put in new foundations under the boxes. That was done last year. There has also been an improvement in the power of State batteries. The Cue battery is now a 10-head battery. The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe said that men working in the mines on a re-admission ticket were not entitled to compensation. That is not true. Any man who gets a re-admission certificate from the laboratory, and secures a job on a mine, is as much entitled to compensation as any other man.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: But he cannot get the re-admission certificate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I sign dozens of them every fortnight.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Not many for my electorate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite a number. A re-admission certificate gives a man all the benefits available under the Act. The only disadvantage for him is that he is not permitted by the Inspector of Mines to work in the return air. That is done for his own benefit. One would think from what the hon. member said there was also a hardship in the fact that the certificate lasted only 12 months. But as a matter of fact, the ticket of every other man working on the mines, even if he is absolutely free from disease and declared to be perfectly healthy, lasts only 12 months, and he must obtain another ticket the next year or he will not be able to get a job. So that the man with the re-admission certificate is in no worse position. If a man is in Kalgoorlie, he can apply at the laboratory for examination. However, that laboratory is controlled by the Commonwealth, and not by the State; and we cannot get the Commonwealth to erect a laboratory in every mining centre. In all probability, what has happened in the case referred to is that the man obtained what is known as a special certificate. The man told the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe that he was working on a re-admission certificate; but if he is not entitled to compensation, then he is working on what is known as a special certificate. If the hon. member will give me the man's name, I will see that he is reimbursed every penny that he has paid into the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Under the Act he is not called upon to pay into that fund, and is not entitled to compensation.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: That is the law.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the law as it stands now. The provision was inserted in order to give a chance of employment to a man who was not suffering from tuberculosis—if so affected, he could not get a certificate at all. There have been such cases. Even a man with advanced silicosis can get a special certificate for a job on the surface. The object of the provision was to enable mine managers who were willing to do so, to give some light job on the surface to men who had worked for them in previous years, men whom they could not employ if entitled to compensation. A man with a special certificate is not entitled to compensation.

Under the Act he does not pay into the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and the company would not be liable to pay workers' compensation insurance premiums in respect of him under the Third Schedule. Those things are definitely laid down by the law as it now stands. Therefore I say there is a mistake somewhere with regard to that re-admission certificate.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: I will give you the man's name afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I shall be pleased to have it, and to inquire into the case. If any man with a re-admission certificate is told by the company that he is not entitled to insurance, the company must be brought to book, and will be, quick and lively. Irrespective of whether a company did or did not say what has been stated, and irrespective of whether the company insured the men or not, under the Act as it stands such a man is entitled to compensation. I have no further reply to make in connection with the Mines Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Medical and Public Health
(Hon. S. W. Munsie, Minister).

Note—Medical, £32,976:

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [9.36]: In connection with the Department of Public Health I have not much that is new to report. Some progress is still being made. I shall not go over all the activities of the department, but there are two matters I wish to deal with particularly on this Vote. First of all, during the past year we have completely altered the conditions of medical service in the North-West, though not yet throughout that area. I have not the slightest wish to reflect in any way upon the past work of the medical profession or the nursing staff in the North, but I think it will be admitted by all who possess any experience of the North that the method of medical service hitherto obtaining there was absolutely inadequate. It was a method unfair to the people of the North. The practice has been to appoint a district medical officer with a subsidy ranging from £250 to £600 a year. For that subsidy he was supposed to treat indigent cases, to do necessary work

in connection with the Police Department, and to attend to aborigines. The system has not worked too satisfactorily. In some cases doctors bought practices in the North, and the Government paid them subsidies. But under those conditions the Government had absolutely no control over the doctor, except by withdrawal of the subsidy. The department cannot go any further than that. After a good deal of discussion between the department and a committee appointed by the British Medical Association an arrangement was arrived at whereby applications for the post of medical officers in the North would be considered by a committee comprising representatives of the British Medical Association, the Pastoralists' Association, and the Medical Department. The idea is to appoint, wherever practicable, young doctors, and to pay them £1,000 a year as full salary and not by way of subsidy. They are to do all necessary medical work within their vicinity, but any fees they charge are to be collected by the department, and not by the doctors themselves. The fees will go into the funds of the Medical Department for the purpose of reimbursing part of the salaries of £1,000 to be paid. Appointments of doctors under the new system have already been made at Wyndham and Broome, and applications are now being called for a similar appointment at a third centre in the North. In my opinion, the State will not suffer financially by reason of the payment of the salaries of £1,000 a year, because the fees to be collected will just about balance the difference between the former subsidies and the salaries. The objective is to get young men for the North, and to limit their service there to three years at the outside. A doctor who stays the full three years will be given six months' leave on half pay, partly to enable him to bring himself up to date in his profession. We could not introduce that scheme without altering the conditions obtaining in regard to hospitals in the North. For the sake of economy the previous Government leased all Government hospitals in the North. A saving may have resulted, but personally I disapprove of the arrangement. I disapprove of it more strongly as applied to the North, because of the isolation of the North, than as applied to any other part of Western Australia. In the more thickly popu-

lated districts it would not be nearly so objectionable to lease hospitals as it is to lease them in the North, for if the people in the centre directly served by a leased hospital do not care for the treatment there, they can at next to no cost go to a neighbouring centre where there is another hospital. That is not possible in the North, where the hospitals are hundreds of miles apart. Further, the person who leases a hospital—irrespective of how genuine he might be, and many of them are genuine—will not extend the same facilities to indigent cases as would be given in a hospital controlled by the Government. Therefore we have cancelled all hospital leases in the North, and have taken the institutions back to be conducted as departmental hospitals. I wish to give credit to the Australian Inland Mission for being the first to organise and establish the flying doctor system in Australia. They have endeavoured to establish a branch of that system in Western Australia. I believe it will come to pass that the very best of the young medical men, not only of Western Australia, but of Australia, will be applicants for the position of flying doctor once the scheme is established here. I want it to be so, if practicable. I believe that when the complete chain of flying doctors has been established, the qualification set up for members of the aerial medical service will be as high as, or higher than, that of any other medical service in Australia. I want to see young doctors encouraged. It is necessary to give them reasonable conditions, and they will get them. They will get them under this scheme. Now that the new aerial mail service has been established, only a few weeks should pass before the Government will be able to come to an agreement with the company for an aerial service in the North. Indeed, I believe arrangements are just about completed. Quite recently we have appointed Dr. Alan Vickers to Broome, even though only temporarily. I consider Western Australia exceedingly fortunate in being able to secure that gentleman's services as the first flying doctor under the North-West scheme. Dr. Vickers has had nearly three years' experience of such work at Cloncurry. We gave him the appointment at Broome for two reasons. One was to keep him in Australia, and the second to give him practical experience of the conditions prevailing in the North before the time comes for the appointment

of the flying doctor. There need be no doubt on the point; when the first flying doctor is appointed, he will be Dr. Alan Vickers. That deals with two improvements we have effected in the North, one with regard to hospitals and the other with regard to medical services. Under the existing system, some of the incidents recorded in the North during the last 18 months or two years could not possibly happen. I will not go into details just now. The new system adopted stands out as an immense improvement in the conditions in the North, from the point of view of medical service. It was rather strange to receive criticism from the people of Wyndham when it was suggested that the doctor who had appointed there might have to do some flying. Irrespective of who they may have been, doctors who have been at Wyndham for the last 20 years have had to drive out by pony and trap or, later on, by motor car, to render medical service, even though an accident should have occurred upwards of 200 miles away from the port. They did not object to that. In fact, I believe the people of Wyndham would have objected if the doctor had refused to undertake the duty. On the other hand, immediately it was announced that the doctor appointed at Wyndham might be required to use the aeroplane, should the necessity arise, the Wyndham residents strenuously objected and said they required the services of a doctor every minute of every day. Well, they will not have them. If an accident occurs, the doctor, who receives £1,000 a year, will go out in response to the call. If he does not, he will be sacked. I am positive that the people of Wyndham will agree that he should do so. The Commonwealth Government recognised that they had done a disservice to Wyndham when they cut that township out of the North-West air mail service. In consequence, they have called tenders for a weekly mail service from Wyndham, where an aeroplane will be situated, to Hall's Creek, where the service will link up with that from Catherine and thence to Perth. The 'plane will be at Wyndham with the exception of four hours on one day per week—two hours to Hall's Creek and two for the return journey. The Commonwealth authorities have agreed to that without requiring the State to pay anything, and have agreed also to pay all the flying expenses of the doctor, for the first year. I jumped at that offer, and most decidedly the doctor

will take advantage of the 'plane should it be there when a call is received. Nevertheless, it is strange that when I tried to do something for the people, I received objections from the Wyndham residents.

Mr. Coverley: You were misunderstood, because the departmental officer told half the tale only.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In addition to the departmental officer, a Minister of the Crown explained the position almost word for word with what I have said to-night, and the Wyndham people still objected. I do not know, nor do I care, about their objection. If the doctor is there and the 'plane is there, he must go out in response to a call.

Mr. Coverley: The Wyndham people have been without any doctor at all for weeks at a time.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Of course; and it was ridiculous to raise such an objection.

Mr. Coverley: The objection was not taken on the ground you have suggested.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is there a landing ground at Wyndham?

Mr. Coverley: Yes.

Mr. Wise: About five miles long.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: A far better one than at Darwin, which has been made the air port. Wyndham should have been made the air port.

Mr. Sampson: It certainly should have been.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It would have been, if justice had been done to Western Australia. There is one other matter I want to mention in connection with the Health Department. Here again we have received criticism for not doing all we should with regard to relieving the position of nurses in our various institutions respecting working hours and accommodation. Western Australia is a big State. The Medical and Public Health Department has an immense territory to cover, and many activities to control. Our duty is first to relieve those who are most in need of relief. At the moment we cannot find money for everything. Ever since we have been training midwives at the King Edward Maternity Hospital, the trainees have spent nine months on the midwifery course and three months on a course in mothercraft. Those trainees have received no salary; in fact, in one hospital only in Australia do

such trainees receive a salary. In no training school for mothercraft are trainees paid. In no other institution are they trained for mothercraft certificates without the payment of a premium of at least £10 and, in some instances, they have to pay £20. We have never charged premiums, and we have paid no salaries. In some instances we have accepted trainees at the King Edward Hospital, and we have charged a premium because the trainees had no previous medical education. Those young women desired to become midwives and, as they are required to serve a longer period, we make them pay a premium, but give them no salary. The reason for that is that we do not desire to encourage that sort of thing. It would be better if we did not undertake the tuition of such trainees. I believe nurses who desire to get their midwifery certificate should, in their own interests and in the interests of the mothers, have had some previous medical training. For that reason we discourage the system. I have agreed that nurses who go there for training shall be paid a small remuneration and not be required to pay any premiums. Therefore in that respect our Health Department is in advance of those of the other States. That improvement has been authorised during the last month or two. I have nothing to add, except to say that I do not suppose there will be a general discussion on the hospital fund, but rather on hospitals generally. With regard to the hospital fund, the collections last year totalled £154,228, and the total cost of collecting was £3,248, or 3 per cent. That, I think, is exceptionally good. Practically the whole of that money is expended on the maintenance of hospitals. We have been able to carry out some slight repairs to hospitals, and to put aside a little for new buildings, but not nearly enough. As a matter of fact, £103,144 was paid out by way of special and regular subsidies to board and committee hospitals out of the fund last year, while £42,000 was expended in the maintenance of departmental hospitals. It will be seen, therefore, that the great bulk of the money went purely in maintenance. Even with a collection of £154,000 last year, we were still over £12,000 worse off regarding hospital expenditure than in the year prior to the introduction of the hospital tax. In the circumstances, some other provision will have to be made for buildings and

repairs to hospitals, and I was hopeful it would be made this year. The hospital fund will not enable that to be done, for we cannot possibly maintain the hospitals of the State and effect the necessary repairs out of the total proceeds of the fund. We had more money to spend on hospitals in the years before the hospital tax was levied than we have had since its imposition. The position is becoming rather serious, and money must be provided for the erection of new hospitals. For six years prior to the inauguration of the hospital fund we got an average annually of £23,000 for building purposes. Last year, prior to the introduction of the hospital tax, we had £48,000 from the entertainments tax and £104,000 from Consolidated Revenue. If members add those two amounts together, they will see that we were worse off, from a hospital maintenance standpoint, than when we got the £154,000 from the hospital tax last year. That position cannot continue much longer.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But last year you got fees in addition to £154,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We collected fees, but even so, we were still considerably worse off than previously. I know the fees went into Consolidated Revenue. So that, although we did receive those fees, it did not make the slightest difference. The total fees collected by all Government hospitals throughout Western Australia prior to the introduction of the hospital tax, went into Consolidated Revenue, and, on top of those fees, collected and debited against the fund, the Treasurer provided £104,000. I undertake to say that the fees collected last year were nothing in comparison with those received during the year prior to the imposition of the hospital tax. Conditions were better then, and the depression occurred when the hospital tax was levied.

Mr. Rodoreda: Into what fund do the fees go now?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are spent on the maintenance of hospitals, and do not go into Consolidated Revenue. The amount I refer to was over and above the actual fees collected. The amount was £168,000, and the fees reduced it to £104,000.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You had £104,000, plus the amusements tax.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and £16,000 from loan funds for buildings.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: How much from the amusement tax?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think it was £48,000.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [10.0]: I am glad the Minister has given us an opportunity to learn something of the ramifications of this department's finances. I wish to turn first to what he was dealing with when he sat down, references to receipts from the hospital tax fund. On the last balance sheet he presented to the House he showed that last year he received £146,000 in tax, £27,000 in hospital fees, a recoup for an advance made on X-ray plant at Fremantle £56; and his total receipts were £179,757 13s. 2d. That, of course, is considerably more than he gave me just now, namely £104,000 plus £16,000 from loan funds and £48,000 from amusement tax.

The Minister for Health: I know we did not get it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then the Auditor General's statement is not correct, for your balance sheet shows exactly how the money was spent. I admit that it cost £3,562 to collect, but I am going to tell the Minister that he is giving away £20,000 this year.

The Minister for Health: Am I?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. Have a look at your own Estimates. I heard a very good case put up by the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) the other night when he pleaded for fewer hours for the nurses in Government hospitals. The Minister then told a good story, and I believed it. I thought he was short of money. However, that is not so, because he is giving away a great deal more than it would cost to afford the nurses fewer hours; he is giving away this year, £19,665. For in the previous year's Estimates the whole cost of the Wooroloo Sanatorium came from Consolidated Revenue.

The Minister for Health: And so, too, this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This year it does not. On page 76 of the Estimates there are set out the details of the Vote of £5,400. Last year the amount shown for total salaries and wages was £13,664, whereas this year it is only

£6,008. The salaries of the resident medical officer and of the assistant resident medical officer are to come out of the hospital fund tax this year, as are also the salaries of the secretary, £448, and of the matron £191. Those salaries are to come out of the hospital fund tax, not out of Consolidated Revenue. Also there is to come out of the hospital fund tax an amount of £8,645 for nurses, domestic staff, housemaids, wards-maids, and a number of others, plus £40 for the chaplain; all this is to come out of the tax, not out of Consolidated Revenue. On the Estimates last year there was an item of £9,000 for the Wooroloo Sanatorium, and of that amount £8,896 was spent. This year no provision is made on the Estimates for a single penny for the Wooroloo Sanatorium. Will the Minister say that statement is not correct? Every penny of it is to come out of the hospital fund tax. If there was one thing we fought against, it was that the Wooroloo Sanatorium, which is a national institution, should be provided for out of the hospital tax.

The Minister for Health: You have an amazing idea of the position.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: My statement is quite correct.

The Minister for Health: Then why is there shown in this year's Estimates the exact increase of expenditure?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, the Vote for 1933-34 was £16,500, of which £15,791 was spent. This year the amount shown is £6,560. I do not think the Minister has looked at this part of his Estimates.

The Minister for Health: Why did not you read the figure immediately below that, beginning "less rebated to hospital fund"?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will quote that now. It does not make the slightest difference. I am showing the items as set out, and that expenditure was provided for in the 1933-34 Estimates, for which no provision whatever is made in these Estimates for 1934-35.

The Minister for Health: Of what amount?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of those items I have read out. There is no provision made for them. Take the Wooroloo Sanatorium; there is no provision for that on this year's Estimates. The Minister will see that the Vote for total salaries last year was £13,694, of which £13,664 was spent, whereas this

year only £6,008 is provided, or a decrease of £7,656, which no doubt is money coming out of the hospital fund tax for the purpose of maintaining the Wooroloo Sanatorium.

The Minister for Health: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will be glad if the Minister can explain it, but my statement is quite correct.

The Minister for Health: It is not even debited against the hospital fund this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Because the fund is not there to be debited. When I was Minister for Health we were always having it thrown up to us that this tax would be used to relieve Consolidated Revenue. Tonight the Minister has said that he has insufficient money; yet here in this one item he is giving away £19,000.

The Minister for Health: I am not. Why do not you look at the Estimates? There you will find the exact figures for the salaries. What you have quoted are merely the details of it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: These are salaries not relating to Wooroloo. Take Item 2.

The Minister for Health: No, it is Item 1 that carries the salaries.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Until you come to the Wooroloo Sanatorium, where there is no provision whatever for 1933-34. Where are these items to come from? You have not dismissed the resident medical officer, nor his assistant.

The Minister for Health: No. We are paying them out of Consolidated Revenue.

The Acting Premier: The figures you have quoted are taken from a group showing the details of Item No. 1.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is the Commissioner of Public Health and Principal Medical Officer, with a total of £1,031. Then there are clerks above the automatic range, £1,240, clerks within the automatic range, £852, North-West medical service, £2,750, plus partial exemption from financial emergency legislation £135. The total is £6,008, and there is no provision whatever for the Wooroloo Sanatorium item which was shown on last year's Estimates. From what are you going to pay them?

The Minister for Health: They were there last year, debited against the hospital fund tax, but the futility of that has now been recognised.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They must be shown here if they are to be paid from Consolidated Revenue; but they are not on the Estimates, because they are to be paid out of the hospital tax fund. The money has to be found, and it must either be provided for on the Estimates or taken from the hospital tax fund.

The Minister for Health: It does not come from the hospital tax fund this year. The Estimates show it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They do not. I advise members that on the Estimates there is no provision for carrying on the Wooroloo Sanatorium, not a penny piece. No provision is made for the whole of the medical and nursing services or for provisions, bedding and clothing, fuel, medicines and surgical instruments, equipment, uniforms for staff, travelling, telephones, forage, machinery and oils, etc., or items not otherwise provided for. It is of no use the Minister repeating that there is provision in the Estimates. There is not. If he desires to give the nurses the relief that the member for Perth requested, he has the money there instead of giving it away to the Government to inflate their revenue.

The Minister for Health: Not a penny piece went to the Government last year, and there is nothing on the Estimates for Wooroloo Sanatorium this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am sorry the Under Secretary is not present to advise the Minister, because what I have said is correct.

The Minister for Health: You know nothing at all about it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I can see the point, but unfortunately the Minister cannot. I have told him what is happening, and I think it has come as a surprise to him.

The Minister for Health: Not at all.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Last year the Treasurer announced that it was proposed to remove the Wooroloo expenses from Consolidated Revenue and charge them against the hospital tax fund.

The Minister for Health: He charged them all right last year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The items are shown on the Estimates, but whereas provision was made for them last year, no provision is made for this year. I have given the Minister some information. I say there

is £20,000 available for repairs to hospitals and for better conditions for the nursing staff if the Minister uses it, instead of helping Consolidated Revenue to that extent.

The Minister for Health: The item has increased now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the Minister wishes to have the exact amount, it is £19,665.

The Minister for Health: Where do you get that amount?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: R.M.O. and Assistant R.M.O. £1,345, secretary £448, matron £191, nurses, domestic staff, etc., £8,645, chaplain £40.

The Acting Premier: All those items are provided for under Item No. 1.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not at all.

The Acting Premier: Yes, they are. See the heading "Informative only; details of the item are."

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What is happening is that £6,008 is provided, but contingencies constitute a separate item. Last year an amount of £9,000 was provided and £8,998 was expended. This year no provision is made, and consequently the amount must be provided out of the hospital tax fund.

The Minister for Health: That was portion of the £15,000 provided last year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Estimates show contingencies £6,560, including incidental, travelling and transport, postage and telephones, miscellaneous, medical attendance and subsidies to doctors and nurses, none of which is to be used for the Wooroloo Sanatorium. I have raised the point that it is unfair of the Minister to tell us at this stage that there are insufficient funds.

The Minister for Health: There are insufficient funds.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then the Minister should see that the Treasurer does not take the £19,665. Of course he will get it under the Estimates as they are framed.

The Minister for Health: He will not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is of no use the Minister saying that.

Mr. Marshall: You will have to watch the Acting-Treasurer.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think he has had anything to do with it. I wish to congratulate the foreman of the Wooroloo Sanatorium farm. In the

last two years he has shown the champion Shorthorn and is breeding up a wonderful herd. He is devoting the whole of his time to the work—

Mr. Marshall: Is it not a full-time job?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, but he does not mind how many hours he works, or what the conditions are, so long as he can do justice to the herd, and there is no doubt he is doing it. He should be commended for the number of prizes he has won, particularly during the last two years. I admit that money has been spent on the farm, but he has turned the farm from a losing to a profitable proposition, which has been very useful not only to the sanatorium but to the State. I point out to the member for Perth that there is an opportunity to get the £20,000 he requires for improving the conditions of nurses by telling the Treasurer that Consolidated Revenue must carry the cost of the Wooroloo Sanatorium as in years gone by.

MR. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [10.18]: I congratulate the Minister on the alteration made to the system in the North-West, which will be of great benefit to the residents. There was a misunderstanding on the part of the Wyndham people, but the Minister has justified himself by the administration of the Act and the alteration of the system in the North. Under the leased hospital system that the people of the North had to put up with, they were getting a very raw deal. Matters were very unsatisfactory from every point of view, particularly from the standpoint of indigent patients. The objection raised was due to the departmental information forwarded to the road boards in the Wyndham area. The new system was not fully explained and the residents of Wyndham misunderstood the position. They believed what they had read in the Press that the aerial system to be established by the Australian Inland Mission was the system to be inaugurated in the Wyndham district, and that the doctor appointed for their district would be required to travel throughout the length and breadth of the North-West. Naturally they were very concerned about it, and were entitled to put up a protest. The matter was not fully explained to them. Everything was done in a hurry, because the medical practitioner in Wyndham had telegraphed his resignation. Just at that point the new system was being

inaugurated, but only part of the information was forwarded to the people at Wyndham. They have no objection to the doctor being called away in the case of a serious accident, or sickness in the interior. They have given credit to doctors in the past when these men have travelled hundreds of miles with pack horses to attend serious cases. All credit is due to the medical staff we have had in times past. They gave the best service that was possible. The new system will give us what we have needed for some time. We have wanted younger men with new ideas, men with the nerve to perform operations when necessary. We know the department had no intention of discrediting the medical staff of the past. We should be entitled to be brought nearer to civilisation than we have been in the past. The people are very satisfied with what the Minister has done, and give him every credit for the inauguration of the new system.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [10.22]: I was naturally interested in the wordy duel between the Minister and the Leader of the Opposition concerning the whereabouts of a matter of £20,000, and as to whether it had been lost, stolen or strayed.

Mr. Moloney: They did not leave much for us.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I see the Minister looking through the Estimates in the hope of finding it. I trust the result of the argument will bring my desire, so far as nurses' hours are concerned, nearer to fruition. I still cling to the hope that the Minister will have a change of heart and carry my motion into effect. I should like to know how the negotiations are proceeding for the erection of a new hospital or additions to the present Perth Hospital. The matter is a very important one. The hospital is seriously overcrowded, and the Minister, members of Parliament, and the public are well aware of it. When my motion with regard to an eight-hour day for nurses was being debated the Minister said he was conducting negotiations with a view to getting another site on which a hospital might be erected.

The Minister for Health: I am having a conference to-morrow at noon.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I hope the Minister will be able to give some further information on the point.

The Minister for Health: Not until that conference has been held.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I wish to refresh the Minister's memory about a deputation which waited on him a few months ago seeking the re-establishment of the psychological clinic. That was the most representative deputation of its kind that ever waited upon a Minister of the Crown in this State. It was also the largest, and comprised mostly representatives of every women's organisation in Western Australia. The Minister was very enthusiastic in his support of the idea, but stressed the shortage of money. Since then he has again, in reply to inquiries, stated that money was tight.

The Minister for Health: It was the Premier who said that.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Is the Premier in a better mood to help the Minister to re-open the clinic which was established by a Labour Government, but was closed, I understand, by the Government which succeeded them? The Minister knows the good that was done by the clinic, and no doubt increasing good would have been done had it been kept going. Some cynics in the community may look upon such an establishment as a luxury, but not those who have given attention to the matter. It is a growing necessity in modern times, and it is essential that one should be established in our midst, just as they are established in other parts of the world. I hope the Minister will soon be able to tell us that the clinic will be re-opened.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [10.27]: It is wholly impossible to understand the assertion of the Minister that the Woorloo Sanatorium expenses are provided for on the Estimates.

The Minister for Health: I did not say they were.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Then where is the money to come from?

The Minister for Health: Don't worry about that. The money will be there all right.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is, of course, coming out of the hospital tax collections. No other source is available. It is ridiculous to pretend that the £6,008 on the Estimates covers a single penny of the expenditure on the Woorloo Sanatorium.

The Acting Premier: The Estimates clearly set out that it does.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Surely the Minister is not serious in that statement?

The Acting Premier: Yes. It is all contained in Item 1. The details are there.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The whole of that amount is finished off with the salary of the Commissioner for Public Health, the clerks above the automatic range, those within it, and the North-West medical services, together with a small provision for partial exemption from the financial emergency legislation. Not a penny of that falls to the Woorloo Sanatorium. The Acting Treasurer must admit that. It is plain that the £8,996 which last year was necessary for the Woorloo Sanatorium under such provisions as bedding, clothing, fuel, medicines, etc., is not provided. Where is the money to come from? Of course it must come from the hospital tax. And yet the Minister denies that, as if he was grabbing the money out of the air.

Mr. Hegney: It might come out of the State lotteries.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The hospital tax collections provide the only source for the money. It could not come from any other source except the fund, which the Minister said would not be sufficient for the upkeep of the hospital.

The Minister for Health: I said it was not sufficient to provide for the upkeep of the building.

Hon. N. KEENAN: What about the £19,000 for the building fund?

The Minister for Health: It will not be paid this year.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Let the Minister have an understanding of his Estimates, and not tell us a fairy tale and ask us to discuss it. Let the Minister tell us something that is actual and real. Here is something that is actual and real—an amount of £19,655 which he can apply to the building fund, instead of telling us that tale of woe he has told us to-night. At this hour it is not possible to debate the Estimates in the way they should be debated, or to get the information which it is necessary the country should have before the Estimates are passed. This little incident is a strong illustration of that. Here we have had a picture painted to us that is wholly illusive—£19,655 gone astray. And still we are asked to pass these Estimates! I object to their being passed in so perfunctory a manner. And there are other matters connected with the Vote that I would like to

have the opportunity of discussing, as for instance the question of giving some greater consideration to the inmates of the Old Men's Home. They, no doubt, have their grievances, because all those who are in the position these men are in find themselves faced with grievances. However, there are some very genuine grievances. When times are so improved that the financial emergency cut has been restored to many who have had to suffer it, surely it is also right to give some consideration of the same kind to the old men. The little amount allotted for tobacco, £400 odd a year, represents, I am told, 6d. per week. Surely something might be done there when so much money is going astray. However, the principal matter I wish to emphasise is that we should not be asked to rush the Estimates through. There is no need whatever for haste.

The Minister for Health: None whatever!

Hon. N. KEENAN: At the present moment there is nothing on the Notice Paper that warrants the Government in saying there is need for the Estimates to be rushed through.

The Minister for Health: There are a lot more Estimates here yet.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is the very reason for not rushing through. I suppose the Minister would emphasise that when we have Estimates we ought to rush them through.

The Minister for Health: You have had ample time to consider the Estimates. They have been longer in going through than any other Estimates since you have been in Parliament. You were the first to complain in the Press that we did not go on with business, and now we are going on with business you want to delay it. I do not care what you say.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Why should the Minister care? He has told a fairy story, and expects us to believe it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the Minister to keep quiet, and I must ask the member for Nedlands to address the Chair.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not wish to discuss the matter any further, because of the reason I have stated, that I do not think this Vote should be rushed through. We certainly should not be asked to pass the Vote before we clear up this mystery of

£19,655, and the story that was told us of the poverty of the Minister for the purpose of providing the necessary hospital accommodation while he has all this money up his sleeve to give back to the Treasurer.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.34]: I hope the Minister will agree to report progress. The position is becoming highly awkward and embarrassing, and I am sure no one desires to embarrass the hon. gentleman unduly. However, it would appear that these figures have been put up without the Minister having an opportunity to examine them. What is going to happen in future years? For this year we have figures showing the expenditure for 1933-34. Those figures, of course, are given; but the Estimates for the current year show blanks in many instances, thus supporting—

The Minister for Health: Blanks are shown wherever there was a rebate from the hospital fund.

Mr. SAMPSON: The blanks support the very clear statement of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the disappearance of money from the hospital tax fund. That surely cannot be allowed to continue, in view of the number of times either side of the Chamber has charged the other with protecting Consolidated Revenue and putting up statements that the hospital tax must be increased in order that hospital services may be provided. If that money is to be used to protect Consolidated Revenue, and if the Wooroloo Sanatorium—

The Minister for Health: You ought to talk like that, you being the man who introduced the Bill to take the money away.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister is speaking of the first tax. If the Minister could review the words he uttered at that time, he would be staggered at the audacity of what he said on the occasions when the House was held up hour after hour in an endeavour to oppose the imposition of a hospital tax.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is no opposition to the hospital tax. The opposition is to the fact that money is being taken from the hospital tax fund to protect Consolidated Revenue. That has been made clear over and over again. Out of deference to the Minister I say he should report progress and put up a statement of the position as

it exists, so that the Committee will have an opportunity of clearly understanding the matter. I do not want to say anything more than that. The Minister has shown that he does not understand the matter.

The Minister for Health: Your statement is absolutely as clear as mud!

Mr. SAMPSON: If so, we have a doubly muddy outlook. Undoubtedly, apart from the statements of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nedlands, there has not been anything to clarify the position, at all events from the other side of the Chamber, if the Minister will pardon my saying so. I do not want to see this new method instituted. It seems to me that if we pass this Vote as it is, then in years to come we shall have a repetition of what is occurring here to-night. The fact that a precedent has been established will perhaps have the effect of preventing criticism in future. It is definitely wrong, and the Committee, irrespective of party, should take a stand against it.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [10.39]: I wish to ask the Minister one or two questions. I would like to know whether the Health Department have given any consideration to the imposition of uniform hospital fees. The hospital of one town charges a certain fixed rate per day, while another hospital committee, only a few miles away, charges something else. It ought to be possible to bring about uniformity in hospital charges. Again, I was wondering what percentage of hospital fees is being collected by the various hospital boards.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The particulars are all in the report.

Mr. McLARTY: I had not noticed those figures. Recently I spoke about the provision of milk for school children. I shall be glad if the Minister can give any information in that regard to indicate the prospect of milk being provided for the children. That matter has received the attention of other Governments, and I trust the Minister will be able to give us some information in that regard.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [10.41]: Medical and health services are vital considerations in the North-West. It was pleasing to hear the Minister feature the improvements that have been, and are still

being effected in the North-West, and I agree with him that we are fortunate to have secured the services of Dr. Vickers, who has had such experience in the work he will undertake and who undoubtedly will start off the organisation on a sound basis. When I mentioned in the House last year the necessity for a flying doctor I did not anticipate that the scheme would be practically in operation within 12 months. From the Minister's statement this evening and from what I know of the position, I believe that the scheme will be in operation as soon as arrangements can be made with the aerial contractor. The system of having full-time doctors is wise, and all residents of the North-West will be in agreement on that point. We can accept the apology of the member for Kimberley who pointed out that his constituents had not realised to the full the intentions of the department, and now that they do, I am sure they will be in hearty agreement with the Government. It is a matter for congratulation for the people in the North that the leased hospital system has been abolished. Last year the Minister promised that he would abolish it, and he did so as soon as he possibly could. There is one complaint that I have to make, and it is that so far a maternity ward has not been provided at the Beadon Hospital. Last year the Minister promised that he would do his best to provide this facility. The department has made available a matron holding a double certificate, and the only thing that remains to be accomplished is the provision of the maternity ward. The Minister realises as well as I do that it is essential, for at present there is no provision for maternity cases nearer than at Roebourne, 200 miles away to the north, or at Carnarvon, 150 miles to the south. I trust the Minister will make available the money necessary to enable the ward to be established.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie — Hannans — in reply) [10.45]: Regarding the question raised by the member for Murray-Wellington, I do not know that it is the duty of the department to dictate to committees who control hospitals what charges should be levied. All the hospitals have been circularised with regard to fees, but I do not think it would be wise for

the department to attempt dictation in that respect. We will get on much better if we allow hospital committees to levy charges suitable to their districts. The charges levied at Government and semi-Government hospitals differ, and it is essential that it should be so in some instances. I do not know that it is right to say that, irrespective of where the hospital may be, the same rate of charges should be levied. It is not done anywhere in Australia that I know of. I do not want to enter into further arguments on any matters that have been dealt with. I do not know what the Auditor General's report will contain when it is issued, but I assure the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party that last year not one penny was paid from the Hospital Fund towards the support of the Wooroloo Sanatorium.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was refunded and is shown as such.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It was rebated from the hospital tax.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Evidently they took it out and paid it back.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If the Leader of the Opposition will allow me to make my statement, he will have the facts. Not one penny from hospital tax collections last year was paid towards the maintenance of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, nor will a penny be paid from that fund this year, if I still remain Minister for Public Health. Last year the Estimates provided for £14,000 being paid out of the hospital fund for the support of the Wooroloo Sanatorium. No Minister, Treasury official, or anyone else can spend one penny out of the hospital fund without my signature. The Act provides that the Minister for Public Health controls the fund. It does not say that I control it, but that no expenditure can be made from the fund without the authority of the Minister for Public Health. While that provision appears in the Act, I shall control the fund irrespective of what even Treasury officials may say. I did not spend one penny from the fund on Wooroloo last year, although I know the Treasurer has debited expenditure against it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They have credited you with the amount too.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They have debited the fund, but I did not sign the authorisation for the expenditure. No one else can do so. It was not paid from

the fund last year, and will not be paid from the fund this year. The accounts are there, and members will be able to peruse the audited balance sheet. When the Auditor General's report is presented, members will be able to ascertain whether I am £19,000 short in the hospital fund.

Hon. N. Keenan: Where are you to get the money from this year?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: From the Treasurer from whom it came last year, and from whom it will come this year.

Mr. Sampson: It is not provided for in the Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It will not be provided from the hospital fund.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It will be on the supplementary Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is no good arguing the point. I am administering the fund and not one penny piece has been spent unless my signature has been attached to the authorisation. The money is paid into the fund at the Treasury, but the Treasury cannot operate on the fund without my authority.

Hon. N. Keenan: Last year the Estimates made provision for Wooroloo.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Providing for it to come out of the hospital fund.

Hon. N. Keenan: No.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. The decrease this year is exactly what the rebate was last year. That was because they could not get it. They are not going to get it. Not one penny of hospital fund money was expended on Wooroloo last year.

Item, Salaries and allowances, etc.:

Mr. SAMPSON: I should like to have some information as to the intentions of the Minister in dealing with the mosquito scourge. Last year it was worse than ever before.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow you to discuss mosquitoes on the item for the salary of the Commissioner of Public Health. You had your chance on the general debate.

The Minister for Health: It is a matter for the local authorities as well as for the Commissioner of Public Health.

Mr. SAMPSON: I should like the Minister to encourage the local authorities so that there may be co-ordination in the work.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss that on this item.

Mr. SAMPSON: Well, I have said sufficient to indicate my feeling on the subject.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have checked Item No. 1 with last year's Estimates. The estimated expenditure last year was £13,694, with a rebate to the hospital fund of £10,677 leaving £3,017. It looks as if last year we took out of Consolidated Revenue £10,000 of the actual sum paid under this Vote. I hope the Minister will look into that question and, if necessary, bring down supplementary Estimates.

Mr. RODOREDA: It appears that last year we voted £13,694 for salaries and wages, but that there was a rebate of £10,662 which had been spent from the hospital tax fund. Under item No. 3 we voted last year £9,000 for the Wooroloo Sanatorium. We did not spend one penny of that from revenue, because we find here the note "Less rebate to hospital fund." We spent only £7,500 from revenue. So, according to this, not one penny from revenue was spent on Wooroloo Sanatorium last year, and certainly not a penny is provided in this year's Estimates for the sanatorium.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I thought when the Minister was speaking that he might have answered my question regarding the Perth Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have no further information than I had when I made a statement the other night, but I have succeeded in getting that conference, which is to be held at 12 o'clock to-morrow. After the conference I may be able to tell the hon. member something more.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 2), £700,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.