

Clause passed.

Clauses 152 to 180—agreed to.

Clause 181—Examination of milk:

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: This clause provided that it was an offence to sell milk drawn from a cow within ten days before or five days after calving. The period should be one month before calving, and four days afterwards would be sufficient.

Hon. E. McLARTY: This was a matter of importance. The person who drafted the clause had evidently little knowledge of this subject.

Hon. W. T. LOTON: Perhaps it would be well to extend the time to twenty or thirty days before calving. Members need not trouble about the question, for few cows would give any milk up to the time of calving.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE moved an amendment—

*That in line 1 of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1, the word "ten" be struck out and "thirty" inserted in lieu.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no objection to the amendment.

Amendment passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 182 to 193—agreed to.

Clause 194—Sale of food and drugs not of the nature and substance and quality demanded:

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: What was the definition of "sells any compounded food or drug which is not compounded of the ingredients in accordance with the demand of the purchaser"?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This was a copy of Sections 45 and 46 of the present Act and of the English Act. It was quite clear.

Clause passed.

Clauses 195 to 211—agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eleven minutes past 6 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 12th November, 1907.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Railways: Rates and Regulations for the conveyance of passengers, stock, and parcels.

By the Minister for Works: Special By-laws passed by the Peak Hill Roads Board.

By the Premier: 1, Agreement and Reports in connection with the proposed purchase of the Denmark Railway and Estate. 2, Plans (3) showing classification of lands near Denmark and between Denmark and Bridgetown.

By the Attorney General: Papers re imprisonment of Joseph Chilman for Contempt of Court at Kalgoorlie.

## QUESTION—DEBTOR IMPRISONED, A MEDICAL LEVY.

Mr. BATH asked the Attorney General: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the case of Mr. Joseph Chilman, who is undergoing imprisonment for contempt of court because of his refusal to pay an account for medical attendance for which he had made provision by payment to a medical levy? 2, If so, has any action been taken by the Crown Law Department in the matter?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Resident Magistrate was asked to furnish a report on the matter, which I have laid upon the table of the House. As the report is somewhat long,

I will ask leave to lay it on the table of the House.

Paper laid on table.

# QUESTION — MINERS' MEDICAL AGREEMENTS.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines : Will he give consideration to the question of making provision for the registration of medical agreements on the mines, with a view to ensuring their due observance ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied : I have referred the matter to the Colonial Secretary, and will advise the hon. member later.

# QUESTION—WATER-METER RENT, AS TO ABOLISHING.

Mr. DAGLISH asked the Minister for Works : Is it the intention of the Government, in accordance with the expressed will of this House, to abolish the charge made for water-meter rent at the end of the present year ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied : Yes ; but some rearrangement of rates and charges for excess water may be necessary to recoup the loss of revenue occasioned by the abolition of meter rents.

# QUESTION—MACHINERY INSPECTION OFFICERS.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Minister for Mines : 1, On what dates did the Chief Inspector of Machinery leave Perth to conduct engine-drivers' examinations at Bunbury and Ravensthorpe respectively in October last, and what was the date of his return in each instance ? 2, Was he accompanied by another officer of the Mines Department ? If so, by whom ? 3, What amount was paid to each officer by way of allowances in addition to salaries ? 4, What was the total number of candidates examined in each instance ? 5, Was any other work or duty performed by each in addition to the conduct of such examinations ? If so, the

nature of same ? 6, What was the total cost of the two visits, including salaries and allowances ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied : 1, (a) Left Perth 30th September for Bunbury and returned 3rd October. (b) Left Perth for Ravensthorpe 7th October, and returned 19th October. 2, (a) Yes. To Bunbury by Inspector of Machinery Tickle. (b) To Ravensthorpe by Inspector of Mines Cullingworth. 3, (a) Inspector Tickle, £1 2s. 6d. (b) Inspector Cullingworth, £8 10s. (c) Chief Inspector of Machinery, £13 7s. 4d. 4, (a) Bunbury : Applications, 8 ; Candidates, 3. (b) Ravensthorpe : Applications, 13 ; candidates, 10. (c) Albany : Applications, 5 ; candidates, 3. 5, Yes. Inspection of plants ; inspection of mines ; and examination of engine-drivers at Albany. 6, £73 8s. 8d., including delay at Hopetoun through non-arrival of steamer.

# QUESTION—RAILWAY OFFICER'S CLAIM FOR LOSS OF OFFICE.

*Ex-Detective McCartney.*

Mr. DAGLISH (without notice), on behalf of Mr. Foulkes, asked the Minister for Railways : Will he lay on the table the correspondence between ex-detective McCartney and the Minister for Railways and the Acting Commissioner of Railways, in connection with Mr. McCartney's claim for compensation for loss of office

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied : I have no objection.

# DENMARK RAILWAY AND ESTATE PURCHASE.

*Motion to Approve.*

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purpose of the purchase.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) moved—

*That this House approves of the purchase by the Government of the Denmark Railway and Estate, at the*

*price of £50,000, and subject to the terms and conditions of a Draft Agreement now submitted to the House.*

He said: I have here a copy of the agreement referred to, also copies of various reports on the property under consideration, plans showing the route of the railway, also of the lands referred to in the schedule to the agreement, and the Government lands available for selection in the vicinity of the railway. I have pleasure in laying these papers, by leave, on the table of the House. In submitting this motion for the approval of purchase, I shall endeavour to give hon. members as much information as possible in regard to the nature and quality of the land which forms the subject of this proposal, as well as the negotiations which have led to the project now submitted for the consideration of the House. The Denmark Estate forms a portion of Location 402. It is one of those locations acquired some years ago by the West Australian Land Company, when the railway from Albany to Beverley was built. This railway, and the lands forming the subject of discussion, were revested in the Government in 1896, when the Great Southern Railway and the lands adjacent thereto were acquired by purchase from the West Australian Land Company for the sum of £1,100,000. In the year 1884, prior to Responsible Government, a contract was entered into by the Western Australian Government with Mr. Anthony Hordern for the construction of a railway from Albany to Beverley, the consideration being that on the completion of that railway he or his assigns were to receive a Crown grant of 12,000 acres per mile for each mile of railway constructed. Later on a company was formed to take over this concession from Mr. Hordern. The railway was constructed, and some 3,000,000 acres of land was vested in the company. This land was selected within an area of 40 miles on either side of the railway from Albany to Beverley. Amongst the first areas selected was this Location 402, which comprised an area 38 miles long by 10 miles wide, from Albany north, on the western side of the Great Southern Railway. Some 19 years ago by a

strange coincidence, I was entrusted with the survey of this Location 402, the first block surveyed by the West Australian Land Company; which survey, by the way, was very heavy work owing to the dense scrub in that part of the district. While I was engaged on the survey of this line I drew attention to the fact that we had some splendid forests of karri in the neighbourhood of the Denmark River and to the north of Wilson's Inlet, with the result that a little later the attention of several well-known timber people was called to that fact. Soon afterwards Messrs. Hudson Brothers, the great rolling-stock firm of Sydney, came over and made an inspection of this land with a view to establishing mills in the neighbourhood; but owing to the fact that the West Australian Land Company at that time asked £2 an acre for the land, the deal was declared off. When it was decided to call tenders for the construction of the Great Southern Railway, Millar Brothers were the successful tenderers; and as soon as their earthworks were laid down as far as Torbay they immediately proceeded to lay down a railway from what is known as Torbay Junction to the Torbay Hills, with a view to establishing in the hills mills for supplying them with timber to be used in the Great Southern line. As a result, sleepers for the first 180 miles of the railway from Albany towards Beverley were supplied from the Torbay district. For years afterwards Millar Brothers carried on the timber milling industry at Torbay; and when the timber in that district was cut out they extended the line to Denmark and acquired from the West Australian Land Company some 24,000 acres, which area is portion of the land we are at the present moment discussing. This line was an extension of an original line previously put down by Millar Brothers, under an agreement with the West Australian Land Company, whereby Millar Brothers received 2,000 acres per mile for each mile of railway they constructed, conditionally upon certain improvements being undertaken, the Government reserving the right to purchase the railway, at the expira-

tion of seven years, at the rate of £1,000 per mile. Failing this, the railway was to revert to the Government in 14 years' time. However, this agreement was amended in May, 1899, Millar Brothers giving up the concession of about 25,000 acres, inclusive of the 15,000 held in fee simple, together with improvements valued at £10,000; and in consideration they received the fee simple of a strip of land two chains wide and about four and a-half long on which their line was built, together with the fee simple of 1,000 acres surrounding the manager's house. This amendment of the original agreement was brought about as the result of a motion passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 12th October, 1898. The company then purchased this additional land and resumed operations on what was known as the Denmark townsite, situated on the Denmark River, one mile north of where the river enters Wilson's Inlet. In 1904, during the time the Daglish Government was in power, Millars agreed to hand over this railway and concession if the Government would provide an equal mileage of rails and fastenings and at the same time grant a timber lease of 100,000 acres near Warren River, at nominal rent. Their idea was to construct a line from somewhere near Karridale, thirty odd miles in the direction of the Warren. This offer was quite rightly refused, inasmuch as, had it been agreed to, it would have meant that the Government for the 23,000 acres which had already been cut out would have been giving up 100,000 acres of the best karri land in Western Australia. If I had been asked to pick the best 50,000 acres of karri country in Western Australia I would certainly have located it in the neighbourhood of the Warren. Those members who have had an opportunity of inspecting the karri forests there will bear me out in this contention. Negotiations still continued and Inspector Brockman was asked to report on the country lying between Bridgetown and Denmark, paying special attention to the country in the vicinity of the head of the line from Denmark. Towards the end of 1905 Mr. Chaplin,

who was then Director of Agriculture, and who had been instructed to make an inspection of the Albany District to report upon its suitability for dairying operations, also made an inspection of the property under review, and formed a very high opinion of its value as a suitable district for carrying on dairy operations. He also made a valuation in connection with this property, which was considered by members of the Cabinet at that time a very high one. He stated in reference to it :—

"The country in this locality, and which may be said to be tapped by the railway, contains probably some of the best soil in the State, while the climate is all that can be desired for agricultural purposes. A perusal of the attached rainfall return (from 1898 to 1904) gives an adequate idea of what may be considered its extremely favourable moisture. It will be noticed that in the summer months the rainfall is ample, and country such as this should constitute one of the best fields in Australia for the settlement of dairy farmers, orchardists, and general agriculturists. There is permanent water and running streams, and if the country were cut up into blocks of from 100 to 200 acres, there would be room for a considerable number of families. While I was at the settlement horses were provided, and in company with a number of the settlers I visited and inspected a large area of the country. In addition to the area held by the company there are about 100,000 acres of first-class Crown land, which it is estimated would be served by the railway, and which could be profitably utilised, were the line in the hands of the State. The country is undulating, both ridge and valley over large areas being composed of chocolate or brown soil indicative of more than ordinary fertility."

I do not propose to give members the benefit of the whole of the report, as I have laid the document on the table of the House. I may incidentally mention

that Mr. Chaplin valued the property at £74,895, the items being as follow :—

	£
18,147 acres of first-class land at £2 per acre .. .. .	36,847
6,145 acres of second-class land at 6s. 8d. per acre .. .. .	2,048
30 miles of railway at £1,000 per mile .. .. .	30,000
Buildings .. .. .	4,000
Plant, including locomotive and rolling stock .. .. .	2,000
	— — —
	£74,895
	— — —

Mr. Chaplin adds to his estimate the following :—

“The railway appears to me to be in good running order at present, although I did not examine it carefully. I would respectfully suggest, however, that an officer from the Railway Department be requested to make a valuation of the line. There are some rather expensive bridges on the line, and the earthworks, in places, have evidently involved a fair amount of work.”

Millars made an offer for the disposal of this line and land for £85,000, payable in four per cent. debentures, which was considered by Cabinet too high, and a letter was written to them informing them accordingly. In February of that year I visited Albany, proceeding from Bridgetown. I was accompanied by the Honorary Minister (Mr. Mitchell), and we went through to Albany. While at Albany I received a deputation from the settlers in the neighbourhood and the townspeople as to the purchase of this railway, and later on I took the opportunity of going out to Denmark, renewing my acquaintance with the district, and made an inspection (lasting a few hours) of the property which is now under review. Later on I reported to Cabinet the result of my visit in the following terms :—

“I beg to submit for Cabinet’s consideration on the papers hereunder dealing with the Torbay and Denmark property of Millars’ Karri and Jarrah Co. Ltd., together with the company’s offer to sell the whole of the land, railway, and improvements to the Govern-

ment for £85,000, payable in 4 per cent. debenture bonds, redeemable in 1925, not to bear interest till after the 31st December, 1909, or alternatively for the sum of £70,000 payable in debenture bonds bearing 4 per cent. interest from 1st July, 1906, redeemable in 1925.”

I proceeded to give a review of what had taken place in regard to the negotiations and went on to say farther :—

“On my instructions an officer of the department reported on the land contained within this estate (pages 55-59 of 1720/04 attached) in which it is stated there are 22 settlers in close proximity to the railway, holding in the aggregate 6,000 acres. Twelve of the areas totalling 3,680 acres are in good order, but the remaining 10 with 1,900 acres are only in the first stages of settlement. The value of improvements made by the first 12 settlers was estimated at about £5,000. They have grown some hay crops, and the average for the district is something like two tons to the acre. The potato crops last year returned an average of about 4 tons, some of them going as high as 10 tons, and as much as 10 tons of onions have been raised in the district ; the country consists of red gum and karri. During my recent visit I had an opportunity of inspecting some of the market gardens there and found that the vegetables were doing remarkably well. I was also satisfied, as a result of this visit, that grasses grow exceptionally well, as there were several splendid plots of lucerne, rye, red and white clover, paspalum, and cocksfoot. There can be no doubt as to the productiveness of the soil in this part of the State, and provided the property could be purchased at a reasonable figure I would recommend that the Government acquire it. I cannot agree with the valuation given by either the Director of Agriculture or that submitted by the company, despite the fact that it is a substantial reduction on their previous valuation of £123,650. I think if this property could be purchased for £50,000 it would be a good deal for the State, but

whether the company would accept that or not I am not in a position to say. My estimate is made up as follows:—

	£
25,000 acres at 17s. 6d. per acre .. .. .	21,875
Railway .. .. .	23,200
Buildings .. .. .	3,000
Plant .. .. .	2,000
	----
Total .. .. .	£50,075
	----

The question of the purchase of this railway and land by the Government is a burning one with the people already settled there. A deputation was introduced to me in Albany on my recent visit by Mr. Barnett, M.L.A., which included among others the Hons. Wesley Maley, M.L.C., and S. J. Haynes, M.L.C., the Mayor of Albany, Mr. A. Y. Hassell, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and a considerable number of settlers and residents adjacent to the line. The object of the deputation was to urge upon the Government the necessity for acquiring this railway and lands. It was pointed out that owing to the stoppage of the train service several of the settlers had to abandon their holdings, although they had taken up the land on the understanding that the line would continue to be run, and as the roads were practically impassable, they had found it impossible to carry on. I promised the deputation to lay the matter before Cabinet on my return. Whether this property could be acquired under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act or whether consent of Parliament would first be necessary to the purchase is a matter on which I should like to have the opinion of the Crown Law Department, and if Cabinet consents I will take the necessary steps to obtain this advice with a view to opening up negotiations with the company on the basis of my valuation of the property."

The last offer we received from Millars was £75,000, practically the value which the then Director of Agriculture had

placed upon it. While the Rason Government were in power I wrote under instructions from Cabinet stating that we considered the price too high, and were not prepared to consider farther negotiations unless a more reasonable price was submitted. Eventually Millars agreed that they would be able to offer us the property for £50,000, subject to the approval of their London directors. That was during the latter end of last year. During the early part of this year Mr. Paterson, the Manager of the Agricultural Bank, was asked to proceed to Denmark with a view to reporting on the property and as to the advisability or otherwise of the Government acquiring it. He visited the area, made a careful inspection of the property, and was very enthusiastic as to its adaptability for close settlement. He stated that it was an ideal spot for dairying operations, and spoke very favourably in regard to the purchase of the property. He did not profess to value the railway, but confined his operations to the inspection of the land. Speaking of this property he said:—

"Undoubtedly this portion of the property contains some of the very best soil in Western Australia. The climate is all that could be desired for agronomic purposes, and if wisely handled will become the most valuable area of equal size in this State. The annual rainfall may be put down at 45 inches, therefore sufficient for the needs of settlers who should practise intense culture on this most suitable area. Situated as this land is some 40 miles west of Albany, and near the coast, it is practically free from frosts, consequently there is no risk for the potato grower on this score, and big crops through the year should be relied upon. Onions also should give good returns, for both climate and land are most suitable for their growth. English grasses keep green the year round, which makes it possible for dairying to be engaged in with certainty of profit, and it is in this locality where the best apples are grown, therefore it may be reasonably

supposed, if the right class of settler occupies this country they will be prosperous. I had an opportunity of seeing some of the settlers in this locality, and found that all kinds of vegetables, lucerne, rye grass, many clovers, cocksfoot, and paspalum, grow exceptionally well. The fruit trees are remarkable for size and productiveness; therefore, as a whole, the 24,582 acres I inspected would be of good value to this State at 20s. per acre."

Members will notice that Mr. Paterson, in his valuation, allows 2s. 6d. per acre more than I did when valuing the property. He states farther:—

"If this land and railway is secured by the State, I would strongly advise limiting the area for one person to 100 acres. There would be a better prospect of the whole area being subdued and brought under cultivation. Therefore I think special effort should be made to secure first-class men to select and every encouragement given financially to enable settlers to put their land to its best use. From this estate in a few years the output of fruit, potatoes, onions, and butter would add materially to the prosperity of Albany, as the port for shipment of apples must be there, and they could be taken from the cool lands on which they would be grown and shipped within a few hours into cool chambers, without being subject to any climatic changes which would be likely to injure them. Western Australia's greatest want agronomically to-day is suitable summer land for dairying, and here at Denmark it appears to me the summer would be the most prolific season, as the rainfall appears to be certain and sufficient for this most important industry."

His valuation of the lands comprised in the whole area, at £1 per acre, was £24,882, while he estimated the value of the buildings at £4,500; or a total of £29,382. But he asked that the railway itself should be valued by an officer of the Railway Department, with the result that the Commissioner of Railways was instructed to send an officer. The officer selected was Mr. Dartnall, who put down

the value of the railway as a going concern at £28,000. This Mr. George considered too high; but taking Mr. Dartnall's valuation of £28,000 and Mr. Paterson's valuation of the land and buildings at £29,382, a total valuation is arrived at of a little over £57,000, or somewhere about £7,000 more than the valuation I made in February of last year. During the progress of these negotiations the train service was hung up for a considerable period, and we received constant representations from people in the vicinity urging us to see what could be done to enable them to secure railway communication. The railway was there, and settlers had produce which they desired to take to market; and the only means they had of getting to market was by one of the most wretched roads in the country, some of the flats being bogholes in winter and sandheaps in summer. In 1906 Millars' Company made the suggestion to run a train service—a bi-weekly service, I think—for £1,750 per annum. To this the Government could not agree. In February of this year arrangements were made for a weekly service; but it was found more convenient to have a fortnightly service, a train to run from and to Albany on the same day, this being preferable. In February of this year, consequently, a lease was granted to the Government, pending the completion of these negotiations and subject to the Government keeping the line in order, at a peppercorn rental. That agreement was signed in March of this year, and the train service started on May 3rd. I have laid on the table of the House a copy of the agreement for the purchase of the railway. I do not think it necessary to go fully into the terms of that agreement, farther than to say that its chief points are that under the agreement the Government obtains from Millars' Karri and Jarrah Company (1902), Limited, the right of purchase of the Denmark Railway and all the land belonging to the company comprised in the area served by the railway from Torbay Junction to Denmark, and all the other property of the company relating to the railway excepting only that named in the schedule, at the price

of £50,000. We thought it more advisable to set out in the schedule what we were not buying, so that there could be no dispute when the railway was taken over as to what was or was not included in the agreement; therefore, the schedule sets out the property not included in the option, and includes practically only mill accessories. It is for the House to say whether the Government shall exercise the option in the terms of the draft agreement as now submitted for approval. By this agreement the Government will obtain the railway and lands embodied in the draft agreement free of all encumbrances, and payment is to be made to the trustees of the debenture holders of the company. The option contains all the ordinary conditions of sale as between vendor and purchaser, with a farther provision reserving the rights of the company in the event of the option not being exercised. I have already set out the details of the various valuations; but it may not be out of place at this stage to briefly set them out once more, so that members may have some idea as to how the various valuations were arrived at. The first valuation was made in November 1906, by the then Director of Agriculture, who set out as his value £74,895, made up by £36,847 for the first-class land, £2,048 for the second-class land, £30,000 for the railway, £4,000 for the buildings, and £2,000 for the plant. My valuation was—25,000 acres at 17s. 6d. per acre, £21,875; railway, £23,200 (a little over £700 per mile); buildings and plant, £5,000; total, £50,075. Mr. Paterson's valuation was—£24,882 for the land (at £1 per acre), and £4,500 for the buildings, or a total of £29,382 for the land and buildings exclusive of the railway, which railway was valued by Mr. Dartnall at £28,305. Mr. Dartnall's valuation was made up as follows—earth-works at £250 per mile, railway at £500 per mile, sleepers at £50 per mile, ballasting at £150 per mile, total per mile £950, or a total for the 28 miles of £26,600; to which he added—bridges £1,500, culverts £125, points and crossings £80. Mr. Dartnall farther states that he considers in order to put the line

in good working order it would be advisable to renew sleepers in different places, to strengthen the bridges, put in extra sidings near Denmark, clear scrub and trees etcetera, at a cost of £2,680. If the above work were carried out, he considers that a ganger and four men would be sufficient to keep the line in good repair, when an average speed of 15 miles an hour could be maintained throughout. [*Mr. Bath:* What weight of rails?] Rails, 45 lbs. We now have an opportunity of acquiring on exceptionally reasonable terms both the railway and the estate; and I think from the valuations made by the various officers concerned, it will be realized by hon. members that £50,000 is a reasonable offer. At least it seemed to the Government they would be wanting in their duty had they not submitted this offer to the House, with the fullest possible information, so that members might be in a position to judge for themselves as to whether it would be good business for the State to acquire this railway and property. The railway is 30 miles in length, and as shown by Mr. Dartnall is in fairly good working order; and it must eventually be the first section of a through line from Albany to Bridgetown. Undoubtedly that through line, if constructed, will start from Torbay Junction and go via Deep River, ultimately joining the existing railway system at Bridgetown. This area of 25,000 acres, as I have already pointed out, was selected some years ago from the Land Company by Millars, and contains a large portion of most fertile soil in a district noted for the magnificence of its climate and regular rainfall. I have endeavoured to give members every information possible, besides supplying particulars of the negotiations which have led up to the present proposal. Possibly the report which will influence members as much as any is that of the Manager of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Paterson, who has exceptional opportunities of becoming proficient in the art of valuing properties, and whose judgment is generally relied upon as being sound. I have given my idea of the value of the property, which undoubtedly contains a very big percentage of rich soil. Evi-



dence of the fertility of the soil may be obtained by those desirous of farther information on this point, in the experience of Mr. Knapp and others settled in the vicinity, who have reared large families on small areas of land. I would also like to point out that there are thousands of acres of good land at present Crown lands, which would be opened up, some of it splendid grazing country near the coast. Some of the hills in that neighbourhood form amongst the best grazing country in Western Australia. Mr. Brockman, who was instructed to report on that land, says:—

"It appears from the information obtainable that within a 10-mile radius of the Denmark-Torbay Railway there are some 35,000 acres suitable for selection under first-class conditions, including about 3,000 acres in the Torbay Agricultural Area, 10,000 acres of coast dairy land, and some 15,000 acres suitable for cultivation within the freehold land offered to the Government by the Timber Combine, and the adjoining land between that area and the coast."

Mr. Angove, from whose report I have already quoted, says that in his opinion there is a great future before that portion of the district. He states:—

"In my opinion, and I have formed that opinion by ocular demonstration, and having a knowledge of the district for a number of years, the district has a great future before it. When potatoes, onions, fruit and grasses will grow and can be seen growing so well on the various kinds of soil, there must be a bright future for it, if given the facilities necessary for development, viz., quick and stable means of communication."

Referring to the fishing industry, Mr. Angove says:—

"The fishing industry was carried on by Smith Brothers; but on the stoppage of the trains, they found carting too expensive and laborious, therefore they closed down."

As a matter of fact Wilson's Inlet, in the neighbourhood of this railway, is one of the best fishing grounds in Western Australia; and Smith Brothers, who were

established there for fifteen or twenty years, did a very big trade in this industry until the stoppage of the trains, when they found it too expensive to cart their fish into Albany.

Mr. Taylor: About what quantity of fish used they to send to market weekly?

The PREMIER: A little over two tons per week. Mr. Angove farther says:—

"There can be no doubt that the running of the trains would not pay expenses for some time; but something must be done if the district is to progress, and by running the trains it would give those already on the land better heart, and would enable them to farther improve their properties, and would also induce fresh settlement to take place."

Mr. Holman: Do not they run trains there now?

The PREMIER: We have lately entered into an agreement by which we have leased the property at a peppercorn rental pending the consideration of this proposal, and a train has been running every fortnight. First of all the arrangement was made for a weekly service, but afterwards it was found better to run trains fortnightly, one each way, so that people could go to and from Albany on the same day. Should Parliament approve of the proposal to secure this property it is our intention to spend a considerable amount of money on improving it, because it is no use purchasing the railway and buying the property if we do not do something to clear the land. On this land some of the densest undergrowth in West Australia grows. The karri has all been cut out, and the dense hazel scrub has practically taken possession of the land. My idea would be to slash down this scrub and burn it over, and subdivide the land into blocks of not more than 100 acres, clearing at least 10 acres of each block, so that each man who took up land would have a start and be able to secure some return.

Mr. Taylor: How much would it cost per acre to clear?

The PREMIER: Mr. Paterson estimates it at £4 an acre, but I think that if

it was cut down and burned at the proper time it could be got rid of for less.

*Mr. Bath* : What about the karri stumps ?

The PREMIER : It must be a question of time in dealing with them. I want members to thoroughly understand that if we do buy the property we will have to spend money on it.

*Mr. Taylor* : It really means that the Government have to spend £40 on each 100-acre block.

The PREMIER : Yes ; and the amount expended would be repaid over a period of 20 years, just as we have done when we have ringbarked in other portions of the State. The rainfall is abundant in the district, and the soil is particularly adapted for summer grasses, the property is exceedingly well watered, and it is in close proximity to the port of Albany. All these facts combine in my opinion to make it a good property to acquire. The township of Denmark, situated on the west side of the Denmark River, consists of from 50 to 70 buildings, a couple of churches, a hall, and several other buildings ; these latter would be valuable, and many of the smaller cottages could be disposed of at a nominal cost to those who take up the land. If we obtain only a small price for these houses it would be advisable to give those settlers, who take up land there, the opportunity of acquiring them at a reasonable cost, taking down and re-erecting them on their own holdings. They are made of wood with galvanised iron roofs. In conclusion I would like to say that in my opinion this railway will eventually form one of the first sections of the railway from Bridgetown to Albany, which, if constructed, will practically give us a new province, and open a territory which will, in the future, form a home for many hundreds of settlers, being one of the most fertile regions in the State and having this advantage, that a man, given railway communication, will be able to obtain a home on a very small area.

*Mr. Johnson* : Do you propose to run the Kojonup line to Bridgetown ?

The PREMIER : The Kojonup line will eventually join the line authorised last year from Preston to Boyup Brook.

I commend this proposal to the favourable consideration of the House. If there is any farther information I can give to hon. members on this important matter I shall be only too happy to do so.

*Mr. Bath* : Will the Premier lay the files on the table ?

The Premier : I shall be pleased to do so.

On motion by *Mr. Bath*, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 6th November, 1906. *Daglish* in the Chair.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES (Hon. J. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—*Mines Generally*, £51,355:

The MINISTER FOR MINES in introducing the Estimates of the Mining Department said: In view of the recent decline in our gold yield and the pessimistic utterances of many people, I thought it would be wise to make a short review of the mineral industry, and endeavour to point out that there is very little reason to feel in any way doubtful concerning it. There has been a decrease in value. In 1905 the value of the output was £7,818,000 ; in 1906 it was £7,375,000 ; while for the nine months of the present year the value of the output has been £5,214,000. This shows a continuous decrease for the past three years ; but it is not that there has been a smaller quantity of stone treated, it is that we are getting a smaller average value from the stone. The industry is employing as many people now as at any time in its history, and I think that in the future we will find it more progressive and more valuable to the State than it has been in the past. The stone treated in 1905 was 2,643,000 tons, with an average value of 58s. 6d. per ton. In 1906, the tonnage increased to 2,878,000 tons, but the average value decreased to 50s. 6d. During the nine months of the present year the tonnage treated has been 2,213,394 tons, a monthly increase of 8,000 tons over last year, but the value

has decreased to 46s. 6d. per ton, a decrease in value of 4s. for every ton treated. But I think that is a good sign, because though the value of the stone treated is not so great, it is at the same time a value which can well be worked economically; and if we have these large low-grade propositions treated it means a longer life for our mines. In addition to our gold mines we have the advantage of the recent improvements that have taken place in mining for the baser metals. Unfortunately the condition of the market for copper and tin has done much to depress mining for these metals. In February of this year copper was worth £108 10s.; now it is in the vicinity of £60; and has been as low as £55 5s. The low price must do a great deal towards discouraging those who have put labour and money into developing that class of the industry, but I think there is not much doubt in regard to the future. The high price of £108 10s. was no doubt due to over speculation; and the present price can equally be put down to the same cause. The financial trouble at present occurring in America is put down to the recent speculation in copper. However, I want to point out the progress made in connection with the development of copper within the State. The Anaconda copper mine near Murrin Murrin in 1906 produced 4,239 tons of a value of £20,000; for the nine months of the year there were 3,762 tons treated of a value of £49,000; that is a wonderful increase, because the yield this year has been two and a-half times the whole of the output last year. At Phillips River during 1905 the value of the yield of copper was £15,292. Last year it was £25,270, while for the nine months of this year the yield has been £54,600, a very satisfactory increase. In the North-West, more especially at Roebourne and Whim Creek, there has been a great increase in the work going on in the search for copper. At Roebourne I saw about 15 prospecting shows. One mine, the Lily Blanche, produced copper worth £17,541 during the first nine months of this year, and the Whim Creek mine produced £36,317 worth. These two mines alone

show what a large increase there has been in mining for copper. The recent history of tin mining in the State is somewhat similar to the recent history of copper mining. In July last tin was worth £200, and this had a good deal to do with the energy thrown into the development of tin mines. At Greenbushes there has been a great deal of activity of late, and I understand that the value of mining machinery put into that district was something like £20,000. The output for 1905 was £52,000; for 1906 it was £79,000; and for the nine months of this year it has been over £60,000, a considerable increase over the preceding years. The same remarks apply to Pilbarra. The tin from that district comes mostly from Moolyella. In 1905 the output was £33,000; in 1906 it was £78,000; and for the nine months of this year it has been £68,000. I think that shows a marvellous increase in connection with the districts I have mentioned. There are many other districts which are doing exceedingly well. At Wodgina a specimen was obtained the other day and it has been given to us for exhibition in London. It weighs 600lbs., a huge block of black tin. It was taken from the lode. I myself when there saw a piece of tin buried in the lode; I saw other pieces that must each weigh anything between 100lbs. to 150lbs. We saw a specimen taken from a lode weighing from 80lbs. to 100lbs. Little can be done toward developing these mines until the district has railway communication. I feel satisfied with the values we have there. I noticed in the paper to-day a telegram as to asbestos specimens obtained at Pilbarra. I have no doubt as to the quality of the mineral being discovered, although I do not know much about the quantity of it. I am hopeful because I know there are lodes there which may develop into valuable propositions. There is no doubt as to the value of the mineral itself and the discoveries may do much to increase the population. There are other base metals such as antimony and so forth which in time will demand the attention of capitalists. I am looking forward with a good deal of interest to the report to be obtained shortly from Mr. Maitland, the

Government Geologist. I instructed that officer to make an examination of the whole of the country between Carnarvon, Onslow and Roebourne. I believe coal exists there. We have there, as is known, the largest iron deposits which are supposed to exist in the world, and we are advised that tin exists there. Only to-day I saw a gentleman who had been prospecting through some country a considerable distance in from Onslow. He brought in very valuable specimens of copper, and reports that there are numerous deposits of copper in that part of this district some 200 miles from Onslow. From the description given by this man and from the reports received we made a small reservation in order that the prospector shall have some return for his labours. This reservation is for three months, to enable the man who reported the discovery to obtain some result from his discovery. A lot of the prospectors in this country do not know the mining regulations. This man was not aware that he could have pegged out two 40-acre blocks of ground and applied for them as a reward lease. For that reason I made the reservation in this case. I intend to have a special pamphlet issued to prospectors showing under what conditions areas can be obtained. This man I am speaking of has pegged out 30 acres in two blocks, but it will be of little use 200 miles inland. He is of the old type of prospector and I believe he is a man to be relied upon. The discovery seems to be exceedingly valuable and it is all the more valuable because not so long ago I was waited on by a gentleman representing the carrying industry up that way, and he assured me that it was anticipated that he would be able to obtain contracts for 300 to 500 tons of silver lead and copper per month from Onslow. We are definitely told tin exists and we believe that coal exists, or that there is a probability of obtaining coal. We have received good specimens of mica, and as soon as Mr. Maitland returns I intend to have an interim report, giving a summary of his opinions of the district, published as quickly as possible. In connection with Collie coal the output has not increased to any considerable ex-

tent, still the industry is progressing and is in a condition that it has not been for some time. Although there is a likelihood of a great deal of increased development in connection with base metals, our attention for the most part should be in connection with the gold-mining industry. It is the chief of our mineral industries at present and I believe will be for all time. New developments are occurring in connection with the gold-mining industry and we should make the best use of them. In connection with gold-mining the first place that demands our attention is the Kalgoorlie field. The reports which we have obtained lately—reports which have been submitted to the Chamber of Mines by the various companies, and I do not think there is any reason to doubt them—show that the developments which are taking place at depths in connection with the principal mines in Kalgoorlie will be of enormous benefit to the State. I do not wish to read the reports I have here in reference to the ore reserves, but the value of these reserves tends much to impress our people and the people outside of Australia with regard to the Golden Belt developments. The Hainault and the Golden Horseshoe are showing good development, also the Ivanhoe. At the 1659-foot level of this mine, the reef has been proved to be 26 feet wide and the ore worth 46s. per ton. It is a magnificent development. In the Great Boulder last month at a depth of 2,230 feet they came on a body of quartz 20 feet wide and it assayed 17 'weights to the ton. When we remember how short is the history of Kalgoorlie and know that the quartz at 2230 feet contains 17dwts., that will show the high value of the mines of Kalgoorlie. In the Hidden Secret another rich chute has been discovered. It speaks volumes for the Kalgoorlie field that up to the present time the district has turned out 271 tons of fine gold of the value of 37 millions of money; and when we find that development is taking place at a depth and that good values are still being discovered it will encourage many outside districts also to prospect at a depth to try and get similar results. In Coolgardie I am pleased to record a revival of

the mining industry. At Tindalls there has been good development lately. At Golden Gully they are erecting a 20-head mill and there has been farther development lately at Bayley's. One cannot over-estimate the value of these developments. A rich chute of ore has been found at the Redemption. This is very cheering, and I believe it is intended to form a new company. I suppose the member for Coolgardie will be able to tell us of the good development that is taking place at Lord Bobs. The value of the output has been considerably increased, and I am exceedingly hopeful of the future of the old town. Menzies certainly is keeping up the record, and at Norseman there has been a general revival. A good many head of new stamps are being erected and large new ore reserves have been developed. Members need not be told about the Meekatharra district after the speech of the hon. member for Murchison, and I have no doubt that the hon. member's description of the place is a perfectly correct one and that he has not exaggerated at all. I am impressed, as a result of my recent visit, with the future of it, and I think the district will employ a large population and that the output of the district will be increased. The Black Range output also shows a good increase. For the third quarter of 1904 the output was 8,900 ounces of gold and for the third quarter of this year the field turned out 15,500 ounces. I have not found out what the population is, but there has been a considerable revival of mining at Black Range; also at Wiluna the increase is very pronounced, because in the third quarter of 1906 the returns showed only 1,700 ounces, and this year the tonnage is three times as great as they turned out 3,540 ounces, showing a very large increase in the output of that district and in the quantity now treated. When we find that people are treating extremely low-grade ore in a district such as Wiluna, it is encouraging. Then there is Linden. A large quantity of prospecting is going on there of late. Seventy people are prospecting in the district, which is situated south of Mt. Margaret and is a

very old field which six or seven years ago was deserted. The development of late has been rather startling, and I promised to send a small mill there with a set of stamps and an oil engine to enable the leaseholders of the district to get a trial of their stone and see if the place warranted the erection of a State mill or the introduction of capital into the district. The reports I have received from the officers who have inspected the district show that they are pleased indeed with the prospects, with the values and the quantities of stone which appears to be available. Jourdie Hills is showing very fine development. On my last visit I saw a vast difference in the place. Although the stone seems to be low grade, yet if facilities are given to the people of that district it will go ahead. The same applies to the Armidale district north of Kookynie. At Kunanalling the place has not looked brighter for some considerable time and the same thing also applies to Higginsville. In all these places there seems to be a considerable revival in the work. Instead of having the prospecting of the old days, more legitimate work is done by the prospector to-day and a better result is shown. I think we may well look forward to a slight revival in the gold-mining industry. I suppose if members make any attack on the administration, they will attack the methods by which assistance is rendered to the mining industry. In the first place, I have always held that the best method of assisting the mining industry is to give to each mining district railway communication and a good water supply. As to railways, the Norseman railway, which was "in the air" for many years, is now in the course of construction; and there is no doubt that much of the renewed activity at Norseman is due to the railway. There is the proposed Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway to be built with a view to developing the Phillips River field. This project has been the subject of a good deal of criticism; and I wish to say in passing that before the Government decided to construct the railway, three offers to construct it were made by private people.

In one instance, though the Public Works Department considered that the Government should charge 6d. per ton to enable the railway to pay, the private capitalists offered to charge only 4d. for the transport of ore, and after thirty years to hand over the railway free of charge to the State. It was thought wiser that the Government should construct the railway. When dealing with such questions I wish members to consider whether, if they do not think it wise that these railways should be owned by the Government, they would think it wise to leave such places without any railways at all. There is also the Marble Bar railway proposal, lately agreed to by both Houses, and the proposed railway from Magnet to Black Range. In addition, the department are supplying rails and sleepers for the construction of a new tramway in an easterly direction some few miles north of Cue, with a view to an efficient firewood supply for the Cue district; and instructions have been issued for the construction of a tramway from the Point Sampson jetty to connect with the Roebourne-Cossack tramway, to enable the copper deposits at Roebourne to be developed. With reference to water supply I should like to point out that in 1904-5 we spent from loan and revenue £40,991; in 1905-6, £67,958; and in 1906-7 no less than £94,623 was spent by the Mines Water Supply Branch to assist the industry.

*Mr. Troy :* Where was the bulk of the money spent?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I will give the hon. member the full report showing the work done. An enormous amount of boring has been effected. During the past five years we have done no less than 45,000 feet of boring, and some 8,645 feet of well-sinking. We are now maintaining no less than 500 watering stations. Those members who have visited the Pilbarra field will be pleased to record their opinion of the water supply the department have provided throughout the whole of that country. At Davyhurst we have a very fine system, and the whole of that district is entirely dependent on the Government supply. At Menzies we are supplying fresh and

salt water at from 5s. to 7s. 6d. per thousand gallons. Before we put down the well and constructed the dams, the price of salt water at Menzies was 20s. per thousand; and were it not for the departmental efforts every mine in that district would have had to close down. The same remark applies to Norseman, where we have constructed a new dam. From our own well we are supplying all the mines, which are absolutely relying upon the Mines Water Supply Branch. The mine at Mertondale would have closed down but for certain departmental expenditure; and I refer to this because it may be questioned whether expenditure is justified which assists only one mine and one community. But the working expenses amount to £350 a year, and with interest and sinking fund at eight per cent. make a total of £830, while we are receiving a revenue of £1,600; so it will be seen that the enterprise is payable to the department, and that in a short period the whole cost of the work will be repaid. At Meekatharra also we have a highly efficient water supply. That district is receiving fresh water at 5s., 5s. 6d., and 6s. per thousand gallons according to the expenditure which the department found necessary to provide the water. We have in some instances to provide large sums for reticulation, and in such instances I think we are justified in making a higher charge; but when the cost of the scheme is taken into consideration, I hardly think that the prices can be objected to. At Ravensthorpe we put down one tank with a capacity of 5 million gallons, and we enlarged the capacity of another. At Kundip we sunk a tank to hold 2½ million gallons. No fresh water is available at that place except what is purchased from the dams. At Leonora we are spending some £16,000 on a water supply for the town and the mines. With the consent of the local authority it is my intention, when that work is complete, to create a water area and a water board, and hand to the local authority the control of the work. At Jourdie Hills only recently we put down a very fine tank, and a small tank at Edjudina, and we purpose doing the same

in other districts ; so I think members will admit that in the matter of mines water supply, with the money at our disposal, every possible effort is being made to give assistance to all the districts. Another matter is assistance to mining by cash advances. For the past twelve months I have given very little money to assist prospectors for development purposes. In almost every instance where the department advanced small sums to help some individual prospector, very little good resulted to the department ; and I propose in future, unless in special cases—that is where it can be shown that the advance is likely to assist the district generally and not the individual alone—to limit any advances that we make as assistance for the purchase of machinery. Most people can push along and do their own developmental work ; but the purchase of machinery means much to them, because with machinery the cost of production is usually reduced. If a man has a winding-plant he can raise his ore at a considerably lower rate than he can by an ordinary windlass. Perhaps the water may rush in, and he finds himself unable to purchase a pumping plant. The Mines Department will always be happy to advance pound for pound towards the purchase of that plant. Or he may wish to erect a battery for crushing his ore. We shall be only too pleased to advance the money for such a purpose. I think that policy will be far better, far more in the interest of the State, more especially when we remember the results of the large sums of money advanced both in Victoria and in New South Wales for the development of mining, and how little good resulted from those advances. I think members will believe me when I say that from my experience, a loan for the purchase of machinery will be far more advantageous to the mine-owner than a loan for any other purpose. The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) can confirm what I am about to say of the advances made some little time ago in the Parker's Range district, some 30 miles south of Southern Cross, where the department lent £1,000 to assist in the erection of a 10-head mill, and also sunk a well and

leased it at a peppercorn rental. But we made the condition that during the whole term of the loan the person whom we assisted should crush stone for the public at rates to be approved by the department ; and as a result there is now a large population in that district, and the lessee has not only proved his own mine to be payable, but has assisted many other leaseholders within the district to continue developments and to prove that they also have payable propositions. The same policy has been pursued in the Orabanda district, some 15 miles south of Siberia. A couple of men came to me some time ago and stated their desire to erect a 10-head mill in that district, as a public crushing plant. They said, if I would lend them £1,000 on the security of the mill, they would put up a plant and comply with the conditions enforced by the department. This was done, with the result that 130 men are now working in that district, which has become a prosperous little community wholly through the assistance given to the owners of the mill. Similar accounts might be given of many other districts ; but I have taken those two as showing the best results which have accrued through the assistance given by the department. Of course there are cases in which it will be wise to grant assistance for developmental work. At the present time we are making an advance to prove the deep levels in the north end of the Kalgoorlie field. Some 12 months ago, when in Kalgoorlie, I said we should be prepared to make the advance, and several applications were sent in. I referred them to the Government Geologist, and upon his recommendation the North End mine was chosen as the one to be tested to prove whether payable ore existed at a depth in that part of the field. If we can prove that gold does exist there in payable quantities, capital will at once come in, and the whole of the north end will be developed. During the past year a good many prospectors have been sent out ; and I have offered, with a view to getting more prospectors in the Onslow, Roebourne, and Marble Bar districts, that to any approved parties that may come

along we shall be pleased to give the assistance of a couple of horses and a dray, or even camels. With the diamond drill particularly good work has been done at Cue, near the Cue One lease. Not only have some very good bodies of ore been located, but the work done by the Government diamond drill compares more than favourably in cost with contract boring in this State. I ought to have brought with me the departmental records, which will be of interest to gold-fields members. I must not forget to table the cost of the work done by the diamond drill ; because, if it can be shown that for 10s. or 11s. per foot diamond drilling can be done, a good deal more of such work will be done in districts which can be prospected by boring. In addition to the existing drill, now on loan I think to the Murchison United, I have given instructions for the purchase of another drill ; and when this comes to hand that drill will be available for loan, always with a departmental officer in charge of it, to any person or company desirous of borrowing it for the purpose of proving the locations of lodes.

*Mr. Taylor :* What drill is that ?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** A diamond drill that I purchased some four years ago, with which particularly good work was done in Chesson and Heydon's property, and which is now being used in the property with which Mr. Thomas is connected, the Murchison United or Murchison Associated. The owners of this mine have spent something like £70,000 in the country, and I do not think there has been a penny returned in any shape or form. I believe, however, they are spending £8,000 or £10,000 more in trying to prove the country at a depth. To show how desirous Chesson and Heydon are to continue the borings, they are anxious to continue operations later on on other properties over which they have no control. In connection with the State Batteries Branch, I do not propose to make any lengthy observations at present. I would prefer dealing with this question when we are discussing the Loan Estimates, upon which will appear a sum to be available for me to

carry on this work during the current year, and it will depend entirely upon the money made available for assisting in this direction that the Department will be able to advise the House of the exact course it is proposed to take in connection with this system. It is my intention to have new regulations prepared in connection with the State batteries. I have had a very extensive report prepared by Mr. Dunstan in connection with this system. When I asked him to report I advised him that it would be necessary for him to visit the plants and examine the system thoroughly, and also to understand thoroughly the whole question before reporting upon it. I have obtained that report from him, and he recommends a very large expenditure in connection with the present plants, and in addition I want a fairly large sum for new works. For instance I am removing the battery from Duketon to Black Range. It is a very fine plant, complete with rockbreaker and other apparatus, and it will be able to do the work in the Black Range district particularly well. It will be a costly operation to remove the plant. The present plant at Black Range is most ineffective, and as there have been several applications for that battery it is not my intention to remove it from the district. It can be divided in two 5-head plants ; one will be given to a proposition which has been recommended by the State Mining Engineer, and the other 5-head battery will be at the disposal of some other property in the district. As I have mentioned before, I propose to get a certain number of 2-head stamps, which will either be sold to prospectors or lent to persons who have low-grade propositions which they desire to have thoroughly tested. We intend to work them with oil engines. It was reported at Menzies that I proposed to run large plants with oil engines ; but this is quite a mistake. I think a small plant might be effectively worked with an oil engine by one man alone ; he will be able to do the whole of the work in connection with the feeding, running of the plant and everything else. These 2-head batteries will put through a little more than one stamp of a 5-head



battery, although they will not deal with the quantity of stone which people will desire to have treated; still they can be very economically worked and controlled by one man, and yet do a very great deal to help to prove the value of the mines in the districts in which they are placed. After a leaseholder has done a good deal of developmental work he will be able to apply to the department for the loan for six or 12 months of one of these plants. His desire must be to prove the value of his proposition, and if he has not sufficient money to take up a loan for a 5-head or 10-head mill—in such applications we are only permitted to advance pound for pound for the erection of a battery—he may obtain one of these small plants, providing the report from an officer of the department shows that he had done a fair amount of developmental work, that the mine was believed to carry fair values, and that it would be worth while to grant assistance to the man. The leaseholder will by this means be able to continue his developmental work instead of spending what he might have in proving his property through some other battery. We have promised to put a 2-head mill on a mine at Mount Morgans where a good deal of work has been done, the owners putting up £400 in cash to be expended in additional development work, and we will put up this 2-head mill and leave it on the property for six months, or a longer period if necessary. If the owners continue their work we will have no objection to leave it there for some time longer than the minimum period. At present the owners cannot afford to cart stone to a battery, but by our taking the battery to them they will be enabled to prove the value of their property. When the work has been completed there we shall either store the plant or send it on to some other property. The introduction of these unit stamps should prove of considerable value to the small leaseholder. In connection with the battery system it is our intention, if money can be made available this year, to re-organise a great number of the present plants. We propose to make reductions in the present charges. I am not going

to make as great reductions as I think there should be, and which I would like to see, for this cannot be done until the control of the batteries is more efficient, and until the plants themselves are more efficient than they are now. If members will go through the yearly records they will see that where we have all the facilities of up-to-date plants and crushing appliances the work is done cheaply in comparison with the other batteries. If we have labour-saving appliances, for instance rock-breakers, we shall not only provide a greatly increased capacity at the mill, but we shall also decrease the crushing charges. Certain alterations which we propose to the cyanide plants should also bring about a big reduction in the cost of working. I may mention one small matter in connection with the cyanide plants, and that is that very often plants may be at work when the battery is not working, and for the purpose of pumping the solution it may be necessary to light up and fire the boiler with sufficient power to run the whole crushing. We propose to have small oil engines so as to have the whole work done from the solution room. This will mean a very big saving. The cost of firewood is very great indeed, and whereas it should be something like from 9d. to 1s. a ton it is as high as 3s. 11½d. [Mr. Bath: How about the producer gas experiments at Nannine?] The tests are very satisfactory. We are willing to pay for the plant, but in connection with the general working of that particular plant the hon. member must remember that a new battery is nearly always in difficulties at the start, and that it takes some little time to get it into thorough working order. Trouble here and there occurs in the machinery, and there were considerable difficulties in the plant in question at the start. That, however, is being got rid of now, and from the last report I am very satisfied with the test made of running machinery with producer gas. I think it is going to be the power of the future for these batteries. Where we have the necessity for the power at some distance from our boilers there is always a very large loss in steam, and when we

have to fire up simply for the purpose of pumping a little solution a very heavy cost is demanded. As I said for every ton of ore we have crushed the cost of firewood has been as high as 3s. 8d. In Meekatharra it takes 70lbs. of steam to pump water alone. Sometimes the well is 200 yards away from the battery, and steam pumps are worked. The member for Cue will agree with me that where you have to pump water and have your steam pipe 150 or 200 yards before you get to the pump, and the well 150 or 180 feet in depth, the difficulties are very great indeed, as any engine driver will know. The cost of firewood is really preposterous, and we cannot crush cheaply while it is so high. We desire to reduce the charges for crushing. Mr. Dunstan is quite satisfied that he can do this, and he wants me to make rebates according to the tonnage put through, so as to impress upon prospectors the necessity to bring big tonnage to us, and to show that if they do that they can get cheaper crushing. When members remember that the crushing capacity of the batteries is equal to three times what we are now treating, they will admit that if we can get big quantities of ore we can deal with it much more cheaply, and therefore reduce the charges. The policy of the department from the beginning to the end has been that the money spent on the work is for the development of mining. Parliament has never asked that the batteries should show a profit, but is satisfied if they pay working expenses and upkeep. We have done that up to the present, but I desire to give greater facilities in the way of reduced charges. In order to do that we have to make the plant more efficient.

At 6.15, the Chairman left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (continuing) : I have pointed out that we have a crushing capacity for three times the quantity of ore at present being brought to the public batteries, and that to make a rebate according to the increased size of the parcels brought in would be an inducement for men to de-

velop their mines. Except in the early stages of prospecting, not much good accrues to a mill from the treatment of small parcels ; and we have always been glad even to crush for nothing trial parcels of ore, so as to enable men to put through a small parcel from a new property, to give them some indication of the value of the proposition. But what the Government and I am sure every member desire is that every possible facility should be given to the leaseholder to develop his mine. We anticipate that he will carry on developmental work ; and the only way in which he can do it is to open up the ground and give us large parcels of ore to crush. Therefore it is proposed in the near future, in framing the new regulations, to make special rebates according to the size of the parcels brought to the public mill. Our cyanide charges also will stand a reduction ; but the principal feature of the new regulations will be the direct purchase of the sands and slimes. That is, wherever we have a plant for the treatment of the sands and slimes, instead of paying on to their extraction as at present, we shall institute a system of purchasing the sands and slimes direct from the leaseholder. Regulations are now being framed to deal with this ; but as I told members at the start, I hope to leave the fuller discussion of the working of the public batteries till the Loan Estimates are before the Committee. The new regulations will then be available, so that members can see exactly the departmental propositions ; and I feel satisfied that though at the first onset the regulations will not effect all that is desired at the same time they will be a considerable advance on the existing regulations and I am quite sure that with good administration we shall be able to make even farther rebates than I purpose making in a few weeks' time. We cannot claim that the public battery system has been a great financial success ; because it has not been able to return any profit to the State. But we have won two and a-quarter million pounds worth of gold and all that gold has been retained in the State, and represents money given to our own people. When we look

around we see little mining communities growing up year after year. We see the little district of Mulline sustaining nearly 200 people, where the public battery has won £278,000 worth of gold. Take Burtville, which in 1901 had a population of 40 people, though the number has since increased to 250. That district has produced £146,000 worth of gold through the State mill; and I do think it is wonderful the public attention now being given to Burtville, a place where the lodes are very small but enormously rich. Mining in that district is entering upon quite a new era, and since 1901 the district has been wholly sustained by the State mill. The same remark applies to many other places. Black Range was opened up entirely by the Mines Water Supply Branch and the public mills sent there to crush ore for the people. There are many similar districts which I have no time to mention; but the indirect public advantages of the State battery system have been manifold, and I am satisfied that a continuation of the system is necessary if we wish to induce our own people to invest in our mines. There is always a loud outcry about the amount of money which goes out of the country in dividends; a cry that there is so much money going out of the State, money which ought to be retained within our borders. I believe in the encouragement of private enterprise. I like to see capital flowing in to assist in the development of Western Australia. At the same time, our duty is to endeavour to assist our own people; and this battery system has done much to achieve that end. Of course there are objections to the system. In many places it has simply helped a few prospectors to exploit the richest portions of the various lodes they could discover, put their crushings through the State mill, and then leave the place and go elsewhere. Many members may now the district of Mt. Ida. Over 10 years ago that was a very rich little community; and first-class crushings were obtained there. But the people deserted the district. Now it is again coming to the fore, and I have a very strong belief in the future of that small camp. The

history of that field shows the good and bad effects of the battery system. In the early stages the bad effects were shown, and now it is beginning to show the good effects. With this system I feel quite satisfied that we shall do much to induce the people of Western Australia to invest in their own mining ventures. I have shown what the Government have done to develop mining through our railway system and our water supply; I have shown what we desire to do to assist by way of development. I may also mention our stock-route. It is our desire to open a stock-route from Kimberley to the Eastern Goldfields, thus reducing the cost of living and opening up the vast pastoral resources in those goldfields districts. We have reduced the railway freights on foodstuffs. Not much has been said of that reduction; but for the past two years I have made very fair reductions in food freights from the coast to the goldfields.

*Mr. Troy:* But the cost of living is no lower.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** If the hon. member will compare the cost of taking a ton of flour 400 miles inland by rail in this State with the cost of taking it a similar distance inland in Queensland, he will see how much we are doing, compared with Queensland, to give cheap food to the people, notwithstanding all that has been recently said regarding the cheap freights in Queensland.

*Mr. Troy:* And a loaf of bread is as dear to-day on the fields as it was six years ago.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** That reminds me of a rather humorous discovery. A little while ago the Railway Department received an application that bread should be carried cheaply to a certain district. On inquiry the department found that in this old milling and farming district, with mills and farmers all around, bakers were charging 4d. for a 2-lb. loaf; whereas in Bunbury, where the flour had to be obtained from this district, the name of which I do not care to mention, a 2-lb. loaf was being sold for 2½d. I think the bakers have much to do with the price of bread in many of those districts; so even if we do

grant cheap freights, it will not always follow that the consumer will get the advantage of the reduction. All the Government can do is to try their best to help the people ; and for the year before last and for last year we made rebates on the freight of foodstuffs to the goldfields. As to the future of our mining industry I do not think I need say much, except that I think there is a great possibility of a new era for our gold-mining. I have not the slightest anticipation of any boom ; and I do not want a boom. At the same time, there is much very genuine development work being carried on in the various mining communities. Little districts which it was thought would be completely snuffed out are beginning to come to the fore ; and the development work being done on them is remarkably good. It is surprising the numbers of mine-owners who are purchasing 5-head and 10-head mills, purchasing ordinary mining machinery, such as winches and pumping plants ; and there is a very strong and earnest desire on the part of a great number of our leaseholders to develop their own mines. I am sure their efforts will in many cases be successful ; and that success will mean a new era for the industry in Western Australia ; it will mean that the efforts we have been making for many years past to induce our own people to invest in our own mines will at last have the effect so long desired. I do not wish anyone to think that I am indisposed to continue our past policy of inducing capital to come to the State. We have a vast country requiring enormous capital to develop ; and unless we get the money in our own day, it will be many years, probably generations, before our auriferous areas will be properly developed. I may refer more particularly to the Pilbarra district ; and I feel sure that unless capital and population follow the construction of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, that work will not achieve the success we desire. Population is necessary, and more than that capital is necessary, for the development of the Pilbarra district. But it is nevertheless pleasing to think that our own people, more particularly

our own miners, are making more genuine efforts to develop our own mining propositions. I do not think I need refer to the value of the mining industry to Western Australia, when it is clear, at least from all the statistics that I can obtain, that every man employed in mining usually carries about three other men on his back. In the majority of the mining fields we find about three other men for every working miner. And when we look at the indirect advantage of the mining industry to the State—the splendid market it provides for the pastoralist and the agriculturist, the opportunity it creates for the building up of other industries—I do not think any Parliament will object to any fair amount being spent on the industry, so long as the money is properly expended for the purpose of trying to develop and exploit the mining areas of this State. I have tried to give the fullest particulars of what my policy is in regard to development of mining and of the assistance I desire to give to that industry. I have not referred in detail to the Estimate themselves. Of course when we come to the items I shall be able to deal with them and I hope I shall be able to give full explanations. I have referred to a few departments only, because they come more prominently before members such as the State Batteries, Mines Water Supply, and the Geological Department. I think those are the departments which create the greatest interest. I will leave the work of the other departments ; and in conclusion I trust hon. members will deal with these Estimates in a careful manner and that it will not be too long before we agree to their being passed.

*[General discussion followed.]*

Mr. TROY agreed with a good deal the Minister had said, particularly in the hope that there was a new era in store for the mining industry. We were only in the infancy of gold production, while the next 10 years would see greatly in excess of any point reached in the past. It was a matter for congratulation the number of new districts opening up, as well as the number of old districts being

resuscitated. Dozens on the Murchison could be mentioned. Many localities he (Mr. Troy) had visited during the past year, which 12 months or two years ago were in a depressed state, were to-day again approaching a very prosperous condition. Through wise administration on the part of the department, and with that generous assistance to the industry which its value to the State deserved, it was to be hoped the anticipations of members representing mining districts would be realised, and that within a few years we would again have a record in gold production. If we were to judge from these Estimates, one could not congratulate the Government upon what had been done for the assistance of the industry ; but one had to bear in mind that the Minister had promised that a good deal of money would be provided on the Loan Estimates. The projected construction of railways in mining districts must also be taken into consideration, showing that the Government were sincere in their efforts to help the industry. As we had not too much money to expend from revenue the assistance could not be shown on the Revenue Estimates, but members would not complain if that assistance was provided on the Loan Estimates, and if every effort was put forward by the officers of the Mines Department to assist the industry. It was to be regretted there were, in several departments, increases which apparently were unnecessary. While there was an increase of £4,000 for State batteries in maintenance and upkeep, there were increases in salaries shown in regard to the Mining School and in the Explosives and Analytical Branch. Last year increases were noted in these departments in the same direction. It was not wise to agree to any increase of salaries in any of these departments at present. We were entering a period when increases were not the order of the day. The State could not afford them. No one cared to see a person receiving a salary which would not admit of his living under fair conditions, but that condition of affairs did not obtain in connection with this department. However, when the matter was under discussion the Minister

would no doubt tell us why these increases were arranged and who received them. There was an increase of £1,647 for wages on the goldfields generally in connection with the Mines Water Supply Branch. It was pleasing to see this. It meant the sinking of new wells, so necessary for opening up the goldfields. Our goldfields were arid districts, and no successful development could take place unless water was provided. The Government deserved every commendation for their policy in this direction. The development of the Black Range district had been materially assisted in this way, and it was to be hoped the policy would be prosecuted. A good water supply was essential at Black Range and Sandstone, and it was to be hoped the people in the district would soon be in a position to approach the Government for the purpose of obtaining assistance to initiate a water scheme such as existed at Cue and Day Dawn. The sooner it was done the better. The first expense would be the only expense. It would be cheaper to go in for a full scheme at once than to spend money in putting down a number of small wells, because the full scheme must be undertaken later on. He (Mr. Troy) had always advocated the policy which the Minister had first enunciated, that of putting down bores in the various districts to open up the localities. This policy had done a great deal for Black Range and the Montagu country. The Minister had agreed to put down another bore at Redcastle in response to an application he (Mr. Troy) had made. Redcastle was a nice auriferous belt of country, and the bore would prove a camping dépôt for prospectors seeking to open up that country. Three years ago Hancocks had only two mines, but a bore was put down and now there were about a hundred mines, and they were almost the mainstay of the public battery at Black Range. It was a rich spot. Developments there in the last three years had been of a most amazing character. The prospectors were able to camp at the bore and push out to open up the country. No one would raise objection to spending any amount of money in a reasonable way in the

direction of providing water supplies. It was the only possible way in which to develop the goldfields, and it was one of the most sensible ways. The matter of State batteries particularly affected the Mount Magnet electorate. Last year he had secured information from various portions of the State where State batteries had been erected to ascertain what the batteries had done for the districts and how the districts could be best assisted. If the mining industry was to be successfully developed in the Boogardie district it was necessary that a reduction should be made in the charges, or that some assistance should be given to the prospectors. In no district was a State battery operating on ore of lower grade than that at Boogardie where there were many prospectors who had been struggling for the past twelve years ; in fact, they had made a gallant struggle long before they got a battery. The Minister had been at first inclined not to grant the battery ; but the people having consistently advocated a battery to open up their district, the Minister had granted it. [*The Minister : Against the reports.*] The battery had done a great deal of good, especially since Mr. Allom had been in charge, and there was a decided improvement in the district, but there was absolute need for some reduction to be made in charges in order that those who were struggling with low-grade propositions could be assisted to carry on. In many leases the grade of the ore did not exceed 5dwts., and though the prospectors had been working them, paying battery charges, the cost of carting and so forth, the costs were too high to enable them to eke out a fair living. A reduction of a few shillings in the battery charges would make all the difference between carrying on and closing down the properties. The development of the industry in the State depended upon the prospectors, and those prospectors were mostly dealing with low-grade ore and not with rich propositions. With a reduction in charges the prospectors would be able to carry on more successfully, and would receive that margin of profit that would enable them to rear their families under good conditions,

while the batteries would be kept going and no loss would accrue to the department. Few people outside those intimately associated with the mining industry recognised what an immense factor the public battery system had been in the development of the State. Apart from materially assisting the gold production to the extent of 2¼ millions of money it must be borne in mind that the money was not sent out of the State, but was retained here and spent again in opening up other localities.

*The Minister :* And £75,000 could be added for tin from Greenbushes.

Mr. TROY was glad to recognise that in tin-mining also a very great deal of work had been done. The battery system had been a great success in Western Australia. Money gained by this means had not been sent out of the State in the way of dividends, but was kept and circulated in Western Australia and utilised for the extension of the industry. There was a time when a mine could be floated with but little trouble, so long as it showed fair prospects, but to-day the state of affairs in this respect was very different. It was a most difficult matter to float a mine here now. There were but few people willing to take up properties unless very good returns had been obtained, and therefore the development of mining depended more particularly upon the prospector. There were numerous cases where the batteries had brought about the exclusive development of localities. Had it not been for the public battery at Black Range and the manner in which the prospectors were assisted to open up the country, the district would not have progressed as it had done. A water supply was also provided there. The majority of flotations from that district were due to the fact that the mines had been proved by the State battery. On the Oroya Black Range £100,000 had been spent in development work, and there was the Sandstone Development Company and the Kohinoor and other properties, all of which were owned by the prospectors in the first instance, and were proved by the public battery to be payable propositions. These properties were now practically the mainstay of the

locality. Considering the good that had been done, members need pay no attention to the fact that the work of the system showed a loss last year of £1,000. The battery at Boogardie had assisted in floating a mine which would add materially to the gold output of the State. He referred to the St. George mine near Mount Magnet. A portion of this property was owned originally by the New Chum Company, but it was thrown up and prospectors went into it. Had they not been able to crush at the State battery the mine could not have been worked, but as it was, they carted stone to Boogardie battery three miles distant, and the result showed that the mine could be worked at a profit. The property was developed to a considerable extent and opened up, and there was now there one of the largest lodes in Western Australia. Only that day he had spoken to a man who knew the mine well and was well qualified to judge. He spoke most highly of the property, saying it was one of the best mines in Western Australia. The Great Boulder Company owned the mine, and he had learned that they were going to erect a 20-head battery on it. Already they had in sight on that property a sufficient profit to more than pay for all the development work at the mine, and the erection of the battery. The Meekatharra battery crushed to June 1907, 29,142 tons for 42,292oz., valued at £154,952. The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) pointed out recently, when moving for a railway, that all that money remained in the locality and was being utilised in the development of the district. He believed that was so, and that the majority of the mines there were owned by prospectors. Had it not been for the State battery the original patches would have been worked out and the prospectors would have left the district long ago. This had been the experience of many localities where he had hoped batteries would have been erected. The Minister, however, was compelled to indulge in a cautious programme and the batteries were not put there. He hoped that wherever a number of leases were taken up, and the development of the mines warranted the

erection of a battery, one would be built without delay. At Meekatharra at least one mine had been floated. This was the Ingleston which had been proved by the State battery, and which never would have been floated had there been no battery there. Too many people attached over much importance to the fact that the system had not been paying well in the past. There had not been a very great loss at any time, while in 1906 there was a profit of over £2,000. When one took into consideration the fact that it was a very large system, that it was one which was not intended to be profit-making, and when one recognised the difficulties that existed in economical working, he must realise that the loss was very small. Put against the loss the immense value the system had been in regard to gold production, and in proving mines which had since been floated and were now adding greatly to the gold output of the State, and all must recognise what a great success it had been. If a reduction in charge to 3s. a ton were made no loss would be shown for the next couple of years. The only battery erected last year was built at Nannine, and it had given a decided impetus to the district. Not very long ago Nannine was in a most depressed state, and were it not then for the fact that it was a centre in connection with the North Murchison railway system, it would have disappeared altogether. Similar improvements would be shown in many other localities were batteries to be erected. At Coolgardie, as a result of the prospectors' efforts, the mining industry was becoming more prosperous. Complaints were being made there of the high cost of treatment, and these were justifiable when the prices were compared with the charges made at other batteries in the same locality where the cost was very much lower.

*The Minister for Mines:* Compare the charges now with what they were before the State battery was erected.

*Mr. TROY:* The splendid result to be obtained by the proper treatment and working of low-grade ores was shown in connection with the Lindsays mine which was being worked by tributers. At the time of his visit to Coolgardie he ascer-

tained that from 1,450 tons of stone, gold to the quantity of 111oz. 3dwts. was obtained, or equal to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. per ton. On the mine 15 men were employed, there being but 9 tributers and 6 wages men. The amount paid for the battery work was £25, and the royalty was £19 8s. Water cost £20, firewood and hauling £37, and the total cost £161 8s., exclusive of wages which totalled £281 5s. The gold taken valued at £4 per oz. was worth approximately £444, while the total expenditure was £442 13s., which included the top rate of wages per man. It was thus shown that the property could pay top rate of wages, raise the ore, bear the whole cost of treatment and do it all on  $1\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. stuff. This case provided an era in the gold-production of the State, and he hoped a similar state of affairs would obtain not only in Coolgardie, but also in many other places. He had also brought under his notice the case of the Orabanda property. They crushed ore there at a more liberal rate than the Government, charging 10s. for 8dwts. stuff and 10s. for 9dwts. stuff. He had before him a statement showing the charges made by the department, and it would be found that they were considerably in excess of those charged at the mine in question. The department charged for stone yielding 8dwts. and under, 10s. ; 8dwts. to 9dwts., 10s. 6d. per ton ; and so on ; from 15dwts. and over, 14s. per ton. He thought 14s. absolutely too high. He could not understand why the system did not pay when such high rates were charged. Looking over the public battery returns from month to month, one would see that the average return was higher than 15dwts. per ton. At private batteries, he supposed, small as well as large parcels were treated. At the State batteries there were a greater number of large parcels, particularly in new districts. The Minister had promised a reduction in the charges, and that members should have an opportunity of considering the reduction later on. It was to be hoped the reduction would be substantial, because if so there would be no loss on future workings. The loss had been caused from the fact that the batteries were not the most up-to-date,

for when the system was started it was not intended to extend it, and any batteries which would crush stone were good enough. But the system had been extended, and now the department had old, obsolete batteries, which compelled a good deal of loss. Until these obsolete batteries were wiped out and up-to-date batteries were erected in their stead, the work would not be carried out under the best possible conditions. The batteries were not always kept going. This was not due to the prospectors not being able to keep the batteries supplied with stone. The loss last year was principally in connection with the batteries in the North-East Coolgardie goldfield. In his own electorate, at Leenonville the battery was kept six weeks idle because all that time the Government were putting a plate on a boiler. One could hardly expect that for those six weeks the battery would show anything but a loss. He recognised that if a battery were kept going full time it would pay its way, and that they could crush at a lower figure than was done to-day. This could only be brought about by reducing the battery charges, so that prospectors would be enabled to work properties which to-day were abandoned because they were not sufficiently rich for the prospectors to carry them on at a profit. In the country he found many mines such as the one he would now illustrate. One mine in his electorate that was very close to a battery had a body of ore 8 feet wide which up to the last crushing averaged 9dwts. per ton. The last lot averaged  $5\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. per ton. It was estimated from 20 to 30 tons of stone per week could be broken by two men. Twenty tons per week of ore at  $5\frac{1}{2}$ dwts. meant for the prospectors £19 5s., at £3 10s. per ounce. The carting was 5s. per ton, and the crushing 8s., therefore the carting and crushing amounted to 13s. That would entail an expenditure of £13. These two men would almost make wages if they were able to crush at 13s. per ton. They would have for a week's work, between them, £6 5s. ; but under present charges they could not divide between them £3. While the half of £6 5s. on the goldfields was not by any means the standard rate



of wage, still every man recognised that the prospector was willing, and justified when he was working his own mine, in working at a loss ; because he did not know the time—and he always hoped for the time—when he would get something better. Prospectors often worked for six to eight months for almost nothing, and at the end of that time they might receive sufficient to recoup themselves for money expended during the whole of the time they had been on the goldfields. Not only at Coolgardie was there necessity for a reduction, for in another locality, at Euro, near Laverton, the cost of cyaniding was only 2s. 1d. per ton, at a private battery ; yet at the Laverton public battery prospectors were compelled to pay 12s. for the treatment of their sands. The Euro battery could crush at an average cost of 5s. 6d. per ton, therefore, the cost of crushing and cyaniding would only amount to 7s. 7d. per ton. He did not expect public batteries to do that ; but with proper administration and a better system they could certainly crush and treat the tailings at a lower rate than was being done now. In South Australia, though they had not the public battery system on an extended scale, the charges compared more than favourably with our own. At the McDonnell Ranges Government battery and cyanide works, the battery treatment for from 5 to 20 tons, for stone of 1oz. and under was 10s. ; in Western Australia it was 14s. ; over 1oz. and under 2ozs., in South Australia, 12s. ; and from 2ozs. and over, 15s. per ton ; for 50 tons and over, in South Australia, 1oz. and under 2ozs., 10s. per ton. There was no extra charge made for clearing up, and it was not made in this State either. In regard to cyanide treatment the charges were very similar to what they were in this State—10dwts. and over, 10s. So it would be seen in connection with the battery charges they were more reasonable in South Australia than in Western Australia. He did not know the reason why. He had tried to get the conditions under which the battery system was worked in South Australia, but he could not ; but from what was stated in the letter to him it appeared they were carrying on reason-

ably in the McDonnell Ranges ; and the conditions of living and wages were about similar in Western Australia. The Minister pointed out there were certain reductions made for development work and for ore raised below a certain level, and in the regulations provision was made for a reduction and certain bonuses for such work as development work and the crushing of 150 tons. But that was too much. There were many prospectors struggling who were not able to wait until they got 150 tons. On one occasion he had caused some merriment by informing members that a man and his wife were raising ore in one locality. In another locality a man was helped by his two daughters. They were carrying on successfully, and credit was due to them, although he did not like to see women doing this work. But they were happy and doing the work well, and it was to be hoped they would do well in the future. In another instance a woman was helping her husband ; they had to struggle hard, under great difficulties. These people were unable to raise 150 tons of stone and wait to have it crushed. The amount might be reduced to 100 tons. He believed in large parcels of ore being sent to the batteries because there were no stoppages and it was of more assistance to the department. There was a regulation providing for certain reductions and certain bonuses for ore raised at a certain level. [*The Minister for Mines* : One hundred feet.] In some localities this worked out very badly, for he knew the water-level to be 90 feet ; in other localities it would be 150 feet or 120 feet. At Meekatharra when he was there some years ago, there was hardly any water ; it was obtained with difficulty at 200 feet. One could see what an advantage the people of Meekatharra would have over other prospectors not so favourably situated. In Coolgardie water was obtained at 80 feet. Prospectors were able to get below the water and obtain the benefit of the provision ; but the provision did not work out too well in other localities. When prospectors reached water level they should be given the reduction. It was hard, except in very rich mines, to get below water-level, though some people

had succeeded in doing so. It was complained of the State batteries that unless the tailings were of greater value than 3dwts. 12 grains, the prospector was not entitled to anything. He (Mr. Troy) had compiled a list of shows of which the assay value was 3dwts. 6grs. These tailings should be worth say 12s. per ton, and it was unfair that the prospector should get no profit.

*The Minister for Mines :* The department would give 90 per cent. of sands and slimes on the basis of a 75 per cent. extraction. Say a hundred tons were put through, the prospector would be paid for 90 tons of sands and slimes. The price would be arranged later.

Mr. TROY : It was well the slimes were to be purchased, for thousands of tons of slimes were now lying useless at the State batteries. Tailings were often washed away. The slimes at Black Range were probably worth about £6,000, which should be recovered by the new battery to be erected. Large quantities of slimes were also lying at Coolgardie and Lennonville ; and members could doubtless give similar instances. He hoped agricultural members would not oppose the vote for the development of mining, for on that development the success of agriculture in this State depended largely. The goldfields people could not for many years, until irrigation schemes were matured, grow their own foodstuffs ; hence our farmers had in the goldfields a natural market, secure from Eastern competition. Yet a leading journalist recently stated that no reduction in State battery charges could be made, by reason of the slight loss. The battery system had been of material benefit to the State by opening up some of our best mining localities, such as Black Range, where 150,000 ounces of gold were produced in three years. The Government were about to give railway communication to Black Range, and the district warranted the enterprise. In this district the Minister was about to erect two 5-head batteries ; but there was ample room for three. While many talked about the losses on the State batteries and the large sums spent on mining development, he would draw at-

tention to the heavy loss on the Goomalling-Dowerin, Wagin-Dumbleyung, and Katanning-Kojonup agricultural railways, a loss of £375 9s. 10d. per month.

Mr. EWING : Agricultural members never objected to expenditure on mining development.

Mr. TROY : No ; but certain members complained of a paltry loss of £1,000 on the State batteries.

*The Minister for Mines :* No ; but some people said simply that the batteries ought to pay their way.

Mr. TROY : Well, these agricultural railways showed an annual loss of £4,500, and the small loss on the batteries was the result of their not keeping going full time, and of the use of obsolete material. Farther remarks on the batteries would be deferred till we considered the Loan Estimates. To provision for water supply he had never heard a member object ; and this fact should encourage the Minister. Of recent years many goldfields had been opened up by this means, and by the State batteries. He must bring before the Committee a point he would have referred to the Minister in his office, but that the Minister was not easy to see. A Mr. Leighton of Greenbushes had written to him (Mr. Troy) and to the member for Nelson (Mr. Layman) concerning a tin-mining lease granted to Mr. Moss at Greenbushes. The hon. member was inquiring into the matter ; and Mr. Leighton's grievance deserved inquiry. Mr. Leighton wrote that when he asked Mr. Williams, the warden's clerk, to be allowed to make a search for the proper titles, and tendered the fee, Mr. Williams replied that there was nothing to search for. Mr. Leighton had been misled right through, and it was unfair that the Minister should allow his servants to treat in this fashion a deserving prospector whose complaint appeared to be genuine. The Public Battery Branch had arranged for the transfer of certain managers. True, it was not desirable that a manager should remain too long in one place. Notwithstanding, when a manager was giving satisfaction in one locality and had gained the confidence of the prospectors, it was wrong to remove him. At Boo-

gardie the manager, Mr. Allom, when he went there found the battery seriously dilapidated ; and when 'he (Mr. Troy) came to Perth the prospectors, who had been dissatisfied for two or three years, sent him numerous complaints, and complained to the Minister also. Since Mr. Allom took charge there was no complaints ; he had cut down the cost of production ; the battery had been kept going ; and the superintendent of batteries reported that for the past two years the battery had given every satisfaction. Yet Mr. Allom was to be removed, though the people unanimously desired his retention. There was great need for reduction in charges, for overhauling the public battery system and for expending money in bringing it up to date. The system would then be able to carry on at a profit and crush at lower rates than at present. We were not, as many thought, on the down-grade in gold-production. We were facing a new era. In the Magnet district there had never been such prosperity during the past five years. New fields had been opened up and the Minister had been compelled to arrange for the introduction of more public batteries. In that district over 100 head of stamps had been erected during the past three years. The Minister had not said whether his pet scheme for the abolition of labour covenants was to be introduced. That scheme would not do any good to the prospectors, who were generally opposed to it. At any rate, his (Mr. Troy's) constituents were. They did not think it would give any assistance to the prospectors upon whom the success of the industry depended. The prospector did not seek any abolition of the labour covenants. He simply desired to work his proposition, and if after a time he applied for exemption for a lengthy term in order to earn money to again work his proposition, no warden would refuse to grant it. No prospector sought to shepherd his lease. If he found his property no good, he would throw it up and let somebody else take it. It was to be hoped the Minister would be guided by common sense and would not introduce any measure for the abolition of the labour covenants. The Minister

could assist the prospector by cutting down exemption fees and survey fees and by abolishing the necessity for advertising lease applications in a newspaper. It should be sufficient to post the notices at the office of the registrar and on the claim. By cutting down these little costs the prospector could spend his money to the best advantage. It was to be hoped the Minister would bring down his proposal for the reduction in battery charges very soon, that members would have an opportunity of discussing them and that they would be such as would give a decided impetus to the industry.

Mr. HOLMAN : It was little use speaking at length on these Estimates with such a sparse attendance of members on the Government side. Those representing mining districts regarded the discussion of the Mines Estimates as an opportunity for imparting a great deal of information ; but as in the past, instead of the members on the Government side listening to the debates on this matter, they remained outside the Chamber and blindly followed the Minister. Last year he (Mr. Holman) had condemned the Phillips River Railway as a disgrace, because it would only assist Mr. Kaufman in his flotation and in practically robbing the investors in the old country ; and now his (Mr. Holman's) remarks had been proved to be absolutely true ; but members supporting the Government had sneered at the remarks, the Minister even joining in the sneers. It was a waste of time talking on this subject when members who knew nothing about mining refused to remain in the Chamber when such an important matter was being debated. When it came to a question of legislating for the miners, instead of having any knowledge of the subject or of what they were doing, members on the Government side simply followed the Minister blindly to the detriment of the industry. [Interjection by Mr. Ewing.] The prospects of Phillips River were not too encouraging. [Mr. Ewing : They were only waiting for the completion of the railway.] That would only make it easier for the people to get away. One would

prefer to see the district flourishing, and if anything could be done to make it a profitable field he would be one of the first to come forward to give that assistance ; but this railway was built to give one or two companies assistance in bringing off a big flotation, while other fields, where the prospects were brighter and the output was greater, could get no railway communication. It was not the prospectors who got consideration in the matter of railways. It was only when the companies stepped in that railway communication had been given at Black Range and again at Phillips River. The money should be spent to assist the prospectors themselves ; but, unfortunately, the prospectors could get nothing unless there were big companies behind the scenes, or perhaps with better facilities for getting the State to give assistance. Without the companies it was impossible to get assistance for any district. Not sufficient assistance was given to prospectors. We had less genuine prospectors out now than at any time in the history of the State. [*The Minister : More.*] A few parties had gone out to the North-West and to the East, but there was less genuine prospecting being done now. The Minister had been asked to give assistance to Mr. Bertram, the discoverer of Mindoola. Mr. Bertram, who came to the State 12 years ago with £300 cash, had been prospecting ever since travelling from Lake Way to Ashburton. When he had worked his property at Mindoola to water level, he had run out of cash, and had applied for a reward for the discovery of the field. Had he received the money it would have been spent in developing his property, but the reply he received was anything but encouraging.

*The Minister for Mines :* The reply was that the department did not think that at the present time the discovery warranted a special reward.

Mr. HOLMAN : Thousands of ounces of gold had been returned from the district and the average of the ore treated was over an ounce to the ton, which should be sufficient for the department to give the most favourable consideration to the request for a grant. George

Woodley, the old Murchison prospector, and who was even now prospecting, had made several discoveries. Instead of a monetary reward, the Government had offered Woodley some land.

*The Minister for Mines :* He wrote to the department stating that he wanted land and he was given a piece ; it was not known, however, what happened afterwards, for although a deal of trouble was taken in his case, nothing farther had been heard of it.

Mr. HOLMAN : No one would cavil at the prospectors being given monetary or other assistance. He had received a letter from Mr. Bertram, in which that gentleman said it appeared as if the Minister were disinclined to grant him any reward, and that the clause in the Mining Regulations, dealing with the granting of rewards for discoveries on payable districts, might just as well be struck out. In this letter, Mr. Bertram quotes the case of Woodley who, he said, had been offered land in lieu of cash ; as that man had no means the land would be a white elephant to him, and he was not desirous of taking up farming ; he wanted to go out prospecting again. The writer pointed out that it was seldom that the discoverer of a new field obtained a profit from it, as it was the man who came after him that reaped all the benefit. Had the reward been granted to Mr. Bertram he would have been able to erect machinery on his property, to sink a shaft below the water level, and great good would have resulted. In connection with the superintendent of batteries, members knew too little of what had occurred. The case had been before the court, but very little information had been given in the Press. He desired to criticise the remarks made by the magistrate and to say that they were the worst that could fall from any man who was supposed to mete out justice. If what Mr. Roe had said were true, he had not done his duty in stopping the case from going farther ; but if his remarks were untrue, it was a standing disgrace that such should have fallen from the lips of a magistrate, as the result might be to ruin the man to whom he was referring for life. He had had personal experience

of remarks made by Mr. Roe and knew what they were worth. He could speak without prejudice, and must say that the man was a disgrace in his position. In all probability he would have a better opportunity of dealing with some of Mr. Roe's doings when the Estimates concerning that department were before the House; he intended to take that opportunity. The remarks Mr. Roe made at various times from the bench were dreadful; time after time he had criticised the laws Parliament had passed, and the sooner he was taught his proper position the better for the people who might unfortunately have to go before him, and the better it would be for the State. [Mr. Taylor: Send him out pearling.] He should be sent out among the pearlers and the Japanese; it was far more suitable that he should be with the latter than among the people in the city. The House should hear something about the case of the Superintendent of Batteries, which had lasted in the police court for a long time. If the charges were true, no punishment could be too great for Mr. White, but if they were not true, every recompense should be paid to him for the suffering he had been forced to undergo. He would not deal farther with that question at present, but it was a very important one and the Minister should have taken members into his confidence with regard to the matter. He had been told an extraordinary story as to the manner in which evidence was procured. He did not know whether it was true, but he had been informed that the Minister got a man into his office and while he was there and telling his story had a detective hidden behind a screen to take down all the words uttered. If that were true it was a very peculiar thing for a Minister to do—to get a man's evidence and have a detective to hear what he said. He had only been informed that this was the case and did not know whether it was true or not. Men should not resort to such tactics in order to try to beat another man. They all know that during the last year or two Mr. White had had an uphill battle to fight with the Minister. During last session there was a long debate on the ques-

tion, and when they found that Mr. White had to wait for three months before his case was heard they could not but be dissatisfied. He did not desire to screen White if guilty, but he wanted every man to have justice, and if there was any doubt the accused should receive the benefit of it. They all knew that the gold returns were decreasing, and they should do everything possible to keep the yield up. What was wanted to achieve this result was a few good mineral discoveries, and if only such were made the depression which had existed for the last year or two would cease. Everything possible should be done to obtain new discoveries. With regard to water supplies in mining districts, he must admit that the efforts of the department to get water into out-back places deserved praise and every encouragement. On almost every occasion when an application was made for a water supply for such districts, the department did their very best to grant it. He hoped the officials would always try and get water into the country as rapidly as possible. It was immaterial if there were a mining camp near the water supply or not, for the supply in itself was a very valuable asset to the State. There was not the slightest doubt that the public battery system had done much good. Last year he had criticised the batteries and informed the House that many of the plants were no better than scrap iron. He was pleased to know, however, that improvements were being made. A good plant had been erected at Nannine, and the gas producer engines with which it was being worked had turned out a success. He was one of the first to advocate the introduction of this producer gas in connection with batteries; the engines would be, he was satisfied, of great assistance in development of mines. [Mr. Ewing: They would pay anywhere.] They would pay, especially those in the back country. He was sorry that the Minister did not get an engine that would consume wood instead of Collie coal; it was only a trial, but they could not get Collie coal to a place like Wiluna, where all material had to be carted about 100 miles. The producer gas engines should be tested with

wood as the fuel instead of coal. Experiments were being undertaken, for mulga had been sent home and he was sure that it would be good for the producer gas. [*The Minister for Mines* : A tremendous lot of gas was got from "mulga."] The battery system had given a considerable amount of encouragement and assistance to the mining industry generally, and had it not been for the system there would at present be no Meekatharra. The State battery had opened up that district and there were many other places in the State about which the same thing could be said. The introduction of the batteries had brought about a revolution in mining in the State, and in addition to the actual gold that was being won through its medium, it had resulted in a large number of people going out and opening up new centres. The prospectors now knew that if anything of value was discovered out-back they would be able to get assistance from the Government in the shape of a State battery. He desired to refer to the Minister's remarks as to inducing our own people to invest in our mines. They could not give too much encouragement in that direction, for if only we could encourage our own people to own our mines it would be much better for the whole State. He would urge the Minister to have the motion on the Notice Paper, of which he had given notice, for the construction of a railway to Meekatharra brought on as rapidly as possible. There was no place in Western Australia which had such bright prospects as that district, and there was no place where the lack of timber was so badly felt. There was no fuel for the engines and no timber for the mines, and unless a railway were constructed there, in all probability a large number of prospectors would have to throw up their shows. If this were done a big mining company would come in, buy up the property and get a railway in a short time. Instead of waiting for the speculator to secure all the big properties the Government should construct the railway and so ensure that the payable propositions were retained by the prospectors. Some of the biggest lodes in the State were in that district,

and the railway to Meekatharra was warranted more than any goldfields railway now being constructed. In no part of the State had so much gold been produced in a similar time without railway communication as at Meekatharra, and £35,000 should be spent this year in making a start with the railway. If this were not done, he would take the matter up and would bring forward information and ask for returns in the direction of showing why other places were treated so well, whereas Meekatharra, where all the properties were owned by prospectors, received no consideration. The question of a railway in the North-West was a very important one and should receive serious consideration. If the railway did not make the North-West it would be a bad job for the State. Then there was the other railway to Black Range. We should have an opportunity of dealing with that when the Bill now before the House was considered, and he would be able to give some information to the House on the subject. The railway to Norseman was a step in the right direction. It should have been built sooner. The money spent on the Phillips River railway had been absolute waste of money. He hoped his views would turn out to be incorrect. [*The Minister for Mines* : The hon. member would find out he was wrong.] He sincerely hoped that the money spent there would prove a great benefit in opening up the place and making a mining district of it. [Interjection by the *Minister for Mines*.] At that time there was an effort to boom the Peak Hill property so that Darlington Simpson and a few of the swindlers we had had in this country would be able to make money out of it. At the time the Phillips River railway was constructed it was the means of booming the properties in London. It was the means of taking money from investors and putting it into Mr. Kaufman's pockets. We could not continue to urge people to put their money into swindles ; they should get a fair deal. At the time this railway was started the market value of the properties held by Kaufman was one and a quarter millions, whereas the returns from the Phillips River field only

amounted to £170,000. Anyone considering that would see what an absolute swindle was being carried out. He had every confidence in the mining industry ; with fair encouragement to prospectors some valuable discoveries would be made in Western Australia before long. On the Murchison several discoveries had been made. There was Errols, Berambi, Stake Well, Mindoola, in fact, the prospects on the Murchison were never better than now. If the prospectors receive a measure of assistance there would be good return. Although agricultural members said they were willing to give the mining industry every assistance, in his opinion they would give much more assistance by being in the House listening to goldfields members. They would then be in a position to cast their votes instead of blindly following the Minister who, according to his lights, was doing all he could to assist the industry. He gave the Minister credit for being sincere in his work. Although he (Mr. Holman) had attacked him about various matters, the Minister had to the best of his ability the interest of the gold mining industry at heart, and worked to make it a success. But the Minister should recognise that there were others who had the industry at heart, and if he would listen to members and take notice of the wishes of the prospectors, no doubt the industry would receive better treatment. He would congratulate the Minister on the efforts he was making to give water supplies and to open up routes in the back country, also his efforts in connection with the public battery system. It had been said legislation would be brought down to do away with the labour conditions. Right throughout the 14 or 15 centres on the Murchison the opinion was unanimous that under no consideration should there be a reduction of the labour conditions. They were not too stringent and the prospectors would rather prefer the breaking up of the leases into smaller areas. Previously the conditions were two men to six acres, now only two men were required to twelve acres. He hoped the mining industry would improve during the next year, and the administration also. He would like to know from the

Minister the names of the prospectors who were to get the reward for the Phillips River field.

*The Minister for Mines:* A board would be appointed to deal with that matter, but the principal applicant was Dunn.

Mr. HOLMAN: No doubt there would be some difficulty. There was no doubt about the prospector of Mindoola; but he did not get the encouragement he deserved.

*The Minister for Mines:* It was not overlooked.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister should await developments and see how the field turned out, and instead of writing the letter which he did to that prospector, more encouragement should have been given to him. He was not seriously concerned about the future of mining in Western Australia because from his knowledge he had no hesitation in saying the prospects of the mining industry were second to none in any part of Australasia. We had proved we had the best mines in Western Australia, and as soon as we got the prospectors to go out into the new areas it might be proved that we had more than one Golden Mile in Western Australia. In the district around Meekatharra there were 8 to 12 areas where good payable gold was obtainable; and as soon as the place had a fair chance we should have a population there of some thousands. Four or five years ago there were only 50 or 60 men in that locality; at the present time the population was 800. With fair encouragement the population would greatly increase. Whatever Minister might be in power he could always rely on his (Mr. Holman's) criticism when he thought the Minister was wrong, but he would give every encouragement and assistance when he thought the Minister was doing right. He congratulated the Minister on some of the work done. It was known he had criticised the Minister strongly, and had good cause; when the Minister did good work he (Mr. Holman) was the first to give him credit.

Mr. W. T. EDDY: As a representative of a mining district it was his duty to say a few words. He agreed with the

member for Murchison that this industry deserved all the attention members could give it. It was regrettable in a way that there was a decline in the production of gold for some years past, but after all there was the fact that there were just as many men, or more, employed now as in better times. The most valuable assets the State could claim were the real producing industries. In mineral output whether in gold, copper, tin, asbestos, mica or any of the other minerals this State could claim to be producing in advance of any other State in the Commonwealth, and he thought it could safely claim, in any other part of the world. He wished to mention the many developments which were taking place around the electorate of Coolgardie, the mother town of the goldfields? He was pleased that in Coolgardie there were bright signs of revival, of better prospects at the present time than for many years past. There were prospects of an early re-opening of Bayley's mine that was well known, not only to the people of Australia, but to the world. Operations were to be begun at once, and £30,000 would be available for working that mine at a very early date. He was quite sure that with good management good results would be attained. For after all it was the wilful waste of money from time to time that had been the great curse of the mining industry. Fortunately investors now took care to put their money into good ventures. At Tindall's mine, which was a low-grade proposition where 50,000 tons of ore had been treated, it was made to pay with less than 3 dwts. to the ton. The member for Ivanhoe could bear him out in this respect, for that member had worked on the mine years ago when they were making the mine pay on less than 3 dwts. to the ton. Now it was found that at a greater depth the value of the stone was increasing, and the last crushing from that mine gave 10 dwts. to the ton. He believed a 20-head plant would be erected there immediately, and in that mine alone there was at least five or six years' work in sight. The other day the New Hope mine was taken up again, and after the first crushing six shareholders divided £100 a man out of it. They were

to have another clean-up this week. The the Lord Bobs mine which was away from town in the bush returned £12,000 in dividends to the 16 shareholders; and was still going strongly. The member of this syndicate, himself included, had contributed towards it for over three years without any return; but they had now been rewarded, and there was twelve months' work in sight on stone that would produce from two to three ounces. Other propositions were at work right around Coolgardie, almost within a stone's throw of the town, and on three or four of the machinery was being erected. The crushing charge of public batteries was altogether too high, and the promised reduction would not come too soon. From the sands the Government deducted 3 or one-third pennyweights, thus robbing the prospectors of 5s. or 6s. per ton on the sands alone.

Mr. Taylor had been accusing the Government of that for seven years.

Mr. EDDY : It was quite true. The cost ought to be reduced by one-half. All Governments in power did the same thing, and no attempt at reform was made by the Labour Government. The slimes gathered round public batteries represented large sums of prospectors' money lying idle for eight or ten years. The tributers at the Lindsays mine, near Coolgardie, making stone pay at less than 2 dwts. to the ton, proposed to the department, if they could get water at 2 pence per thousand gallons, to take a million gallons for the first month and 400,000 gallons per month afterwards. The proposition seemed fair; but the Minister for Works said he could not agree, because of the outcry that would be raised by other mines which were paying more. Seeing that water could be pumped from Mundaring to the goldfields for 10d. a thousand, the Minister should have some discretionary power to help the poorer mines in this matter. A payment by the Mines to the Works Department of the amount of the necessary reduction in the price would be only a book-keeping entry. The survey charges and other fees to miners and prospectors were far too high, and another tax had recently been imposed on tributers in the shape of



increased stamp duty. More attention should be given to boring, both for water and minerals. The opening up of a stock-route and provision of a water supply was gratifying, and would afford a connecting link between the Eastern Goldfields and the North. It was pleasing to note the necessary increases mentioned by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy). He endorsed the remarks of other speakers as to battery charges, more particularly for low-grade propositions on which the future of the industry would depend. The charges must be reduced to allow these mines to be payable. By sending out a one-head or two-head mill a place could be proved, and when proved a larger and more expensive mill should follow. The varying charges made by the public batteries in accordance with the values of stone, from 8s. upwards, were unfair and unnecessary. The charge should be the same whether the stone were 5dwt. or 5oz. Men would work for three or four months on a rich leader, securing 50zs. to the ton, but might not make so much as men on a wide, open proposition going 5dwts. He would support generally the estimates of expenditure on this great industry.

Mr. TAYLOR : After the very encouraging speech of the Minister one hardly felt disposed at the outset to deal with these Estimates as they deserved; but it was impossible to shut one's eyes and ears to the complaints made far and wide against the administration of the department, in which there was great room for improvement, especially in the public battery system. The Minister held out some hope of reform; and it would not be attacking him to say that in portions of the State he (Mr. Taylor) had visited he had heard numerous complaints. The Minister pointed to great developments in many places, and said that the mines as a whole were on the up-grade. He would lead us to believe that certain statements about the Phillips River field were not true. Twelve months ago he (Mr. Taylor) had severely condemned the Government for their conduct in disposing of the Phillips River smelter. The

Government had disposed of the Phillips River smelter to an English company, to the inconvenience of the prospectors and the narrowing of the scope of prospecting in the district. To give railway communication and open up water supplies was the right policy to pursue; but in the past the practice has been to give these facilities not while the fields remained in the hands of the prospectors, but only when mining companies came into the field and were able to secure the ear of the Minister. That was particularly the case with the Black Range and Phillips River districts. In regard to Phillips River, the district was reported to be flourishing to such an extent that a newspaper which had been circulating there had been shut down. It might be wise on the part of the Government to take the advice given in some quarters, to stay their hands in connection with the railway, because if the district had gone down, as was reported, there could be no justification for farther probing the proposition. It was argued in some quarters that the contractors for the railway had tendered at too low a price, and wanted to get out of the contract. However, one failed to see how the goldfield could develop under the condition of being owned by a company wholly and solely. The district from the cradle had been fed by the Government, and when it was a going concern the smelter had been handed over to a company. Great strides would have to be made by the district to justify the sale of that smelter. What had the Government done for Roebourne when copper was quoted at £95 a ton? There were from 600 to 800 tons of copper ore at the mines and on the jetty at Roebourne, but it was impossible to get it to the market, because owing to the agreement between the squatters and the shipping companies the squatters had first call on the ships, and the space on the boats was utilised for the shipping of wool, so that it was impossible to get the copper away until the price was down to £65. People in the Roebourne district deserved great credit for going into such a hot district to open up copper mines, but the Government had not come to their assist-

ance, and the result was that the men could not get their wages, and the mines had practically to shut down. True, the Government had stepped in within the last month or so and given something in the way of tramway facilities ; but the proper time to have assisted them was when copper was at a good price so that the men could get the best results from their work. There was a matter in connection with the battery at Pig Well to which attention should be called. According to the leading article in the *Mount Leonora Miner* of the 9th November, Kelly and Penny who owned the Gambier Lass near Pig Well had, while crushing at the battery, taken 7.65 ounces of amalgam which they thought was their property. There was a dispute in connection with the matter, and the result was a letter from the department informing the leaseholders that no more crushing would be done for them unless they immediately returned the 7.65 ounces of gold, or its value contained in the amalgam taken from the elevator pit. That was not the proper procedure. If the men were guilty of taking what did not belong to them it was the duty of the Government to punish them as any other person would be punished, but if they were taking what was theirs they were entitled to do so. [*The Minister for Mines* : The prospectors tried to run the battery.] The amalgam must have belonged to them or to some other prospector. It was not the property of the Government, and a lack of management, and administration was shown. It was unjust that the Government did not give them full value for their stone. If an injustice had been done to these people the Ministry should rectify it. The Government had decided to remove the Duketon battery to Black Range, and if it were erected at the latter place then they would have one of the most up to date 10-head mills in the State. While he was sorry that the battery would be removed from Duketon, still he must admit that there was not sufficient stone there at present to keep it going, and there were so many places in the country requiring batteries that the Government could not afford to keep it idle. The

Minister, however, should take into consideration the cost of dismantling the battery, carting it, and re-erecting it at Black Range; and if he did that he would probably find that it would cost less to purchase a new plant in Perth and send it up to Black Range. In view of that fact, it would be wise for the Government to leave the mill at Duketon for another 12 months as it would serve there to continue their work; and perhaps this would result in the discovery of properties which would justify the battery remaining there altogether. He was glad to know that the Government were sending up a smaller crusher to Duketon in order to meet present requirements. He did not intend to speak farther generally on the department, for he hoped to be able to discuss many of the items. He trusted that this desire would not be frustrated in the same way as in connection with the Education Estimates. He had wanted to discuss several items in that vote, but they were brought on about seven o'clock in the morning after he had gone home and he had thus missed his opportunity. While the Minister for Mines was placing railway communication and water supply at the disposal of the prospectors, and was in that way opening up the fields, still it must be remembered that the supply of schools in the outback districts was likewise of very great value. At Burtville, for instance, there were seven or eight children, and the fathers and mothers would have to leave that district unless a school were kept going there. At present the Government paid £35 a year for the seven children and the people had to find £40 in order to pay the salary of a teacher. The parents would not stay in those places and have their children growing up in ignorance. He was very pleased to have heard the encouraging speech delivered by the Minister for Mines in introducing his Estimates, and he only hoped that his remarks were borne out by facts and his conclusions arrived at from the statistics of the department.

Mr. ANGWIN moved—

*That progress be reported.*

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against	..	7
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Rrebbler
Mr. Bath	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Draper
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Horan	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Gull
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Layman
Mr. Walker	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ware	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. S. P. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Verryard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. SCADDAN: There were one or two subjects he desired to bring under the notice of members and particularly of the Minister. Certain regulations under the Mines Regulation Act had been issued, and he desired to criticise one or two of them.

*The Minister for Mines:* This was no place for that.

Mr. SCADDAN: Anyhow he was going to take the opportunity of making certain comments upon them. The Minister for Mines had to administer the Mines Regulation Act and the administration required expenditure. He was quite within his rights to discuss that question, if necessary, in the course of his speech. It might not be pleasant to the Minister. First of all he desired to draw the Minister's attention to the provisions made for the use of the Holman hoist and other hoisting appliances, and unless the Minister misled the House when the Mines Regulation Act was being passed this regulation was contrary to the wish of the House.

*The MINISTER FOR MINES (point of order):* On the Estimates it was going rather far to bring forward a question of the mining regulations. If there was anything in connection with the regulations which the member did not agree

with, his proper course was to give notice of motion, so that it could be discussed. It was altogether contrary to procedure to deal with mining regulations when on the Mines Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: So far, the hon. member was in order.

Mr. SCADDAN: If he tabled a motion disagreeing with some of the regulations, the House might discuss it for a week without any effect. Was it not better to discuss the matter on an occasion like this rather than waste the time of the House with the probability of the motion being placed at the bottom of the list? He regretted it was annoying to the Minister, but the regulations were his, and he would have to stand by them. These regulations were contrary to the wish of Parliament when framing the Mines Regulation Act. When men were being raised or lowered by machinery, a properly certificated engine-driver should be in charge of the engine whether the engine was driven by air, electricity or steam. The Minister had been able to get past the wish of Parliament and had framed a regulation dealing with the Holman hoist and other appliances, exempting owners from having properly certificated engine-drivers in charge of the hoists. It was impossible to get the Minister now to alter the regulation, because it was known it was a pet hobby with the Minister for a considerable time before the Act was framed. In his (Mr. Scaddan's) opinion, the Minister knew when framing the section of the Mines Regulation Act that he could legally pass this section and frame a regulation, but he carefully evaded telling the House that that was his intention. It would have been better had the Minister made it known to the House and allowed the House to decide the question, instead of framing the regulation he had. The Minister must recognise whether a man was being hauled from a winze 200 feet deep, or from the main shaft of a mine by any class of engine a properly qualified man should be in charge of the engine; but the Minister's object was to meet the desire of some mining magnates to obviate the necessity of paying proper wages.

As it would be impossible to get the Minister to alter that regulation, he wished the Minister to take into consideration that part of the regulation which said that the examination should be held by an inspector of mines and a first-class certificated engine-driver; and he asked the Minister to specify that the engine-driver should be appointed by the association in each district; because under this provision it was absolutely impossible for an engine-driver to retain his employment, for if he demanded that the man examined in this work should be efficient, the engine-driver would stand the chance of losing his employment. He had had instances brought under his notice where engine-drivers had declined to act, and it was not long before they lost their employment. The regulation would work hardship. One person in each district might be nominated or recommended by the association, so that the responsibility placed on the engine-driver under the clause would be removed. There were other regulations that certainly showed some foresight on the part of the Minister or his officers, in dealing with men working alone. The officer who had framed this regulation was an artist. It would have been better if the Minister had left it out altogether, than have framed it in its present terms. It now gave legal enactment to something which the men had objected to for years, and it seemed that to bring anything under the notice of the Minister had the effect of making it law. The regulation which he referred to was as follows:—

“In every mine where there are men employed underground who are working alone at points in the mine where they are not in frequent communication with or within easy hearing of other employees, the manager shall direct that each such man shall be visited by some person told off for this duty at intervals of not more than two hours, and neglect to make such visits on the part of any person so told off shall be a breach of these regulations. The inspector may prescribe conditions for the better protection of men working alone against accidents. In dangerous ground no workman shall be employed

alone unless there is some person with in easy hearing.”

That was impracticable, because a man who had his work to do underground would not bother himself, if instructed by the manager to go into some portion of the mine every two hours, it might be a great distance from where he was working, 20 feet or 200 feet, to visit someone working alone. If the manager came along and asked the man if he had visited so and so he would certainly say, “Yes two minutes ago.” The regulation was *ultra vires* and had never been put into practice, so he was informed. He hoped the Minister would cause the regulation to be cancelled; it would be better to have the old order of things existing than that we should have such a regulation. He agreed with the Minister and other members that the mining outlook was somewhat promising; but it was not due to any great consideration that the mining industry had received from Parliament or the Government. It had forged ahead notwithstanding Parliament and the Government. For the last couple of years every possible function held in the State, one Minister or other spoke of the great possibilities of the agricultural industry, and they said as a side line, for the purpose of not losing sight altogether of the fact that the goldfields returned a member or two to Parliament, that the mining industry was a promising industry. It would be as well if the Minister and other members representing the goldfields constituencies would give a little more attention to the mining industry when functions were held, and draw attention to the fact that the mining industry was the backbone and most stable industry of the State, and not pay their whole attention to one particular industry; the whole should receive fair and legitimate treatment. The member for Mount Magnet in addressing the House regretted that there was an increase under the Explosives and Analytical Department, in salaries; he would like to point out that there was an increase, not in salaries, but in the number of analysts employed, and personally he did not object to that. He believed that there was an increase last year in the number of men employed in

the department, there being new inspectors of explosives. This had had good effect, because the number of accidents which had happened through faulty explosives and otherwise, had fallen off in 1906 as compared with 1905.

*The Minister for Mines:* The staff had to be kept there for the Mines Department and for the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Mr. SCADDAN: This department had a considerable amount of work to do for other departments, but he hoped it would not be lost sight of that there was a large amount of work necessary under the Explosives Branch of the Mines Department. Last year we had prosecutions against certain firms for importing explosives which had been tampered with. An officer of the Explosives Department in Victoria was recently sent home by the Victorian Government to inquire into the methods adopted by the explosives manufacturers, and he had made a report. He would like to know if the Minister had written for a copy of that report, as it would be of assistance to the Government of the State.

*The Minister for Mines:* They had to adopt our own method.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was all very well to have a test to satisfy themselves that the explosives were up to the standard, but if some ingredient was added to make the test null and void it was useless. It would be wise if the Minister obtained a copy of the Victorian officer's report. He (Mr. Scaddan) had a good deal of criticism to give as to one or two of the branches of this department, and a word or two as to the machinery department; and he hoped the Minister would give him an opportunity, not at midnight, to make these remarks, but so that they would receive proper publicity; for if he were here till seven or eight o'clock in the morning the usual procedure would be adopted by the Press, recording that somebody spoke. The public should know what was going on in the Mines Department; and the system of discussing the Estimates at all-night sittings prevented the facts being published in the Press.

It was well to remind members that, after all, the Golden Mile was responsible for more than half the total gold production of the State; and while members spoke of large areas in the prospecting stage, the Golden Mile assisted other districts by drawing attention to Western Australian mining. Nevertheless, this had its drawbacks; for speculators would not touch any but very high-grade propositions, even though low-grade would pay. Proof of this fact would be found in the Coolgardie district, which as he had contended for years would yet become a good gold-producing centre, for it contained many mines which would pay if they had capital and a proper water supply, as was exemplified already; and the same could be said for many other districts which had been neglected owing to the concentration of attention on the rich lodes of the Kalgoorlie belt, and to the belief that other shows should be as rich or they were not worth touching. The main need on the Golden Mile was that the men employed should be properly treated, and they were not properly treated to-day. In this year's departmental report, inspector after inspector stated that the accidents so very frequently occurring seemed to be unavoidable. That was not so. The return did not show completely how the health of miners was injured, particularly on the Golden Mile. The system of stoping in some mines, and the system of rising, were detrimental to the workers. It was rumoured, he knew not with what correctness, that the managers were considering, if they had not already put in force, a system of rising which would evade the box system prescribed by regulation. It was said they proposed to put in a box after they had proceeded to 30 feet, the prescribed limit, and then to proceed from that box another 30 feet; then to put in another box, thus having a box at every 30 feet, which system would be an evasion of the Act.

*The Minister for Mines:* Whether that was to be proposed would soon be ascertained. It would certainly be an evasion of the Act.

Mr. SCADDAN: The system would abolish the main use of the box system—

the thorough ventilation of the top of the rise. It was alleged there was another proposal, that the rise should be constructed in a zig-zag fashion, in one direction at less than 30 degrees from the vertical, and then in the same manner in an opposite direction. After reaching the desired height, the corners would be knocked off the various angles, and there would remain practically an upright rise. This method, it was said, the managers considered less expensive than the box system; but that was surely a mistake. He hoped the Minister's anticipations of future developments would be fully realised. The serious decline in mining would result in other industries going backward. Members generally should give more consideration to mining questions. There were now only five or six present in the Chamber; yet Western Australia owed more to mining than to any other of her industries.

Mr. HORAN: The congratulatory tenour of the Opposition speeches was satisfactory; but Government mining members were conspicuous by their absence. He hoped the Minister's anticipations would be realised, and would provide a silver lining to the cloud hanging over the industry for some years past. He congratulated the Minister on the result of wrestling with the problem of the treatment of sands by public batteries. In the last Parliament the legal opinion was that the Government had no right to the possession of these sands; and now the Government recognised this, but only at the eleventh hour. Though the public batteries were not an unmixed blessing, they had in many respects been successful. From time to time goldfields members were disturbed with complaints about the battery crushings; and the promised reduction in charges would probably diminish complaints. The battery system was going far beyond what was originally intended. The original object was to ascertain the values of prospecting shows, so that prospectors might determine whether they should erect batteries of their own. Now the Minister boasted of making the public batteries pay. [*The Minister: Pay their way.*]

It would be better to provide in outlying centres small portable batteries, as in Victoria and New South Wales; and to lend money to prospectors so that they could erect their own machinery. He knew from experience that this would be the better method in his own district, where he had recently inspected almost every mine. The Agricultural Bank supplied the farmer with money on easy terms, even to purchase sheep; and the Savings Bank might on good security lend mine-owners money at say 5 per cent. to purchase batteries, thus avoiding the necessity of foreign flotations, which meant sending the profits out of the State. Savings Bank returns showed that a quarter of a million was lying idle and serving no purpose whatever. It might well be utilised for mining developments. The Minister mentioned £1,000 lent by the Government to a mine-owner in the Yilgarn district, who was thus enabled not only to erect a 10-head battery and crush for the public, but ultimately to erect another 10-head battery on his own account. The cost of water supplied to the poorer mines should be reduced, and the mines development vote utilised to subsidise the Goldfields Water Supply Branch, thus avoiding any general reduction in the price of water which, however, might well be reduced generally in view of the low cost of pumping and the immense quantities running to waste over the Mundaring Weir. The Westralia Extension mine at Bonnie Vale was in great difficulties, and though using much more water than some of the mines at Kalgoorlie, it was charged 7s. 6d. per thousand while they paid 5s. or 5s. 6d. They used more water than was used at Kalgoorlie, but the charge was 2s. 6d. more, because scheme water was not used exclusively. It was good the Minister recognised that in some of the hitherto abandoned places prospectors were improving, and that the people who had been attracted to Kalgoorlie were now paying attention to other fields, such as Coolgardie and Yilgarn. At Marve Loch fine discoveries had been made, and the mines were opening up well. The Minister should not delay the construction of a dam at that locality. At Wid

giemooltha there was strong indication of a revival owing to the construction of the railway. Developments were most satisfactory: there were numerous lodes of sulphides running for several miles in the Mount Pleasant locality, and the yields were high. The lodes were numerous, and had already been prospected to a depth of 150ft. or 180ft. One mine yielded 6dwts. 4grs. over the plates, and averaged 5dwts. 18grs. in the sands. Another yielded 9dwts. 3grs. over the plates, and 8½dwts. in the sands. Another show, which had 18,000 tons of ore in sight and which was installing two rock drills by Christmas time, had averaged 32dwts. The Minister should send an inspector to that district, because due regard was not paid to the cheapest method of working these properties, and it was hoped there would be justification for giving farther facilities at the public batteries for treating sulphide ores. All through the Yilgarn district there were great indications of progress. At Jourdie Hills he (Mr. Horan) had seen three bushel-bags filled with rich specimens, some about 20lbs., from reefs three or four feet wide, traversing a couple of miles. The Minister might well consider the idea of subsidising a battery on any one of the properties in this district. The Minister had to be thanked for the attention given to water supply in the Yilgarn district, and to the various matters brought under his notice. Goldfields members must be satisfied that if the optimistic forecast of the Minister turned out correct there was a bright future for the mining industry of the State.

Mr. BATH: While we talked about encouraging investors of capital and lightening the mining laws with a view to encouraging people to invest capital, those we proposed to encourage were those who had damned the industry and were doing their best to discourage investment in our mines. The shareholders of Bayley's Reward, Coolgardie, had held that mine for a considerable time and paid many calls to keep the mine going. Finally, provision was made for the sale of a certain portion of the plant

and the liquidation of the liabilities, but with a promise that the lease would be protected to the shareholders. However, the property was sold, and just sufficient was realised to pay off the liability to one of the banking institutions; and then newcomers came in, and on the second sale of portion of the machinery realised not only sufficient to return what they had paid for the mine, but sufficient to provide a profit of £250; for they acquired the mine itself and sufficient machinery to equip it in a more modest manner. All sorts of rumours had been going about that some of the old company were the back of the deal; but it was difficult to get at the root of the matter, because the mine was still in the name of the solicitor who had fixed up the deed. This would not induce the shareholders of that mine to invest again in Western Australian mines. Any member in this Chamber could quote a dozen instances where similar methods had been resorted to in mining manipulation. There was another instance in connection with the Golden Links. A liquidator was appointed and, without the shareholders getting a dividend, a new company was formed of 350,000 shares, with a working capital of £11,000. The Lake View Consols Company secured four-sevenths of the shares, and at the meeting of the Lake View Consols Company the chairman complimented the shareholders in regard to the deal, pointing out that there was a block of ore in the Golden Links which ought to be quite sufficient for something like £20,000 profit, and that below there was a 15-foot lode which they had started to develop, with the hope that the mine would turn into a real mine. The words the chairman used were: "We do not sufficiently often have an opportunity of getting something for nothing, but I do not see how they could have done much better unless they were prepared to sell the lease right out, which they did not wish to do." One could not see how they could do much worse. The Lake View Consols had an option on the remaining three-sevenths of the shares, the Lake View managers were managers of the Golden Links mine, and a gentleman had joined the board to represent

the interests of the Lake View Consols shareholders. That was made known to the shareholders of the old Golden Links Company on the 17th October, but there was no information given to the shareholders of the company in Australia in regard to the deal; probably the arrival of the mining journals from the old country would be the first intimation the Australian shareholders would receive of the fact that another company had their property. This was another instance where the methods resorted to in mining flotation and carried on by so-called mining magnates had made mining investment stink in the nostrils of investors. Unless something was done in the direction of enforcing the mining laws passed last session there would be no hope of encouraging the investment of capital in the mining propositions of the State. The Lake View Company had not only avoided the payment of stamp duty, but the probability was that they devoted a portion of their profits to the payment for the shares in the new company, and thus avoided the payment of dividend duty to the State. It was to be hoped the Minister would look into the matter to see if it was not possible to do something with gentry of this sort; at least the Minister could protect the interests of Australian shareholders.

*The Minister :* That was almost entirely a matter for the Companies Act.

Mr. BATH: The Minister had a far more intimate knowledge of the industry, and would have to give the lead to other Ministers, even if the Attorney General had to introduce the legislation later on.

*The Minister :* Drastic alteration to the Companies Act was necessary.

Mr. BATH: There was a loss of £600 shown on working the Siberia battery, and he would like to know how much of that was accounted for by the defalcations of the battery manager.

*The Minister :* It was assumed that the loss by this means was about £200.

Mr. BATH: The manager was presumably not in the service now.

*The Minister :* No; he was prosecuted, but a conviction was not obtained.

Mr. BATH: The manager got off very lightly, and the fact that such a thing

could occur was not likely to inspire confidence in the minds of the leaseholders and prospectors as to the running of the batteries. He was pleased, however, to see that in other centres, so far as the honesty of battery managers was concerned, the inspectors seemed to have every faith in them. If there was a difference of opinion it was with regard to the management of the system.

Mr. STUART: In relation to public batteries, the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) had mentioned one point with regard to Messrs. Kelly and Penny. One had not time yet to bring that matter before the department, as he had been out of town and had only just received a communication with regard to it. The "Gambier Lass" party had in the past few years crushed at the Pig Well State battery about 3,000 tons, averaging about one ounce to the ton. At the last clean-up at the end of October they had reason to believe that some of the amalgam was going astray. They cleared out the elevator pit, and it was found that there had been an oversight somewhere. After the occurrence in question, they received the following letter from the manager:—

"No more crushing will be done for you unless you immediately return 7.65 ounces of gold, or its value, contained in the amalgam taken from the elevator pit."

He was in the locality at the time and was told all about it, and it was mentioned to him that there was likely to be trouble. This was previously to the receipt of the letter he had just read. On November 5th, after he returned to Perth he received the following letter from the firm:—

"In October of this year we completed a crushing of 336 tons at the Pig Well State battery and, in the process of cleaning up, we included the cleaning out of the elevator sump, not the usual custom certainly, but we did so for the following reasons:—(1.) In all previous crushings our residues samples had been taken from the drop of the amalgamating tables and on this occasion it was bored from the settling vats. (2.) We had good reason



to believe that, either through inattention or incompetence on the part of the manager (Mr. Morris), part of our gold was being washed away. (3.) No provision is made, nor any allowance given to compensate us for the gold which is, or may be, arrested in transit from the tables to the settling vats, namely, in the elevator sump. We may mention that the manager objected strongly to our cleaning out the sump, and we received the enclosed notification from him. After having briefly stated the facts to you, we wish to object strongly to such a tyrannical proceeding. It is a serious matter for us and also for the welfare of the district, and the action of the authorities, whoever they are, cannot be too strongly condemned. We consider that our liberties have been interfered with by the authorities by not availing themselves of the civil rights which the law offers to all British subjects, as delay in crushing our ore means considerable expense to us. We would urge you to find out if it is in the power of the authorities to refuse to crush our ore, and if the Minister for Mines approves of this action."

Two of those men had been known to him personally for 12 years. He was quite willing to believe there had been an oversight in cleaning up the battery. The local paper referred to the matter in even stronger terms, for it said:—

"Messrs. Kelly and Penny are either guilty of theft or they were innocent in taking that which they considered their right. If they have laid themselves open to action at law, either criminal or civil, the Government should not hesitate to take the necessary steps to inflict punishment."

The paper also criticised the action as tyrannical and high-handed; but he would not be prepared to endorse those terms, for he did not know enough about the question.

*The Minister for Mines:* The department could not allow prospectors to go to the battery and take charge of the plant.

Mr. STUART: If they had been crushing that amount of ore and the elevator

had not been cleaned out, that amount of amalgam had no right to be there. It was a very promising locality, but was likely to be seriously retarded if the question were left in its present state. He would have brought the matter under the notice of the Minister earlier, but he had been out of town and had only just returned. He would not have mentioned it that night but the member for Mt. Margaret had referred to it. Twelve months ago when the Phillips River Railway Bill was under discussion he had opposed the measure, and he felt no satisfaction at the present time in knowing that that opposition was justified. The local newspaper had been booming the field rather more perhaps than had been justified, but even they now found they could only issue once a week instead of twice. As soon as all the accounts were got together they intended to close down. That was the only one of the 1906 railway proposals of the Government which he had opposed. He desired to draw attention to the fact that facilities for prospectors and leaseholders out-back were not as they should be or what had been promised to them. The warden's court and the mining registrar's office for his district should be in Leonora township instead of at Mt. Malcolm. Recently two very big mining cases were brought up, and it was decided that they should be heard at the registrar's office at Mt. Malcolm. After the cases had been started, however, the warden transferred the hearing to Leonora. The position was that in the first dispute, which was as to a partnership account in the King of the Hills battery, the litigants and their witnesses had to come in to Leonora, a distance of 15 miles, and then go to Malcolm. After they got to the latter place, however, the warden transferred the case to Leonora, so as to prevent their having to go to Malcolm each day. The other case was that of Rowe *versus* the Sons of Gwalia, and a similar alteration for the hearing of the case was made in that action. If the Minister was sincere in his desire to develop the industry, obstacles such as that should not be placed in the way of the people. The alteration would only cost about £1,000, and

he believed that the Public Service Commissioner had recommended that it should be effected. The amalgamation of the two offices would mean a considerable saving of money. The bulk of the population of the district was at Leonora, and there was very little mining work now being done at Malcolm. Then there was a question of the regulations as they effected tributing. He understood that in future one of the regulations would be that tributers by working on a property would not be fulfilling the labour conditions. In the last monthly report of the Chamber of Mines it was stated :—

“Mr. Birkbeck drew the attention of the meeting to the proposals of the Minister for Mines to amend the regulations under the Mining Act, including a change in regard to the conditions of tributing, the Minister having expressed his intention of inserting a regulation under which tributers working on a lease would not be regarded as fulfilling the labour conditions. Mr. Birkbeck pointed out that unless there were some elasticity about the proposed new regulations, they would operate very harshly in respect of many companies, particularly in the back country, who had exhausted their funds after spending thousands of pounds on their leases without profitable results. The chairman (Mr. R. Hamilton) stated that the Minister would be asked to submit a draft of the proposed regulations to the chamber before the same were put into effect, and attention would be given to the points mentioned by Mr. Birkbeck.”

He hoped the desire of the Chamber of Mines for greater elasticity would not be complied with. From one end of the country to another there were complaints about tributers being reckoned as fulfilling the labour conditions simply because they were working on the properties. The extortionate freights charged on mining material, especially in the far-back portions of the State, should be considerably decreased. There were many complaints throughout the country as to the high rates which in some in-

stances were militating against the successful carrying on of the industry. He brought up again the railway facilities for that northern end of the field. Some of the shows out-back were making four dwts. pay; and when that was the case they were entitled to every encouragement. Anyone who had a knowledge of the subject must know that they had to cut things fine to make such a return pay. If the line were constructed from Leonora going North, it would be a payable proposition. He was pleased to see during the past week that a flying survey party had been out, but that did not carry anything substantial in the way of a promise for the railway being constructed at a later date. When the time came the people there would be able to put forward a strong case for the construction of the line, or the appointment of a Commission to inquire into its construction. As to the assistance given to parties to aid in developing the country, he had no complaint to make. People in his electorate had been as well treated as in other parts, but he would like to see the distribution a little more general. In the Never Never in the Yilgarn district one mine got £1,000; and considering the glowing reports which had come from there since, a less sum would have been sufficient, and then money would have been available for other places. If the Never Never was as remunerative as represented, part of the thousand should now be paid back, the Minister would then be at liberty to make advances in other directions. He had heard many complaints in reference to the Government granting aid to the northern end of the Kalgoorlie field. The Kalgoorlie Leaseholders and Prospectors Association were putting forward a good case for assistance by an up-to-date plant to develop the northern end of the Kalgoorlie field. This should receive the attention of the townspeople there and be a subject of serious consideration at the hands of mining authorities. A large area of country was to be found there but the batteries were not suitable for the treatment of the ore, and none of the companies were in a position to place an up-to-date plant in the locality. The Pro-

spectors and Leaseholders Association of Kalgoorlie had been industrious in collecting statistics and figures showing the amount of ore available should the plant be forthcoming. The people had an idea that if the ore were treated with an up-to-date plant the Government would be in a position to put it there. That part of the field was worth a trial. The matter brought forward by the member for Coolgardie in reference to the cheap water supplies for the struggling parties should be taken into consideration. With the water going to waste running over the weir people should not be refused cheap water. The member for Coolgardie struck a sensible suggestion when he said that it would be a wise thing to grant assistance in the shape of a reduction in the price of water. [*The Minister*: All depended on the result of the inquiry.] If an inquiry were made and the result did not justify a reduction, the Minister could refuse. It was a mistake that so much exemption was granted. The Great Tower Company in his electorate had got another six months exemption, and they intended to work the mine with tributers, and if the Chamber of Mines got their way that mine would be regarded as having the conditions fulfilled. He did not know whether the Minister made any reference to the inauguration of a worn out miners fund, but the time had arrived when that fund should be initiated by a vote from the Mines Department as a nucleus and supported by contributions from the miners, as was done in New South Wales. The time was ripe for the initiation of this fund. As the mines got deeper and the conditions of labour more trying the best men found themselves in a few years becoming affected by miner's complaint. It was only a matter of common humanity to institute this fund; it was depressing at times to meet men who ought to be in the prime of their life looking for a ticket to get into the Old Men's Home. He had a suggestion to make, which might be thought visionary, but he suggested that the mines should only work two shifts, thus allowing the atmosphere in the mines to clear. If one shift were deleted the atmosphere might become nor-

mal. He believed he was the first to make the suggestion and he hoped it would not be far distant when it would be adopted. He was sure good results would follow. With regard to the Roebourne close-down, the Government should have arranged for some better facilities to get the ore from these mines. This had a very bad effect when we were trying to boom Western Australia. He got a wire from the district saying the mines had been closed down, that the men were suing the companies for their wages and warning people not to go there. One little instance like that drove more people away from Western Australia than all that the newspapers did to bring them here. The Government might have granted facilities to ship the ores away in order to allow the mines to get on the market while the price was good. He had arrived at the conclusion that the wells in mining areas were administered and supervised in a haphazard fashion. At Linden a well was put down, a pump was put in, and after the men had erected a windmill they found they could only get 40 gallons a day; a test should have been made of the well previously. People were allowed to take water from the wells, and hawk it round for sale, and when those persons for whom the wells were sunk came along there was no water for them. Some provision should be made to see that the water in the wells was not carted away for sale, but that it was for the people who travelled. When these people came along and found no water they were inclined to have an idea that a injustice was perpetrated on them. With regard to the shilling levy, which was legally or illegally deducted from the pay of the miners in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines every fortnight, he maintained this was an illegal deduction. From every single man 2s. was deducted from the fortnight's pay, and from every married man 3s. This was a large item in the total, amounting to anything between £7,500 and perhaps £10,000. It was not to the credit of the mining industry that the men should be bled to that extent without getting more return than they did. If the money was taken from the men they should have some con-

trol of it and know where it went. Men might work for years, having paid into the fund all the time, and on leaving the district they had no claim on the fund. It would be better for men to pay into a friendly society with branches in other parts of the State, when they would have an opportunity of being transferred. In his electorate the miners had a fund which was administered by themselves, they employed their own doctor, they had a large membership and their own hospital. As a sample of the manner in which the department encouraged men to be self-supporting, when the men desired to have their medical fund converted into a hospital they could not have it done, because the Chief Medical Officer refused but did not inquire into the circumstances. He would not allow them to have a hospital, although they wanted to run it independently of the Government. The Government hospital was still under the expense of supporting cases which were sent in. Another institution under the guidance of the Minister was the State hotel. He hoped some reference had been made to it, or that the Minister had some idea of doing a little more justice to the men who produced the revenue for the institution. According to the different accounts this institution was estimated to produce a revenue of over £11,000. On behalf of men, who by patronising the place tended to make the profit, it was time a little more was given back to them. They were compelled to patronise it, and they did not get as much in return as if the hotel was run by a private individual. True the management was hampered by restricted accommodation; but the hotel should be a model to all other licensed houses, whereas it was simply a drinking resort, with none of the comforts of a high-class establishment. The manager did good work under serious disadvantages, but the accommodation and the treatment of employees should be improved. As to tributings, some Kalgoorlie mines charged tributaries from 20 to 60 per cent., according to the value of the gold won. Within the last few months certain men left the State rather than put up with such conditions. Some had gone to the Congo territory in search of work, think-

ing they could get better treatment. With a little encouragement by way of battery subsidies and reduction in freights, the Leonora district would have no reason to complain, except in respect of the items mentioned.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Minister had delivered a very optimistic speech, and other speakers seemed to follow him. He (Mr. Heitmann), though he believed the outlook was very good, was not concerned whether the industry would go forward or go back. He would willingly, if it were possible, remove every miner from the goldfields of Western Australia, place him in some other industry, preferably farming, and shut up the mines at once. Members spoke of the millions of money obtained from the mines and the thousands of men employed; but many of the men would be thankful to anyone who would remove them from a position in which the outlook to them was gloomy. The majority of hon. members viewed the industry from the standpoint of the prospectors and others in shallow workings. As one who had worked for several years in deep mines he had doubts about the beneficial results of the industry to the miner. In some of our deep mines men worked under conditions which would wear them out in a comparatively brief period. Every year the departmental report gave a list of fatal and other serious accidents; yet we treated such accidents as unavoidable. Last year we had 40 fatal accidents. Consider what this meant, not only from a humane but from an economic standpoint. Perhaps half of the 40 killed were married, and left 20 widows and possibly many children. The task of subscribing for the support of these dependants fell upon the miners in the district. One little union at Cue started last year with £700 to the credit of accident pay and death allowances account, and of this they spent the whole sum between last Christmas and June, and had to find other means of raising money for accident purposes. It was unfair that unions should have to contribute so much for this object. To improve the condition of the workers we should have better inspectors and better mine-mana-

gers. Follow the example of New Zealand, and let managers be certificated. A few months ago this was recommended to the Minister by the State Mining Engineer, but without result. This State was now spending less than any other State in Australia on the Inspection of Mines branch, though in view of the nature of the country we should spend more to preserve the lives and the health of our miners. The proportion of such expenditure to the total expenditure was not much over two per cent., while other States spent from five per cent. to 10 and 12 per cent. In 1906 40 men were killed and about 270 seriously injured. True, accidents would happen in mines. Miners themselves became careless, and should be protected against themselves by being brought before the court if they broke the regulations. Every means should be tried of preventing the slaughter, sometimes even murder, of the men. About twelve months ago an accident happened in the East Fingal mine. A man was firing a round of six or seven holes. Before he could get out of the way a fuse ran, and he was seriously injured. By pure luck he had lit this defective fuse first, and before he could get his candle to the other primers the explosion took place. Later on, in a fatal case of the same kind, it was found that the inspector of mines at Cue had instructed the manager that not more than three or four holes were to be fired in one round; yet in the case of a man named Wilson, blown to pieces in the same mine owing to faulty fuse, no notice was taken of the instructions. Our inspectors were insufficient in number, and had too much work to do. In this matter we should not study expense, but should give the miner fair working conditions. We provided in our factories law for a certain quantity of air for employees, but we had nothing of that in the mining law. If the mining industry could not afford to give the workers those conditions which would enable them to live out a fair span of life, it was not being carried on under fair conditions. Instructions should be given to those gathering vital statistics to ascertain the causes of deaths among the miners. The number of deaths from tuberculosis among the

Bendigo miners was astounding, and in this State we would probably find an enormous percentage of miners dying from the same cause. With the rushing and tearing system now followed out on our mines we would have conditions ten times worse than they were in the Eastern States. We burned ten packets of dynamite here to one burned in the mines of the Eastern States. As long as the Minister refused to appoint a sufficient number of inspectors and to treat the miners from the standpoint of humanity, as long as he refused to lay aside a fair sum of money to see that the mines were properly inspected, he (Mr. Heitmann) would bring this matter before the country. [*The Minister*: There was an extra inspector provided for this year.] It was not near enough. Each State of the Commonwealth spent more than we spent in mining inspection. No member would object to half a dozen additional inspectors being appointed if necessary. When an inspector took three months to traverse his district, the mines could not be properly inspected. At all events if we did not spend money in appointing Government inspectors we should have check inspectors. The mines inspectors were not receiving too much pay, but the Public Service Commissioner proposed to cut down some of the salaries.

*Mr. Scaddan* : The salaries paid were not sufficient to make the inspectors independent.

*The Minister* would fight the Commissioner on that point.

*Mr. HEITMANN* : The Cue wood-line proposal had been on the boards for two years. A start was now to be made, but there were objections to letting the contract to any particular individual to supply the mines. The contractor could not get more work out of men than one who took on the work at day labour. The contractor had either to get an unfair amount of work for the money paid, or must sweat the men by getting plenty of work out of them and paying them a smaller wage. The woodcutters in the Cue district had been notified by Mr. Baxter, the contractor, that he intended to reduce rates from 5s. 3d. and 5s. 9d. to 4s. 6d. per ton. No man could make

a fair thing at that price, and rather than that men should work there for a sweating wage the whole of the mines on the Murchison would be stopped. It would be found that the unions on the Murchison were sufficiently strong. If Mr. Baxter tried the game on he would find the unions prepared. As to the classification of inspectors of mines, he (Mr. Heitmann) did not wish to speak at the present time, but he hoped the number of inspectors would be increased.

Mr. SCADDAN moved (at 11.55 p.m.)

*That progress be reported.*

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	19

—

Majority against .. 9

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brabber
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Horan	Mr. Draper
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Walker	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Ware	Mr. Gull
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Vervard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Layman (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

[12 o'clock midnight.]

Mr. WALKER: On frequent occasions he had complained to the Minister concerning the management of the wood-line railway contracts in his and other constituencies. Concessions being granted, the persons obtaining them and conducting the firewood and timber enterprises were at first ready to promise all sorts of conveniences to people in the locality of the line; but after a short while their conduct changed considerably, and they acted in such a way as to override all the regulations and rules of the department, and in fact practically defied the Government. When starting their career, they said they would carry the miners' provisions and assist in every way to serve the people as a common carrier

would; but no sooner were they in full swing than they secured all kinds of extraneous monopolies. He had one in his mind where a company, after obeying for a time the conditions, started stores on their own account. Tradespeople had been supplying the settlers, miners and wood-cutters of the district with goods, but the company refused to carry supplies for the storekeepers, created a complete monopoly and the tradespeople were practically "done" out of their debts. That was outrageous, but it would seem to have been favoured by the Mines Department. Such a state of things would seem to bear out the statement that the department always favoured the company against the prospector, the miner, and the wood-cutter. How was it that in order to still farther play into the hands of the companies the concessions granted to wood-cutting companies were now managed from the Mines Department, instead of from the Lands Department as formerly?

*The Minister for Mines:* The Lands Department were always advised by the Mines Department.

Mr. WALKER: The concessions were managed by the Mines Department. Some time ago a complaint was received from his constituency that some of these companies had gone beyond the boundaries of their concessions and had entered into the forest and mining reserves. He went to the Lands Department to find out if a check could not be put on what appeared to be an unjustifiable encroachment, and he was informed that that branch of work had now been placed in the hands, and under the direction, of the Minister for Mines. Without any authority from this House, or any other source, the management of the work had been changed from the Lands to the Mines Department. One of these companies which was building a tranline and extending operations farther into new country asked the Mines Department for a slice of a certain reserve, and the Minister marked this matter as urgent and sent it on. A certain roads board and town council having ascertained by accident that the company was poaching wrote to the Lands Department for information. They re-

ceived a very misleading answer, for they were led to believe that there was no truth in the rumour. They then asked whether anything had been done, and protested against any farther concessions being granted. The request of the company was granted and the local bodies knew nothing about it. In connection with that and other applications the North-East Coolgardie roads board and other bodies were treated most discourteously by not being placed in possession of the true facts. It was almost useless for local boards to protest, for in almost every instance concessions asked for by companies were granted and the local bodies overlooked. He objected to the Minister being given power to grant those concessions and to overlook so repeatedly the breaking of agreements.

*The Minister for Mines:* The Minister had not that power, and the hon. member had been wrongly informed.

Mr. WALKER: With the object of getting the wrongs redressed, he went to the Lands Department for information and was informed that the whole matter had been placed in the hands of the Minister for Mines, who was responsible for what had been done. Apparently the Lands Department had given up its right to deal with such matters. He was told the change had been made for convenience, as such matters concerned the Mines more or less. The concessions were ratified in the Mines Department, and in one case at Kanowna the Minister wrote "urgent" on the application for the concession, and saw it was passed by the Executive Council. He was not imagining these things. He was objecting to these concessions not only being granted indiscriminately, but when once granted every obstacle was placed in the way of any complaint or any request for the terms of the concession being made known, while facilities were granted to companies. This had become a grievance in his constituency, and he desired as forcibly as he could to object to this course of procedure being continued. He hoped there would be some alteration, if need be an Act of Parliament. Power ought to be

exercised in the interests of the people as against the monopolists and tyrannical power exercised by the concessionaires. He trusted the Minister would carry out the programme promised tonight in lightening the burden of the prospector and small miner. He should lessen the cost of all of those developing new areas, and in extending the mining operations of the State. The Minister had done a considerable amount in extending the water supplies to outlying districts; he had considerably benefited the miners, both large and small in this respect, yet there would be a considerable advantage in lessening the charges to struggling miners in struggling districts. He admitted great good had been done by the enterprise of the Mines Department in this direction, but improvement could be made in every direction. The Minister had given hope of the improvement being realised. He hoped when the Minister had time he would turn his attention a little bit towards the promises we had made, of finding a few additional accessories to the development of mining in the Kanowna district. He hoped funds would admit of it being done and that the Minister would give every opportunity, and have the privileges which had been extended to Black Range, in the way of timber concessions, extended to Paddington and Broad Arrow.

Mr. ANGWIN: Not being a representative of the mining industry he did not intend to deal with the mining Estimates, but to express his pleasure at hearing the remark made by those representing mining constituencies. It had been very refreshing to hear the different opinions expressed by members. One member would condemn the Minister for neglecting outback districts, and another member praised the Minister for the good done in looking after the interests of the people in the outback country. Members were placed in a very difficult position to understand in what manner the Minister had carried out his duties. The member for Yilgarn spoke very highly of the manner in which the Mines Department had been administered, and finished up by saying how well those

engaged in mining in his district had been assisted. We had heard the member for Kanowna, and he agreed with that member after having visited the district, make out a good claim for a timber concession. When the department was considering the handing over of that small area to supply Kalgoorlie with firewood the town of Kanowna should have been considered. Then members heard the laudatory remarks of the member in regard to the administration of the Mines Department, and almost every member who had spoken dealt with the necessity of making a reduction in the charges for goods supplied or work done by the Mines Department. The member for Coolgardie said the charge for water was too high. He forgot that if he wished this reduction to be carried into effect and the water supplied to the small miners at a less cost the mines also would want a reduction in the cost of the water supplied to them. It was quite right to ask that the charges should be reduced, but if the Government supplied water to the small miners at a special rate others also would claim for a similar advantage. The member also said the survey fees were too high and should be reduced; this was another means of taking revenue from the Mines Department. Then the member suggested a tax on tributaries in regard to their agreements. If these reductions were made a certain amount of revenue would be taken from the Mines Department. Then the State battery charges were considered high and should be reduced particularly in dealing with low-grade stone. There was a certain loss this year in regard to batteries. He would like to know whether any sinking fund was being established or any money being set apart for depreciation. From the last loan £500,000 was spent on mines development, but no amount had been set aside for a sinking fund or for depreciation, and it would be necessary for Parliament to borrow another sum to keep batteries up to their proper state. Members said that nothing had been done to assist the mining industry of the State, but from Loan Fund £1,200,000 had been spent in developing the mines of the

State. The present and past Governments had realised the necessity for assisting those engaged in the mining industry. While the member for Coolgardie pointed out the necessity for reducing the various charges he also stated that the prospector should receive more encouragement. What class of prospector did the member refer to? If it was the class to be found round about Coolgardie, and who were always close at hand if the Government had anything with which they could be helped, then not much good would be done; it was the prospector who went far back who should be assisted. The Government had been accused of unfair treatment in regard to keeping the slimes and sands at the batteries, which, it was stated, had been going on for years. Seeing that the batteries had been such a loss to the State for years and that the charges were now too high, and that the Government had been robbing the miners of their sands and slimes, something in the future would have to be done to enable the Government to carry the batteries on at a less loss to the State than in the past. The member for Murchison was not satisfied because the State did not serve the small holders in the same manner as large companies. The State had not built railways through the fields before the mines were developed, but had waited to see whether developments would justify railways. The member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) had to go from home to find cause for complaint against the Minister, and discovered an instance of departmental neglect in Roebourne, where, owing to lack of proper shipping facilities, large quantities of copper could not be got away while high prices ruled. The member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan) suggested lending money from the Savings Bank to those engaged in mining. Rather than do that the Mines Department should take the mines and work them; for if money were lent and a mine turned out badly the Government would have to make the best of the machinery; whereas, if the mines turned out profitable, the borrower would take the profits, and if the State foreclosed the cost of removing old machinery might



exceed the value of new. All mining members complained of the scanty provision on these Estimates; yet for some time the cry had been that the Government were short of funds. As a coastal member he (Mr. Angwin) would do everything possible to assist miners by testing new ground in the attempt to open up another Golden Mile. He trusted the Minister would not be led away by the compliments or the flattery addressed to him to-night, but would watch the best interests of the State as a whole.

Mr. Scaddan called attention to the state of the House. [12.40 a.m.]

Bells rung and quorum formed.

[Hon. T. F. Quinlan took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply generally) : There was no need to reply to all the complaints made to-night; but he must refer to the timber tramways, the control of which was vested in the Minister for Lands. As the Mines Department were more in touch with the requirements of goldfields people, all matters in connection with these applications had to be forwarded to the Mines Department for approval, before being finally dealt with by the Lands. In addition, a board on the goldfields had to report on each application, and thus the department could get the full strength of every request made. Though he did not know the special circumstances of the case referred to by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), it was evident that as a rule the test gave general satisfaction. The members for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) and Leonora (Mr. Stuart) had referred to a dispute between the manager of the public battery at Pig Well and several leaseholders. Details of the case were not available; but it should be generally understood that the manager of a battery was the man in authority. That authority could not be handed over to a customer who came there with stone to crush. If the manager forbade a customer to do certain things, the customer had no right to do them. One did not hear that this had occurred in the

present case; but before he could reply he would have to inquire. The statements made to-night inclined him to believe that the customers had taken control of the battery, whereupon certain instructions were issued by the manager. If the customers had done certain things without the manager's authority, the manager would be upheld. In reference to cheap water supplies and reduced charges, those matters depended on the individual cases put before the department. There might be instances where it would pay the department to pay out of the development vote a proportion for the cost of the water supply, and this had been done in the Southern Cross district; but where two men who were tributers in a mine in the Coolgardie district, because they had an opportunity of getting cheap water from Mr. Graham Price, expected the Goldfields Water Scheme to make a special rebate to them and that the Mines Department would make good any loss to the scheme out of the mines development vote simply to give these two tributers cheap water and have no benefit accruing to the industry other than giving to these two men a good mining venture, it was hardly a grant that he (the Minister) thought could be justified. The Leader of the Opposition referred to matters which pertained more to the Companies Act than mining administration, but certainly an alteration to the Companies Act seemed necessary. There should be an alteration with regard to limited liability companies. The Act could well be amended for the protection of the public. In our mining legislation we were proposing to insist on certain information being given to the public. This would be to the advantage of the investors. Another proposal that would be appreciated by the Opposition was in regard to the amalgamation of leases, and the possibility of placing leases which formed portion of an amalgamated group under the control of the Minister so far as the expenditure of money or labour on them was concerned. When it was found that large areas were held and not worked, power would be given to the Minister to compel the expenditure of

certain moneys on the unworked, though amalgamated, leases should a responsible officer of the department consider that the money could be profitably expended. He (the Minister) was pleased at the criticism directed against the department. It was only by healthy criticism one could improve the work of the department. By the public battery system and by expenditure of money in connection with water supply, he desired to improve the department. When we reached the special votes he would be pleased to give any information.

Mr. SCADDAN moved (at 12.50 a.m.) that progress be reported.

Mr. Gordon: Was not the hon. member out of order? He had moved the same motion at 12.40.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. T. F. Quinlan): The hon. member could not move, twice in succession, to have progress reported.

Mr. Scaddan: At the time mentioned, attention was called to the state of the House.

Motion not pressed.

*General debate concluded; Votes and Items discussed in detail, from 12.50 onward.*

*Salaries Generally, £31,830:*

Item—Secretary for Mines and Inspector of Mining Surveys, £650:

Mr. HORAN: On one occasion the Chief Clerk had given him information directly opposite to what the Secretary for Mines gave a moment later.

The MINISTER: Much latitude was given to and responsibility thrown on the Chief Clerk. Any important matter should certainly have been referred to the Secretary, but great confidence was reposed in Mr. Calanchini, the Chief Clerk, who rarely made an error.

Item—Bookkeeper, £258:

Mr. SCADDAN: Why was there an increase in this item?

The MINISTER: Arrangements were made by the Treasurer to carry out as far as possible the recommendations of the Public Service Commissioner in re-

gard to classification. There were slight reductions and increases, but none beyond those the Commissioner recommended.

Item—Wardens (9), £5,812:

Mr. TROY: With reference to the salaries paid to wardens the Public Service Commissioner had made recommendations that were not fair to those gentlemen. Would the Minister accept the classification?

The MINISTER: The Commissioner's recommendations for a reduction in the number of wardens were fully concurred in. We could do with less wardens.

Mr. Horan: Was it proposed to abolish the Dundas warden?

The MINISTER: Not until the railway was completed. We could do without the warden at Peak Hill, while one warden could act for the North Coolgardie and the Mount Margaret fields. The question of whether wardens' salaries should be reduced in accordance with the recommendations of the Commissioner was a matter Cabinet had yet to deal with, along with the question of the salaries of the inspectors of mines.

Mr. STUART: In the case of the Mount Margaret and North Coolgardie goldfields would the warden of the amalgamated districts reside at Menzies?

The MINISTER: Yes; because we already had a residence at Menzies which had cost £3,500 to build. It was the only place in the two districts. There was no special preference for Menzies other than if we asked a warden to reside in some other place it would mean the erection of a building or the payment of rent while the residence at Menzies would remain unoccupied.

Mr. TROY: The Commissioner's classification meant for many wardens more work and less pay. No doubt the recommendations in regard to the number of wardens was a fair one. There was not much work for a warden at Peak Hill, and the magistrate at Bunbury could easily carry out the work at Greenbushes. The question of salaries should be thoroughly considered before any reduction was made. It struck one how much better than the wardens the magistrates

on the coast were treated in this classification.

*The Minister:* The Mines Department had been treated badly right through.

[1 o'clock a.m. Wednesday.]

MR. SCADDAN : What was known as the "Star of Aberdare" case needed consideration and discussion. An application was made for the forfeiture of the lease, the leaseholder being Mr. Griffiths. In certain correspondence he had with the Mines Department, and with Mr. Keenan in his private capacity, Mr. Griffiths made serious charges against Warden Finnerty. If members were to make half as serious charges against any man the Minister would be very wrathful and would ask for a Royal Commission, but in this case the Minister absolutely ignored the charges and winked at them. At all events, he had made no comment on the files of the department. In a letter to Mr. Keenan, which was sent to the Minister, Mr. Griffiths made the following serious charges against the warden :—

"The complaint was lodged by a man named Fraser on the most trivial and flimsy grounds possible, yet Finnerty to my extreme surprise gave the case against me and would not even impose a small fine in lieu of forfeiture, which he could well have done, seeing that this lease has never been before the court previously. Finnerty has never forgotten the 'Empress of Coolgardie' episode, and in consequence I do not expect to receive any justice or fair play in any matter from him."

That was not the only occasion when he made such an accusation, for in a letter to the Minister he stated that Warden Finnerty had not given him fair play and was personally biased against him. On the files there was not the slightest comment by the Minister as to the charges. One could not understand how the Minister would permit anybody to write in that strain, without either asking the warden to explain the position or sending the letter back to the writer. The first business of the Minister should have been to send a copy of the letter to

the warden, and then to ask Mr. Griffiths what reason he had for making such charges. If the charges were correct, Warden Finnerty had no right to have a seat on the bench. The Minister should have taken the earliest opportunity of making Mr. Griffiths prove his words or retract them. One was surprised at the action of the Minister throughout. In the face of the recommendation by the warden the action of the Minister in deciding not to forfeit the lease, but to inflict a fine, was tantamount to saying that the hearing of the case by the warden was a waste of time. Warden Finnerty took considerable evidence, and came to the conclusion that he should recommend to the Minister the forfeiture of the lease. The Minister, however, accepted a statement from Mr. Griffiths with a covering letter. The Minister did not write to those claiming the forfeiture and ask them to lay their case before him, but decided it on the statement put before him by the defendant Griffiths.

*The Minister for Mines:* That was not correct, for the decision was arrived at on the evidence before him.

MR. SCADDAN : All he could do was to comment from the position as was revealed by the file. If there were another file dealing with the question, he had no knowledge of it. The summary of the registrar, which must have contained the opinion of the warden, was strongly against Mr. Griffiths. It appeared from the summary that Griffiths apparently did not spend a penny upon the working of the lease, but held it by tributers, and even went to the extent of making them pay the lease rents and any fines in connection therewith. On two or three occasions Mr. Griffiths applied for an extension of the period in which to pay the rent and fines, as the tributers had declined to pay them, although it was understood that they should do so. He could not understand the department allowing such a state of things to continue.

*The Minister* did not think that question was ever referred to the department.

MR. SCADDAN : It was evident by the agreement that certain corrections had been made in it by the department.

The Minister did not think it had ever come before him.

Mr. SCADDAN : The question was whether the Minister should have permitted the tributors not only to fulfil the labour conditions, but also to be held liable for the lease rents and fines. Mr. Griffiths not only made these charges against Warden Finnerty, but he also seemed to have brought a number of charges against all sorts of persons in the private letters he wrote.

The Minister : All the letters that ever went to him were on the file.

Mr. SCADDAN : Did not a letter from Mr. Glowrey go to the department ? In the letter to the Minister, Mr. Griffiths made other charges, for he said, "Should you care to learn something regarding the man Fraser above referred to, he is apparently known to the police. Detective Kavanagh has kindly consented to supply you with particulars if required." The Minister should not have overlooked that communication, and should have insisted upon the statements being withdrawn before ever dealing with the matter. The question of the forfeiture had nothing whatever to do with the character of Fraser. If Warden Finnerty did not consider it necessary to probe the character of Fraser, it was unworthy of the Minister to accept a letter of that kind. The Police Department were the proper persons to report to upon such a matter and not the Minister for Mines. Mr. Griffiths wrote to the Minister for Mines, to Mr. Keenan, in his private capacity, and to Mr. Glowrey, whom he knew was "in the running," so far as mining matters in the State were concerned. It was a matter for regret that after perusing his letter the Minister should have given him any consideration whatever. He should have stood by the position of the warden and forfeited the lease.

The Minister : Had he been like others, he would have put the letter in the waste-paper basket. As it was, he had put everything on the file.

Mr. SCADDAN : Either the Secretary of the Department or the Minister should have taken exception to Mr. Griffiths' letter.

Mr. BATH : The present was one of those cases in which a very great mistake had been made in going behind the recommendation of the warden. He could understand the Minister giving consideration to a man who had legitimately worked his lease, but so far as the case of Griffiths was concerned not only had he failed to show *bona fides* with regard to the lease, but in every deal with which he had been connected. In the "Empress of Coolgardie" case and his ventures in the Murchison he had failed to show *bona fides*. He had taken up properties for the purpose of holding them with a view of making something out of them. The case was undoubtedly a clear breach, not only of the labour conditions, but also in connection with the payment of the rent of the lease. The only possible penalty which could be imposed was that of forfeiture. The warden took that view, but the question was brought before the department on an *ex parte* statement by Mr. Griffiths, his case was accepted, and the decision of the warden was practically reversed and a fine imposed in place of the forfeiture. The reflection on the warden at Kalgoorlie and the attempt to discount Fraser's case by a reflection on his character, showed the type of man Griffiths was. If there was anything wrong against Fraser, and if the police or Detective Kavanagh knew anything about him, that was for them to deal with. For all that was known to the contrary, in this case Fraser was a decent, honest citizen. He was acting under the mining laws of the State, and using his legitimate rights to secure a lease which was being shepherded by another individual. The warden was very strong in his remarks as to the manner in which Griffiths had evaded the conditions.

Mr. STUART : The last had not been heard of this case, for the lease had been jumped again, and possibly there would be another trial. So far as the imputation concerning Fraser being known to the police was concerned, it was right to those who had known him to say that the records in the Mines Department would prove that he had been a genuine prospector and leaseholder.

When the case was tried before Warden Finnerty Mr. Griffiths was very angry that the forfeiture had been recommended. The warden allowed him more latitude than most would do, and Mr. Griffiths was somewhat impertinent in his statement to the warden. He even went so far as to suggest the amount of the fine which he thought would meet the case. The endeavour made to cast aspersions on a man who had held a lease for him for years, showed the kind of man Griffiths was. So far as Warden Finnerty was concerned he did what was right in the present case, and judged Griffiths and the jumping of the lease strictly on their merits. The man who applied for the forfeiture of the lease and his partners were prepared to go on and erect a battery. Had the decision of the warden to forfeit the lease not been reversed, there would have been another battery working on the Golden Mile. The fine was inflicted, with the result that the mine was now in just about the same state as then. As he had said, the property had now been jumped again, and he supposed that the old comedy would once more be played. It was not right that a decision such as that of Warden Finnerty's should be reversed on the sole testimony of one of the conflicting parties. There was no doubt about it that a mistake had been made. He hoped that if the case went before Warden Finnerty again and the forfeiture was recommended, a fine would not be inflicted in its place. Had he been in the warden's place, he would have committed Griffiths for contempt of court owing to his actions during the proceeding. The man wanted to take charge of the Mines Department and very nearly succeeded. At all events, he had a fair amount of influence, or else he thought he could bring very convincing evidence that Warden Finnerty was wrong. The decision of Warden Finnerty was strictly in accordance with the evidence.

[Mr. Darglish resumed the Chair.]

Mr. HORAN : But few people thought that Warden Finnerty had been influenced by the "Empress of Coolgardie" case when deciding that of the

"Star of Aberdare." It was about time that a spoke was put in the wheel of Mr. Griffiths. He appeared to have been very successful in his dealings and he had boasted outside of what he had been able to do. In connection with the "Empress of Coolgardie" lease, he remembered that the select committee recommended the Crown Law Department to prosecute him for gross perjury in supporting the petition of right whereas he admitted that most of the statements therein were false. The department should have taken great care before moving in the "Star of Aberdare" case. The whole affair seemed to suggest the worst type of land agency.

Mr. HEITMANN : It must be admitted that in the State there were wardens who were thoroughly acquainted with their work, and who could be trusted at any time with any kind of mining cases. It was a surprise to him to hear the Minister many times declare that it was absurd to place on the wardens a greater responsibility than they at present possessed.

*The Minister for Mines* : At the present time all the responsibility was thrown on him.

Mr. HEITMANN : On the one hand the Minister said that more responsibility should be placed on the wardens, but on the other hand, he said those men were not fit to accept the responsibility.

*The Minister* : Rubbish !

Mr. HEITMANN : The decision in the "Star of Aberdare" case was reversed on an *ex parte* statement. The Minister had acted in a most extraordinary manner. After the warden had heard the case thoroughly and had gone into the evidence closely, the Minister turned round and said the warden had taken up a wrong position altogether. The only attitude the Minister could have rightly taken up was to refer the case back to the warden. As to the case at Cue, that position was one which could not be sustained by the Minister or anyone else. After the man who had lost the lease came to Perth, the Minister reversed the decision of the warden. It was on an *ex parte* statement that the decision was upset.

The CHAIRMAN : The member must discuss the item.

Mr. HEITMANN : This discussion had gone on all the evening, and now an attempt was to be made to block him.

The CHAIRMAN : The member must accept the decision of the Chair, or proper action would be taken. The member must not discuss the decision.

Mr. HEITMANN was not discussing the decision, but he should be allowed the same treatment as other members.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member must not reflect on the Chair. He should not accuse the Chairman of attempting to block him.

Mr. HEITMANN was doing nothing of the kind.

The CHAIRMAN : The member must withdraw the expression that an attempt had been made to block him.

Mr. HEITMANN : What he had said was that he thought it was not fair to stop him after the discussion had gone on for so long. He could not withdraw a statement he had not made.

Mr. HEITMANN (continuing) : The warden in this case gave a decision according to the evidence brought before him, and no one could deny that the warden was in a position to grasp the whole of the evidence in connection with the case. The position taken up by the Minister was untenable, and was not fair to the warden. It gave wardens no encouragement and forced the prospectors and those who had business with the court, to lose the little confidence they had in it.

Mr. ANGWIN : This was a serious matter. The warden gave a decision, and the gentleman affected used the argument that he had certain influence which he could bring to bear. That statement should be inquired into. The gentleman openly made the remark that he had influence which he could bring to bear on the Minister. Some statement should be made to clear up the misapprehension that existed; it was bad for the department and bad for the State, if people did not get fair play. People should not be able to go about saying they could have decisions made in their favour, and according to all appearances everything

had resulted in this man's favour. A gentleman whom a select committee previously recommended should be prosecuted for wrong statements now had a decision given in his favour.

The CHAIRMAN : The proper time to bring up any question affecting the general administration of the department, no matter whether it related to the administration through clerks or wardens or other officers, was under the general discussion of the department, and not in dealing with individual items. On the individual items, items alone could be discussed. He did not know what had taken place when he was not in the Chair, but the rule he had given was the rule he intended to insist on.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Certain statements had been made, casting a very grave reflection on himself, and it was to be hoped, after the remarks made more especially by the member for Ivanhoe, that he should be allowed to reply. It would be impossible to allow such statements to go unchallenged. They had no foundation and were misleading to the Committee. Certain correspondence was stated to be on the file, and members would believe that the correspondence was there before he (the Minister) gave his decision. It would be apparent to anyone reading the file that the correspondence came some time after the decision was given, but he would be able to place a very different complexion on the case. He would like to make an explanation on the matter.

The CHAIRMAN : There seemed to be no alternative but to allow the Minister to reply, but he emphasised the point that in future, because the word "warden" appeared, the mere fact that a warden had dealt with a case did not justify the discussion of the case, any more than that a clerk having written a memorandum would justify a discussion on the result of that memorandum.

The MINISTER : In regard to the complaint made as to the Star of Aberdare lease, the member for Cue made some remarks in reference to the duties of the Minister and the duties of the

wardens under the Mining Act. The full responsibility as to the forfeiture of any mine, the whole responsibility, was thrown on the Minister. There was no such person on the goldfields as Mr. Warden Dowley, for that gentleman was resident magistrate there, and Warden Finnerty was the mining warden. He (the Minister) had stated before, and wished now to emphasise the statement, that he desired to pass legislation providing that instead of wardens making a recommendation, they should be compelled to give a decision, and from that decision there would be the power to appeal to a body to be constituted of the Minister for Mines, the Secretary for Mines, and a resident magistrate of Perth. That board would have certain powers. It was intended to amend the present Mining Act in that direction. This would get away from the feeling that there was the possibility of undue influence being brought to bear. One got tired of these allegations as to dealing with matters on *ex parte* statements. He (the Minister) did not deal with questions on *ex parte* statements. He declined to have anything to do with any statement unless it was in the nature of a sworn declaration. If a sworn declaration was sent in, it was worthy of attention. This matter was important to him because of the gross insinuations that a man had stated he would come down to see him (the Minister) and get his lease back.

Mr. Scaddan: It was not stated to-night that Griffiths came down to Perth and saw the Minister.

The MINISTER: The statement was made, and that sort of feeling existed in the minds of many people, that they could come down and interview him. He did not allow people or their agents to interview him. If any information was desired to be sent in, it must be done by sworn declaration, and if new evidence was brought before him he would refer the matter back to the particular warden. This was a clear case; there was evidence, and there were reasons which the warden gave for forfeiture. He (the Minister,) disagreed with the contention raised by the member for Yilgarn, that because of the previous conduct of this man he

should have been treated in a different manner. He (the Minister) felt when altering the decision of the warden that he would be bringing a certain amount of criticism upon himself, because there was no one who had given him more trouble in the old days, through statements made in connection with the wretched Empress of Coolgardie case, and there was no one whose name he would less like to see on the files of the Mines Department than this man's name. He (the Minister) had to judge the case by the evidence given before the warden, and he considered that if he forfeited the lease and the information went round the country that because a lease was not worked for two or three days the department would not give the lessee an opportunity of paying a fine, there would have been a strong feeling against our legislation. As far as the forfeiture of a lease was concerned, the law at present was that if a lease was unworked for a single day it could be forfeited. If he found that a person had worked a lease, had done a lot of work and spent money on it and had not protected it, but was desirous of holding it, would anyone think he would forfeit that lease? In this case the man had the idea that he need only go into the Mines Department and lodge an application for exemption under the Act, and he could have demanded three months' exemption on the ground of having carried out the labour covenants, under Subsection 2, of Section 93. The case went from the warden to the Secretary for Mines, who referred it to him (the Minister), and in the opinion of the Under Secretary, forfeiture was too severe a penalty; that taking into consideration the policy of the department, he thought it would be wise to fine the man £25. Members would notice, on going through the file, that the question of extension of time did not come before him. That was one of the duties he relegated to the Under Secretary. He (the Minister) had not seen the file until this question arose, because this lessee had taken advantage of the tribute conditions. He (the Minister) thought the department would be justified in inflicting a heavier penalty, and he decided

that the fine should be £35 in lieu of forfeiture. It was after this that the correspondence which the member for Ivanhoe complained of came to hand. The letter containing the reflection was ignored. Here was a letter forwarded to Mr. Keenan, marked "private," and sent on to him (the Minister), and although the letter was marked "private," it was placed on the file. Then Mr. Glowrey received a letter from this man and forwarded it on, asking that the letter be returned, so that a reply could be sent. Mr. Glowrey's letter was also placed on the file. He (the Minister) dictated the reply that should be sent, and it was forwarded to Mr. Glowrey. That was after he had gone carefully into the case and decided on a fine of £35. The application in that case was for a reduction of the fine, and he refused to give the matter any farther consideration. At the present time the responsibility in connection with the forfeiture or non-forfeiture of a lease did not rest with the warden, but on the Minister; the warden could only make a recommendation, the Minister had to take the responsibility of referring the matter to Cabinet for forfeiture or non-forfeiture. He (the Minister) wished to alter that provision and place the responsibility on the warden; his desire was to alter the Act in that respect. He desired to take the whole responsibility for the action, and he adopted the correct procedure. It was a very small breach of the regulations, and Griffiths held the lease in a manner he (the Minister) did not approve of, and it was perhaps desirable that the department should carefully scrutinise any tribute agreements this man brought forward in the future before they were allowed. He did not believe in anyone being allowed to take advantage of the tribute regulations. They were not made so that men could hold leases for two or three years without doing any work. This man was a speculator and the correspondence showed the opinion which he (the Minister) had of him. He (the Minister) did not wish to deal with the man, but he intended that the regulations should be carried out; farther it was his duty to act with justice towards the man.

*Mr. Scaddan:* The matter had gone so far that the department were doubtful whether the fine could be reclaimed.

The MINISTER: No, it could not. The man would be fought on that point. It was a clever point. He did not think that he had acted wrongly in this case, for he had acted in what he thought were the best interests of the mining industry. If he had allowed information to go to the world that for a breach of the covenants on two or three days, although men were working the property, harm would have been done to the State. So long as there was a desire shown to retain the property we should not forfeit it. He (the Minister) would not accept the warden's recommendation to forfeit the property, but he inflicted a heavy penalty.

*Mr. Scaddan:* What about the reflection on the warden in the letters?

The MINISTER had ignored them. If the member saw the letters which the department got from dissatisfied litigants he would be surprised. People frequently wrote when they were aggrieved at the action of magistrates, therefore it was desirable not to take notice of remarks such as those referred to. He had always made a point, if letters were sent to him marked "private" or not, to place them on the file. The member should have given him credit at that time for placing the letters on the file.

*Mr. UNDERWOOD:* What the member for Ivanhoe had stated was that Griffiths came out of the court and made a statement in the street, that he would go to Perth and see the Minister for Mines. He (Mr. Underwood) had been told by others that Griffiths actually did make that statement and Griffiths had come to Perth: whether he saw the Minister or not, one did not know. The statement made by the member for Ivanhoe was absolutely correct.

*Mr. TROY:* In connection with the appointment of the Royal Commission in the Heitmann-Lander case, looking at the departmental file he found that Warden Troy was appointed as a Commissioner to hold that inquiry. Later on an order was issued by the Commissioner that the appointment of Warden Troy



should be cancelled and that Mr. Walter, the magistrate at Geraldton, should be appointed in his stead.

The CHAIRMAN: This was altogether outside the scope of the vote. A matter like this, relating to the administration of the Minister, did not come under the Mines Department at all. The member must deal strictly with the item "Wardens."

Mr. TROY: A serious reflection was made on one of the wardens in the State. Was he not entitled to ask why the reflection was made on the warden?

The CHAIRMAN: That should have come under the discussion on the department generally.

Mr. TROY: Where was that?

The CHAIRMAN: It had already taken place.

Mr. TROY: Were members not able to discuss this matter or the salaries, or any matter affecting the personal honour of a warden?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had an opportunity of bringing up any question affecting the Minister and his department, on the general discussion. The member had a right to discuss the personnel and the payment of the wardens; but he could not now go into a question of any departmental administration.

Mr. Horan: Could not the qualifications of the wardens be discussed?

The CHAIRMAN: A decision had been given on that point.

Mr. TROY was compelled to abide by the decision of the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: No; the hon. member could appeal.

Mr. ANGWIN: An extra warden had been appointed. Would the Minister explain the necessity for this officer?

The MINISTER: No more wardens were required. He hoped two or three would be got rid of.

Mr. ANGWIN: This year the salary of one extra warden was provided for.

The MINISTER: The registrar at Greenbushes appeared as a warden. He was previously registrar and warden, and his salary had been transferred from the item "registrars" to the item "wardens."

Mr. ANGWIN: For 1906-7 the vote under this item was £5,691; in the printed copy of last year's Estimates the amount was £5,391.

Item—State Mining Engineer, £800:

Mr. SCADDAN: According to the report of the Public Service Commissioner the maximum salary of the State Mining Engineer was set down at £700; £800 was provided on the Estimates. Was it intended to reduce the salary by decreases extending over five years?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Cabinet had not yet dealt with the professional classification. Moreover, if the Commissioner's recommendation was confirmed by the Government, there was a right of appeal. What action Cabinet would take it was impossible to say.

Mr. SCADDAN would express an opinion before Cabinet had an opportunity. Only two or three years ago the present Minister (Hon. H. Gregory), then in Opposition, complained bitterly because the salary of the State Mining Engineer had not been increased beyond £800.

The Minister: An increase from £700 to £800 was referred to.

Mr. SCADDAN agreed entirely with the Commissioner that the maximum should be £700, and if he (Mr. Scaddan) were classifying this officer, it would be £500. The officer was not worth £800. Giving him credit for a fair technical knowledge of mining, in his present capacity his service did not justify his salary. As to legislation he could easily alter his views, being even more supple than the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper). Only last year, when considering the Mines Regulation Act, the officer was chairman of the Royal Commission on the Ventilation and Sanitation of Mines; yet when an attempt was made to embody the recommendations of the Commission in the Mines Regulation Act, he primed the Minister to reply to some of the strongest arguments used in the Commission's report.

The Minister: Had the hon. member been behind the scenes?

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes; for the Minister had shown him the State Mining En-

gineer's recommendations. Such an officer should be an independent man, who could do his work without fear or favour.

Mr. HEITMANN supported the last speaker. For this officer's salary we were not getting full value. A mere go-between to the various heads and the Minister was not worth £800. The officer was, it was stated, appointed because of his knowledge of smelting; yet he had never done any smelting since he came to the country.

The Minister had never heard of such a reason for the appointment.

Mr. HEITMANN had heard of it several times. An officer might be a good smelter and one who had passed examinations in the theory of mining; but it was not clear that he knew a rise from a stope. The other day Warden Troy held an inquest on the death of a miner in the Great Fingal mine, and drew the attention of the Minister to the frequency of accidents in chutes. The minute went through the hands of the State Mining Engineer, who appended an addendum showing that he did not know what he was writing about, for he wrote of a pass that did not exist in the stope. He said there should be a double pass; whereas in the shrinkage system of stoping as adopted in the Fingal mine, there were no passes.

Mr. SCADDAN: Warden Troy had referred to the fact that boulders got jammed above the chute, and that frequent accidents resulted from men having to go up to fire them. The State Mining Engineer thought that these were ordinary passes. Victorian mines were now compelled to have wires through the chutes in order to stir the dirt. The State Mining Engineer did not know that Warden Troy was referring to the rill system, in which there were no passes at all.

The MINISTER: When the State Mining Engineer, Mr. Montgomery, was first appointed, his salary was £700, to be increased to £800 for the next two years. Possibly such a statement had been misconstrued by the last speaker. He (the Minister) had no recollection of advocating any increase on the £800 a year. No doubt Mr. Montgomery had done some exceedingly good work. His report

on the Phillips River field, printed in pamphlet form and sent throughout the world, had induced capital to come to that district. His report on the Pilbarra field would do incalculable good to that part of the country, and his other reports on mining districts were first-class. He was highly qualified, and had a fair share of practical experience. For many years he was manager of a large mining company, and was a civil engineer as well as a mine-manager.

Mr. Heitmann: He did not keep himself up-to-date.

The MINISTER: The hon. member might not think so; but Mr. Montgomery was not brought here because of his knowledge of smelting. He was for many years Government Geologist and Chief Inspector of Mines for Tasmania, and was manager of one of the biggest mines in New Zealand, and for many years director of a school of mines. The chief object in bringing Mr. Montgomery to this State was that he should visit the outback country as much as possible, so as to advise the prospector and the small leaseholder what class of work they should do, and to report to the department on the best methods to adopt in new mining districts. We had not enough of such advice in the past. Some twelve months ago Mr. Montgomery's knee was seriously injured, and prevented his being sent out so frequently as was intended; but in future it was hoped he would be more useful in assisting the small man, and in advising how to help remote places inaccessible to the Minister. That was the special reason for Mr. Montgomery's appointment. His advice on the Black Range, Meekatharra, and Pilbarra fields would doubtless prove of great value to the State. In the circumstances members might withdraw all opposition and let the item go.

Item—Inspectors of Mines, £3,441:

Mr. HEITMANN: Of the nine inspectors two were at £400 and six at £350; while one at £140 received £220 as inspector of coal for the Railway Department. Why should the latter receive more than inspectors on the goldfields? The Government could hardly get first-

class inspectors at £350. A good mine-manager could not be obtained for that salary.

The MINISTER FOR MINES agreed that the salary should in no instance be less than £350. We wanted a class of man who could if necessary be sent to give instructions to a mine manager drawing £2,500. If we cut down the salaries we should get inferior men. Why the inspector at Collie received more than others did not appear, though his duties in the Railway Department were onerous. He had to watch every ton of coal being put on the trucks; for the delivery of inferior coal might involve serious loss to the department.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Public Service Commissioner proposed to reduce the salary of three or four inspectors from £350 to £315, and one from £400 to £315. This recommendation should be passed out.

The Minister would be satisfied with one at £375 and the others at £350.

Mr. SCADDAN: The minimum should be £350. An inspector must have a real theoretical and practical knowledge of mining; otherwise, apart altogether from bribery, a mining manager could twist him round his finger. The inspectors were almost entirely occupied in going from mine to mine inspecting the scenes of accidents, instead of inspecting dangerous places prior to accidents. He knew the heavy task of the two inspectors at Kalgoorlie. We should increase the staff and pay the men good wages, so that they might be absolutely above reproach.

The Minister: An extra inspector was appointed this year.

Mr. STUART: An inspector doing duty near his home office was not given travelling allowance; the allowance was given when he was away. Each inspector should be placed where the bulk of his work was to be done, if only to save the travelling allowance. He sympathised with the inspectors in the work they had to do; but some of them might be a little more aggressive, especially in accident cases. In one case an inspector not long in the service was very

lax in not asking questions which might have brought out important evidence. He would not charge the inspector with incapacity, but with not perceiving where his duty lay. Any expenditure on improving the inspection of mines would always be approved by the Labour Party. It was regrettable that the Chamber of Mines, which gave the Government a subsidy of £2,000 a year to inspect property, should, not assist in appointing check inspectors to protect life and limb. Mining inspectors had the serious responsibility of telling mining magnates that work must stop at certain places; and the inspectors' salaries should be commensurate with the responsibility. On the Kalgoorlie field miners had come secretly to him (Mr. Stuart) complaining that they were working in unsafe places; and he had pointed out to the inspectors that it was their duty not to wait till they were told of the danger, and that if over-worked they should ask for assistance. One inspector was plainly told by a number of people that if he was over-worked they would petition the Minister for an assistant; if not, they would petition for his removal, and this was done. The inspection should prevent any man from ever working in a dangerous place for fear of the sack if he complained. The inspectors generally received information which reached them indirectly. Miners who complained direct would probably lose their billets.

Item—Registrars (19), £5,718:

Mr. STUART: The registrar at Malcolm having been transferred to Lawlers was absent from Malcolm for twelve months, and the Malcolm office apparently got on without him. Was there any strong reason for keeping him at Malcolm?

The Minister for Mines: It appeared in reply to a wire, that the people of Leonora were satisfied with the transfer.

Mr. ANGWIN: There was one officer less, but the vote was increased by £50.

The MINISTER: It was the Public Service Commissioner's classification.

[2 o'clock a.m.]

Item—Temporary Clerical Assistance, Draftsmen, Relieving Officers, Deputy Mining Registrars, etcetera, £900 :

Mr. STUART : The Public Service Commissioner recommended that the pay of relieving officers should be 12s. a day instead of 10s. It was hard in the case of an officer relieving at Kalgoorlie to receive not more than 10s.

The MINISTER : A promise had been given that the officer's case would be looked into.

Item—Relieving Inspectors of Mines, temporary appointments, £360 :

Mr. SCADDAN : Last year £682 was spent. What was to be done ?

The MINISTER : A permanent appointment would shortly be made. Several officers were on leave and it was necessary to have this vote. Full advantage would be taken of it.

Mr. SCADDAN : It would be wiser to appoint another inspector permanently who might be made relieving officer.

The MINISTER : That would be done, but the authority of this vote was needed.

*Contingencies Generally, £19,525 :*

Item—Reward for discovery of Phillips River Gold and Copper Field, £300 :

Mr. SCADDAN : Who was to receive this reward ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Dunn Bros. had applied, but a special board consisting of the State Mining Engineer, the Government Geologist, and the Secretary for Mines would deal with all applications and recommend.

Mr. ANGWIN : Where was the necessity for giving a reward for the discovery of a field that, according to all accounts did not exist ?

Item—Mining Development, £3,000 :

Mr. SCADDAN : It was refreshing to see this item again on the Revenue Estimates. How was the money to be spent ?

The PREMIER : In making certain advances on properties recommended by the inspector of mines after inspection. Several advances had been made during the year.

Mr. STUART : If an advance were made it would be in the shape of a mortgage. If the lease were abandoned afterwards, no one could take it up until the mortgage was cleared off. That was hardly fair. If the lease were abandoned the Government might as well retire and not keep the land locked up. Too much land was already locked up in various ways.

Mr. SCADDAN : The suggestion of the hon. member should not be carried out because it would only be a matter of a prospector getting an advance and then working in collusion with another party and forfeiting the lease for the debt to be wiped out altogether. On the other hand it was not fair for the Government to ask the new people to pay off the mortgage before touching the abandoned lease. New people should be put on the same terms as the previous leaseholders. The advance should be made a first charge on the gold won.

The TREASURER : That was how it was done. The fresh leaseholders were put on the same terms as the old leaseholders.

Item—Incidental, £9,400 :

Mr. SCADDAN : A return was moved for last year in regard to free passes issued to public servants. That return would show the distance travelled by officers in the course of their duties. When would that return be furnished ?

The PREMIER : As a matter of fact the information being supplied was more than was required by the hon. member, because particulars were being got out by the department to show what ticket orders were issued.

Mr. Scaddan : That information was unnecessary.

Mr. ANGWIN : This item should be split up. Advertising and travelling expenses should be shown separately. He moved an amendment—

*That the item be reduced by £100.*

The MINISTER : The vote last year was not sufficient and had to be supplemented from others that were not exhausted. No money would be wasted in connection with it.

Mr. SCADDAN: Several items should be shown separately. If the £100 would cover some of the all-lines passes granted to officers of the department, he would support the amendment. The return he had asked for would show whether the department was providing passes for the private use of officers.

Amendment put and negatived.

Other items agreed to; vote put and passed.

Mr. ANGWIN moved (at 12.50 a.m.) that progress be reported.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	21
				—

Majority against . . . 14

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Horan	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Draper
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Ware	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Gull
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Heitmann
	Mr. Layman
	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. N. J. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stuart
	Mr. Vervard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Vote — *Geological Survey*, £6,092—  
agreed to.

Vote—*State Batteries*, £83,515:

Item—Superintendent, £450:

Mr. TROY: What was to be done in regard to the late Superintendent? Did Mr. Dunstan receive this money?

The MINISTER regretted not being in a position to make a statement in connection with this matter, but within the next day or two he hoped to be able to make a public announcement in connection with the unfortunate affair that had been before the courts for some time. He hoped the item would be allowed to pass. Mr. Dunstan's appointment was for 12 months. The officer was paid from the temporary vote, and the appointment depended entirely on the

work Mr. Dunstan was able to give the department and on the improvements he was able to effect in connection with administration. From the way Mr. Dunstan went about his work, and judging from his exhaustive reports and the recommendations he had made, the temporary appointment was one that would prove of great benefit to the customers of the State battery system. It was to be hoped members would not press him (the Minister) in regard to this item to-night. He preferred to leave it in abeyance for a couple of days.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was surprising a man holding such a responsible position as that of Superintendent of State Batteries received such a poor salary. The Chief Inspector of Machinery received the same salary, but the work of the two officers could not be compared. The general opinion in regard to the recent prosecution was that the case should have gone to a higher court.

[3 o'clock a.m.]

Mr. HEITMANN: There appeared to have been a good deal of hush about the case. The missing witness should have been found, or at all events should not have been allowed to leave the State. According to the evidence it appeared that things were carried out in a very lax manner in the Batteries Department. He regretted that White was not committed for trial and this was his opinion for the sake of the man himself. If some members of the Mines Department had been placed in the box there would have been some revelations.

Mr. ANGWIN hoped the Minister would inform the House that so far as his department was concerned there had been no effort to hush up anything.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The case was conducted by the Crown Law Department and he had no desire to discuss it. The department had done their duty and all that was possible in the circumstances.

Item—Temporary Labour, including wages of managers, etc., £48,500:

Mr. SCADDAN: With regard to the appointment of Mr. Dunstan, he had

heard it stated that gentleman was practically promised the appointment of superintendent long before he was selected for the position. The Minister himself last session stated that he intended to get rid of the superintendent of State batteries and to make a new appointment. Evidently he found a difficulty in connection with the Public Service Act, but all the same Mr. Dunstan was appointed in another capacity which made it appear that a promise had been made to him to get the position. He had the strongest possible objection to that system of appointing officers. If there was a position vacant which required filling the man should be selected in the proper manner after applications had been called for, and if necessary an examination had been held and the papers of the applicants carefully perused. It appeared that the present case was more one where a position had been found for an individual, rather than one of a person who had been found for a post. The Public Service Commissioner had referred to the fact that the appointment was contrary to the provisions of the Act.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES :** The appointment of Mr. Dunstan was quite a correct one and the Public Service Commissioner was wrong in that case. As he had previously advised the House, the appointment was merely a temporary one for a period of 12 months at a salary of £575 a year. It did not in any sense affect the Public Service Act. There had not been a breach of the Act by giving Mr. Dunstan the appointment of metallurgist to the department. By placing him in control it meant that they had put someone over the superintendent. Members knew that he had been desirous for a long time of getting good work done in connection with the Batteries Department. It had frequently been pointed out by members that the charges in connection with the batteries were too high and that the department should be able to do the work quite as well and as profitably as private enterprise. The department were not doing that. There had been a great improvement in the system, for when he first took office the loss was fairly considerable. However the

cost had been brought down and the batteries had paid their way, even although the charges had been reduced. There was no doubt that the system should pay its way but it was equally sure that the administration in the past had not been as good as it should be. He would not go beyond that to-night. In this case the responsibility of the appointment was his. Members always wanted to throw responsibility on a Minister and the remark more particularly applied to a department like this, which to a great extent was a business branch. It was his duty to get the administrative cost brought down so that he could give facilities to the public at a moderate price. If Mr. Dunstan at the end of 12 months justified his appointment, one would try and get the authority of the House to make it permanent. If the appointment was not justified he would have no excuse in asking members to assist him in passing the vote. Such a position as that had not yet arisen, but, unfortunately, a new one had come to light and it was possible there might be other changes in the department. He did not want to discuss that matter, but from every point of view a change in the administrative head was necessary. Members had been requesting for a long time that the department should show better administration, and he thought some little sympathy might be shown to him when his only desire was to give better administration than had been provided in the past. No permanent appointment would be made for a considerable time ; in fact it could not be without the concurrence of the Public Service Commissioner. He would not desire that the head of the department should continue as a temporary officer as he was now. If his work was good enough the question would come before the Chamber next session, and members would be asked to say whether Mr. Dunstan should get the permanent position or not. If improvements were effected in the department and the work was kept up to date, the question of an additional £100 salary was not worth a moment's consideration.

Mr. SCADDAN objected to be asked to give £575 for a 12-months trial to a

person to qualify for such a position. Why should Mr. Dunstan be put on trial like that? If that policy were pursued in other departments there would be a howl from every member.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Public Service Act should be carried out in its entirety, and to show his disapproval of the appointment he would move an amendment—

*That the item be reduced by £500.*

Positions like that should be thrown open to the public, if no men in the service were suitable to fill them. Many officers had been appointed without reference to the Public Service Act. The superintendent of batteries should be on the Civil List. The vote for the department had been reduced this year by £1,628, and he did not know whether this was due to the falling off in the work of the batteries or to wise economies having been effected.

Mr. TROY: The Minister had said the late superintendent had not given that satisfaction in administration which he desired. The board of inquiry which went into the batteries question altogether exonerated the superintendent from the charges which had been levelled against him. As to the administration of the batteries branch, there was no doubt that the superintendent had very little power left in his hand. Many of the errors had occurred as the result of Ministerial recommendations and on several occasions the superintendent had been compelled to take certain steps against his wishes. Mr. White had not received altogether fair consideration at the hands of the Minister. One reason why the greatest success had not been achieved was that in the past the staff had not been large enough. On several occasions batteries had been purchased quite against the recommendations of the superintendent. The batteries board had laid on the political heads the blame for the maladministration which existed in the department. In connection with the recent prosecution the superintendent did not meet with that courtesy and consideration which was given to other officers. It was said that he was not even given notice that the department intended to

suspend or prosecute him, and that on the very day that he was suspended the summons was served on him. It appeared to be the general belief that Mr. White had been persecuted.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item — Contingencies, additions and equipment, £1,500:

Mr. HORAN asked what the item meant.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There were certain items which they did not think should be charged to general supplies and maintenance, but should be debited against equipment and batteries. They were old parts which were wearing out and required replacing. Really, the sum of £3,000 or £4,000 should have been provided on this item; but in order that a satisfactory balance-sheet might be provided at the end of the year's transactions, he had only been able to provide the sum of £1,500.

Mr. STUART: Complaints had been made that some of the batteries were not up to date, and he knew that some of them were not equipped with suitable plant for the treatment of slimes. The item should be very much larger than it was.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Provision for such items as the hon. member had referred to would be made on the Loan Estimates.

Item—General Supplies and maintenance, £32,850:

Mr. ANGWIN: Were tenders called for supplies?

The MINISTER: That was the work of the tender board.

Mr. TROY: Recently the Minister had arranged for the conveyance of the Duketon battery to Black Range. Tenders had been called for the work and in so far as Mt. Magnet was concerned there was a great number of teams there which would be willing to tender, but no specifications could be seen. In all places where there was a number of teams copies of the specifications should be lodged.

The Minister: In order to meet the hon. member he would extend the time

for receiving tenders for a couple of months.

Mr. TROY: There was no necessity for such a lengthy delay as that. All he wanted was that specifications should be provided.

Other items agreed to; vote put and passed.

Vote—*Mines Water Supply*, £19,596:

Item—*Engineer-in-charge*, £550:

Mr. ANGWIN: Would it not be to the advantage of the Water Supply Departments generally if one engineer had charge of all the schemes? There were now an engineer for the Goldfields Water Supply and another for the Mines Water Supply.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It would not be wise to place the Goldfields Water Supply under the Mines Department. A great deal of pressure might be attempted to be brought to bear in that event. From the Mines Department point of view, it might be a good thing; but from a State point of view it would be very bad. He would not like to take on the administration of the goldfields water scheme, and it would be a mistake if this vote were placed in the hands of any other Minister. Good work was being done by this small department. The engineer was not a man who gained favour; he had a peculiar faculty for rubbing people up the wrong way; but still the man did good work, and all his work had turned out well. On going out back and looking at the work of this officer, in very few instances had he (the Minister) been disappointed. He would be sorry to lose the engineer or the control of the Mines Water Supply.

Mr. HORAN: Was the Minister satisfied that the engineer in charge had a sufficient staff to get reports from various parts of the goldfields?

The MINISTER: Last year £90,000 was spent from loan and revenue in this department; but he did not think we ought to increase the staff. At times there was a rush of work, but the difficulty could be overcome. There was a great deal of work just now, two or three big schemes being in progress.

Item—*Clerks*, £444:

Mr. ANGWIN: Why was there a decrease here?

The MINISTER: Probably it was due to the classification of the Public Service Commissioner.

Item—*Stock Routes* (Leonora-Peak Hill, Nullagine and Cue-Fortescue) maintenance and improvements, including labour, £2,000:

Mr. TROY: Was this amount provided to enable wells to be sunk on the stock route surveyed by Mr. Canning?

The MINISTER: This was for maintenance previously charged up to the Public Works Department.

Mr. TROY: Was there not some idea of sending Mr. Canning out again?

The MINISTER: The cost of that would be paid out of loan.

Item—*Goldfields Generally*; up-keep of water supplies and routes, casual construction, labour, etc., £9,500:

Mr. ANGWIN: Two or three years ago the Minister thought it necessary to obtain £15,000 for this work.

The MINISTER: There was a big increase that year.

Mr. TROY: It would be a good thing if the department handed over the up-keep of the wells to the roads boards; it would be a great saving.

The MINISTER wished that could be done.

Other items agreed to; vote put and passed.

Vote—*Mining School*, £4,558:

Mr. TROY: We should have as many mining schools as possible, so that people could receive the best possible education to become experts in the industry. From the Murchison field applications had been frequently made for the establishment of a school of mines there, which could be opened at little expense. This was a remote goldfield situated towards the North-West coast, and mining people were unable to undertake the expense of going to Kalgoorlie to study. This mining field was second in importance in the State, and had been so for some years past. It had made considerable headway. He



would like to see a school started on the Central Murchison, in the vicinity of the Great Fingal mine. On this field there were employed 2,525 miners in 1906, and now the total population was about 4,000; therefore a branch of the school of mines was warranted. The revenue derived from this goldfield in 1905 amounted to £5,282, and the expenditure to £3,816; in 1906 the revenue was £5,818, and the expenditure £4,000; in 1905 the production of gold from this field amounted to 381,500 ounces, in 1906 the production was 275,000 ounces.

The MINISTER: Some effort should be made to establish a technical school in the Cue district. He was hopeful of getting a recommendation from the Education Department to start a technical school there. He was pleased to make the announcement in connection with scholarships that Bewick, Moreing & Co. had sent him a letter stating that they were prepared to find work for any boy who won one of these scholarships, so that the boy would be assured of finding employment with that firm during the term of scholarship. It was to be hoped some of the other big companies would follow the lead of Bewick, Moreing & Co. Although he had no desire to see a second mining school, a branch of the technical school might be opened up in this district to give the mining people similar advantages to those obtaining in Coolgardie.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was to be hoped that before long a branch of the technical school would be established at Cue. As to the salaries of lecturers, while we had a course of technical education in Western Australia higher than in any other part of the world, the salaries of lecturers appeared to be small. The first graduate at the School of Mines passed an examination more severe than anyone would have to go through in any other part of the world, and he was sorry that this young man was allowed to leave the State, and not given a chance here. This young man had gone to Tasmania as assistant geologist, at a fair salary. It would have been in the interests of the State if this student could have been kept here.

The MINISTER did not know the officer to whom the member referred. There were Mr. McDougall at £300 a year, Mr. Buteman at £550 a year, and Mr. Ward, who recently left—probably the officer referred to—was getting £350; also Mr. Baker, £400; and Mr. Corlette, £300. These salaries were not bad. There were no allowances. He was sorry the Government could not give larger salaries. The estimated revenue from this department was £775. These officers were engaged at a certain salary, but it was not long before they asked for an increase.

Mr. STUART: Having taken an interest in the mining school, he was pleased to see the use made of it. Men who a few years ago were doing pick-and-shovel work, and who without the establishment of such a school would have had to remain at that work, were now enabled to make some headway, and could take their places amongst imported men. It was to be hoped the staff would not apply right away for big increases. During the last winter it was one of the best features of goldfields life to see the way the officers made themselves at home to the public in giving lectures and entertainments. These officers were entitled to a word of praise.

Item—Incidental, including scholarships, purchase of chemicals, etc., for Kalgoorlie mining school, £1,350:

Mr. ANGWIN: What was the amount of the scholarships and what scholarships had been won?

The MINISTER could not remember the amount of the scholarships; there had been an increasing amount up to this year, but he thought the limit had been reached. The scholarships had been satisfactory.

Other items agreed to; vote put and passed.

Vote—*Explosives and Analytical*, £4,385—agreed to.

Vote—*Inspection of Machinery*, £7,141:

Mr. SCADDAN moved—

*That progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.*

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	21
Majority against				15

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Horan	Mr. Bath
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Ware	Mr. Draper
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. Eddy
	Mr. Ewing
	Mr. Gregory
	Mr. Gull
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Heitmann
	Mr. Layman
	Mr. Male
	Mr. Mitchell
	Mr. Monger
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stuart
	Mr. Veryard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

[4 o'clock a.m.]

Mr. SCADDAN felt inclined to impute sinister motives to the Minister for compelling members to criticise a branch of the department at this hour of the morning; and there was some excuse for imputing such motives, in view of the manner in which the Minister had on every possible occasion defended the maladministration of this branch. The public should know what the Government were doing with the money provided on the Estimates; yet at four o'clock this morning we were asked to pass £7,141, the greater portion of which was to provide a snug billet for an inexperienced and absolute waster in the present Chief Inspector of Machinery, a man who was paid no less than £450 a year to administer an Act of Parliament which he had hopelessly maladministered, an Act which laid down a certain procedure that he did not follow; and in this course he was supported by the Minister, who went so far as to assist him so that when he made a huge blunder, which fortunately did not result in loss of life though it might have killed many, the Minister rewarded him by sending him out of the State on a five months' holiday.

*The Minister for Mines:* Try to be slightly correct.

Mr. SCADDAN would be as correct as possible in the circumstances. The Minister was not acting creditably who would permit a subordinate officer to leave the State with such a charge found against him as was found by the select committee on the Gwalia boiler explosion. The Minister should first have dealt with the officer. The select committee represented both sides of the House. He (Mr. Scaddan) would not come to the House year after year to complain about the administration of the machinery branch and its chief inspector; or if he must complain, his voice would become louder and louder every year, though he was compelled to speak at four in the morning.

*The Treasurer:* Speak to the point.

Mr. SCADDAN would get quickly to the point, and would place the responsibility on the person responsible, the Minister for Mines, who was responsible for an act of omission, not of commission.

*The Minister for Mines:* Because he did not always fall in with the hon. member's views.

Mr. SCADDAN: That was not desired. While such abuses lasted he would raise his voice in protest, irrespective of whether the Minister was pleased. The Minister might bluff him by compelling him not to say at this early hour some things he would say at a more convenient time. The Minister knew he (Mr. Scaddan) intended to criticise the Estimates for this branch; yet they were submitted at 4 a.m., when Press representatives had vanished from the Gallery.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not impute motives.

Mr. SCADDAN: Was it imputing a motive to say it was after four o'clock?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had imputed a motive, and must not, by repeating portion of what he said, attempt to mislead the Chair and the Committee.

Mr. SCADDAN: If any motive he had imputed to the Minister were pointed out, the imputation would be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member imputed to the Minister a desire to prevent the publication in the Press of the hon. member's criticism, as a reason why the Minister was proceeding with the Estimates at this early hour.

Mr. SCADDAN would withdraw that, and say that the Minister's action in compelling us to discuss the Estimates at this early hour had that effect.

The Premier: The hon. member was not compelled to discuss them.

Mr. SCADDAN: These matters needed discussion; and he would discuss them. He had asked the Minister, during the 1906 session, what action the department intended to take in respect of the finding of the select committee on the Sons of Gwalia Boiler Explosion; and the Minister had said he would give the finding early and serious consideration. In view of this reply, he (Mr. Scaddan) as a member of the committee refrained from moving that the report be adopted in the ordinary course, but agreed to an amendment that it should receive the earnest and early attention of the Government. But up to date, it did not appear that any attention whatever had been given to the report.

The Premier: Was not an officer dismissed?

Mr. SCADDAN had met that officer, who stated not once but many times that he had tried to pin the department down to a reason why he was dismissed, but could not get a reason. The department denied that he had been dismissed owing to the report of the select committee or to anything in connection with the Gwalia boiler explosion. But admitting that ex-Inspector Lovegrove was dismissed in view of the finding of the select committee, why was he selected for this special bad treatment while the Chief Inspector, who was found equally guilty in respect of that explosion, was not dealt with at all? It did not appear that he was even censured by the Minister. It was doubtful whether the Minister considered the question of Inspector Lovegrove's dismissal. These matters should be cleared up. Ex-Inspector Lovegrove had stated that he asked for

an inquiry into his dismissal, and the reply was that being only a temporary employee in the service, he could not obtain an inquiry. Whether that was the position still taken up by the department did not appear; but he knew that Mr. Lovegrove was made a scapegoat in the matter of the Gwalia explosion, whereas the select committee that went exhaustively into the question found that while Mr. Lovegrove made himself responsible in the first instance by practically doing what the Chief Inspector told him, the Chief Inspector was really responsible for asking him to issue a certificate on a working inspection, which procedure was an evasion of the Inspection of Machinery Act. There was no authority in the Act to grant a certificate under a working inspection. Admittedly there was authority, not required, to make working inspections in order to see that the conditions on which a certificate was granted were being complied with; but there was no provision for granting a certificate under a working inspection. To give a notion of the Chief Inspector's ability to fill his position we might read what he told the select committee as to the utility of a working inspection: "Apart from leakages in front of a boiler, a working inspection would enable you to detect broken stays." Broken stays were inside the boiler; and to be able to detect their condition when the boiler was under steam, the inspector would have to be able to see through steel; he must have eyes like X-rays. The Chief Inspector's reply continued: "And with a locomotive boiler you would find broken side-stays and fire-box stays. You would often see the bulging out at the sides under pressure. When the boiler was blown down, they go in again. Under normal conditions you would not notice it." Yet all his subordinate officers, many of them rated by him as assistant inspectors, and also independent witnesses called by the select committee, pointed out that it was impossible to tell the internal condition of a boiler by a working inspection. As a matter of fact, Superintendent Borowe, in charge of Sons of Gwalia Mine at the time these working inspections were made, said in answer to a question by the

committee : "I do not see how anyone could make an outside inspection and pass the boiler as all right by making a working inspection." This clearly shows that the granting of the certificate was unwarranted. The Chief Inspector farther told the committee that the Act did not lay down what constituted an inspection—another proof that he did not know the provisions of the Act he was supposed to administer ; because it laid this down in plain English, with marginal notes, in Section 26, "Record of first inspection. Provided that on the first inspection of a boiler the inspector shall make and keep a complete record of all particulars necessary to ascertain the state and condition thereof." He (Mr. Scaddan) would show how that section was complied with in connection with other boilers to which he had drawn the attention of the House and the Minister. The section continued : "Such record shall contain particulars respecting the type and construction of the boiler, the name of the maker, the pressure the boiler is calculated to sustain, and generally as to the state and condition thereof, and of all appliances used in connection therewith, and the fitness thereof for the particular purpose to which it is applied."

*Mr. Anguin* called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

*Mr. SCADDAN* (continuing) : Those particulars must be supplied by the inspector on his first inspection ; and to this reference would be made at a later stage in connection with other boilers. Section 27, under the heading "Subsequent inspections," provided that "On each subsequent inspection of a boiler the inspector shall carefully make a comparison with such standards as aforesaid, and shall record any changes since the previous inspection." How was it possible to compare the standards with the standards arrived at by making a working inspection, which was merely a visual inspection of the boiler under working conditions ? But the Chief Inspector informed the committee that the Act did not prescribe what inspection

should consist of ; and he tried to excuse himself from making working inspections by quoting Section 31, which contained two little words on which he relied : "For the purpose of inspection the owner shall, 'if required,' cause every boiler to be emptied and made cool, and all manhole doors and mudhole doors to be taken off, and all furnace bars and brick or stone bridges to be taken out." The boiler was to be put in a condition for inspection, "if required" ; and the Chief Inspector read into the section that he might make working inspections if required, not otherwise. In view of the other section it was not clear how anything of the sort could be read into Section 31. While there was an explosion at Gwalia owing to the machinery branch granting certificates under working inspections, and after attention was drawn to the matter *ex-Inspector Lovegrove* was made a scapegoat ; yet the Chief Inspector was still pursuing the system, and only recently a similar explosion was narrowly averted at Collie. He (*Mr. Scaddan*) would not be doing his duty if he were to permit this state of affairs to continue without raising his voice. He had stated in this Chamber that a certain boiler at Collie, which received several certificates under working inspections, was ultimately inspected as provided by the Machinery Act, and was found to be so faulty that it was there and then condemned outright. And the inspector reported that the plate was actually eaten through in one place on the crown of the boiler. These were circumstances that should not be permitted to continue, and whoever was responsible should suffer. He (*Mr. Scaddan*) would not minimise the ability of *Mr. Gill*, the Acting Chief Inspector of Machinery.

*The Minister for Mines* : Yet last year the hon. member reflected strongly on that officer.

*Mr. SCADDAN* : And from one standpoint the reflections would be equally strong to-day. He recognised, however, that *Mr. Gill* must be loyal to his superior officer.

*The Minister* : Oh !

*Mr. Bath:* If he was not, the Chief Inspector would work him out quick and lively.

*Mr. SCADDAN:* The Minister said "Oh!" but the fact remained that Mr. Gill, as Acting Chief Inspector of Machinery was not likely to condemn the action of his chief who was only away on leave, Mr. Gill knowing well that he would have to work under that chief when he came back. That was a sound position taken up by Mr. Gill, and one that any sane man would expect. But he (Mr. Scaddan) still objected, and had objected at the time, to the concluding sentence of Mr. Gill's summary of the files—that his (Mr. Scaddan's) statements were absolutely incorrect, and that he should be called upon to withdraw them at the earliest possible moment. He would not withdraw one word of them; he would if necessary repeat them here and now, and would add to them. The machinery branch, with their marvellous chief, took four years to make the first inspection in accordance with the Act; took four years to calculate the working pressure that boiler would sustain. And then they discovered that though the boiler had been manufactured for a maximum working pressure of 80 pounds per square inch, they had granted a certificate for 100 pounds.

*The Minister for Mines:* That was incorrect.

*Mr. SCADDAN:* It was absolutely correct.

*Mr. Bath:* Absolutely. It was on the departmental file.

*The Minister for Mines:* All depended on the factor of safety.

*Mr. SCADDAN:* It was only a quibble on the part of the Inspection of Machinery Branch to say anything about a factor of safety. The inspector of machinery worked out the dimensions of the boiler when instructed to do so, four years after the first certificate was granted; and he found that the maximum working pressure for which the boiler was constructed—this was the wording of the departmental report—was 80 pounds per square inch; and Mr. Inspector Hursthouse wrote a minute at the bottom of

the report: "Do you concur in the maximum working pressure being fixed at 80 pounds per square inch as recommended by the district inspector?" And the Chief Inspector or the acting chief replied, "I concur. Eighty pounds' pressure is the maximum working pressure." And now the same officers, when faced with their own words, said it was a matter of the factor of safety. That was not so. Reed's *Engineer's Handbook*, page 268—and he could bring half a dozen other authorities—dealt with the factor of safety, and quoted the Board of Trade regulations:—"With reference to the divisor 5, by which we obtain the working pressure from the bursting pressure on the seams, the Board of Trade have issued the following circular, showing that this divisor must be:—

"When cylindrical boilers are made of the best material, with all the rivet-holes drilled in place, and all the seams fitted with double butt straps, each of at least five-eighths the thickness of the plates they cover, and all the seams at least double-rivetted with rivets having an allowance of not more than 75 per cent. over the single shear, and provided that the boilers have been open to inspection during the whole period of construction—

It was not done with this boiler—

then five may be used as the factor of safety. The tensile strength of the iron is to be taken as equal to 47,000 lbs. per square inch with the grain, and 40,000 lbs. across the grain. The boilers must be tested by hydraulic pressure in the presence and to the satisfaction of the board's surveyors. But when the above conditions are not complied with, the additions in the following scale must be added to the factor five according to the circumstances of each case. (a.) .15 to be added when all the holes are fair and good in the longitudinal seams, but drilled out of place after bending. (b.) .3 to be added when all the holes are fair and good in the longitudinal seams, but drilled out of place before bending. (c.) .3 to be added when all the holes are fair and good in the longitudinal

seams, but punched after bending instead of drilled."

And so it went on, giving the different points where they had to be added in the event of the first conditions not being complied with. But outside that, even if it were not necessary, when the department discovered after they took the dimensions that the maximum pressure was 80lbs. to the square inch, though they had granted certificates for four years for 100lbs., they turned round on this quibble of this matter of factor of safety. The department might claim that there was a test of the boiler after four years' work and that on this test they arrived at the conclusion that 80lbs. was the maximum working pressure, but the dimensions were taken by instructions from the Chief Inspector. Possibly it was after attention had been drawn to the fact that there was provision made for inspection. The dimensions were worked out, and it was done in the same fashion as if it were the first inspection of a new boiler, and the conclusion was arrived at that 80lbs. to the square inch was the maximum pressure for that boiler. The boiler was at a mine at Collie. Two boilers were placed there at the same time, and the machinery department were informed that they were in use. That was before the department had granted the certificate. Then the department sent down the notice-of-ownership schedules on which the owners were supposed to state the maximum pressure for the boiler. The owners actually stated that the maximum was 100lbs. per square inch for which the boiler was constructed. The officers of the department took the statement and made the inspection without taking the particulars, and granted a certificate for 100lbs. working pressure. [*The Minister*: We had the hon. member's statement for that.] It was on the files of the department that the boiler was inspected but no standards were taken. The department afterwards asked the owners for a copy of the makers' test certificate, and were probably told that Fulton and Co. were the makers. If they had complied with the Machinery Act there would have been no necessity for getting the makers' test certificate; on the first inspection

they should have been able to tell what the boiler was fit for. The department applied to Clemenger Bros. for the makers' test certificate, but were unable to get it. At first Mr. Clemenger was away, and then Fulton and Co. were in liquidation. So the department took the word of the owners that 100lbs. was the correct thing. No precaution was taken to see whether the boilers were working under a proper pressure, but they went on issuing working inspection certificates, because a stoppage of the boilers might mean an inrush of water in the mine. But strange to relate, there were reports from the mine to the machinery department that the boilers had been shut down three weeks before an inspection was due. However, the department gave another working inspection certificate over a short period and a new boiler was put in. An inspector then inspected the boiler and immediately had it thrown out of commission. These things were continually going on in the department. The Minister, if he would only have an inquiry into the matter would have it proved up to the hilt. But the Minister avoided the issue on every possible occasion.

*The Minister*: The hon. member should not talk nonsense.

*The CHAIRMAN*: The Minister must not interject.

*Mr. SCADDAN*: It was correct. Where was the careful and early consideration given to the result of the Gwalia inquiry? Was it right to permit the Chief Inspector of Machinery to ignore an act of Parliament? Was not the Gwalia explosion sufficient warning that the system of issuing certificates on working inspections was dangerous? It was the practice of one inspector to send any letters of complaint he received to the persons complained of.

*The Minister*: Who was the officer?

*Mr. SCADDAN*: Inspector Nicholson. Would the Minister deny that?

*The Minister*: How could he?

*Mr. SCADDAN*: The Minister had already denied what was on the files.

*The Minister*: Because he knew it was incorrect.

*Mr. SCADDAN*: How did the Minister know?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not question the Minister across the floor. The attention of the Minister had just been drawn to the impropriety of interjecting; but the hon. member immediately afterwards personally contradicted the Minister and challenged interjections. The hon. member must not challenge interjections, neither must interjections be made.

Mr. SCADDAN: Apparently what evidence was brought forward would have no effect on the Minister. The past had shown what a waste of time it was for a member to give any of his time to a scrutiny of the machinery department. It was impossible to get reforms. The Chief Inspector had about the rosiest billet in the State. Accompanied by another officer he had travelled to Bunbury, Ravensthorpe and Albany to examine eighteen candidates in all at a cost of £73 8s. 8d.

The Minister: The hon. member had always advocated a travelling board of examiners.

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes, and the Minister had practically promised to institute a board to go to the populous centres, but no one imagined the Minister would send two highly qualified officers to Ravensthorpe to examine ten candidates. Inspector Cullingworth who accompanied the Chief Inspector had done other work, but there was already an inspector who visited Ravensthorpe district regularly, and that officer should have been capable of conducting examinations from a paper set in Perth by the board of examiners. On this visit, though Mr. Cullingworth did other work, the Chief Inspector did not even inspect a boiler.

The MINISTER: The Chief Inspector had recommended another officer to accompany him, but he (the Minister) had instructed Mr. Cullingworth to go, and at the same time make a report on the district.

[Mr. Ware took the Chair.]

Mr. SCADDAN: The Chief Inspector did not put the whole of the facts before the Minister, and the Minister should take steps to ascertain why that had not

been done. The Chief Inspector had withheld from the Minister the information that there was another inspector who visited the district regularly, which was shown by the fact that in the records of the department there were the reports of regular inspections in the Ravensthorpe district. The inspector of mines could easily have examined candidates on the paper prepared by the board in Perth, and it seemed unnecessary that the Chief Inspector should have to proceed to Ravensthorpe any more than to other places in the State where examinations were held. A great blunder was made in moving the machinery department from under the eye of the Minister. From that time onward the cost of the administration of the department had been going up by leaps and bounds.

The Minister: The change was made in Mr. Hastie's time.

Mr. SCADDAN: The earliest opportunity should be taken to rectify the huge blunder made and have the branch removed to the head office. The Chief Inspector should have some practical and technical knowledge of boilers and machinery. But his principal duty was to concur or otherwise in reports that had passed through the hands of the technical officer in the department. The Minister should test the capabilities of the Chief Inspector by sending him out for six months and comparing his record with the records of other officers in the department whom the Chief Inspector surrounded with red tape and harassed in their work. Any officer in the department would show a better record of practical work. He would move that the item be struck out to emphasise his protest in regard to this matter. Until this officer was compelled to do some outside work the salary paid to him was a waste of money.

[5 o'clock a.m.]

Mr. SCADDAN (continuing): Possibly they would be told it was a case of petty spite, but he did not care for that. It was an honest endeavour on his part to purge the Machinery Department of maladministration. He was quite certain that the branch could be con-

ducted equally as well without the chief inspector as with him, and he would not be satisfied until the Minister paid some attention to this department. In order to show his feeling with regard to the question he would move an amendment—

*That the item be struck out.*

Mr. STUART: Last year, after the select committee appointed to inquire into the Gwalia explosion had drawn up their report, it was discussed late in the session and it was decided by the House that the report was worth the early and earnest consideration of the Government. There had been plenty of time since then for the Government to have shown that they considered the matter as seriously as it demanded. Had the explosion in question occurred 20 minutes later, when between two and three hundred men would have been within range of the explosives, the death-roll would have been enormous and one of the worst ever experienced in this State. The evidence was most convincing that there had been neglect somewhere, and if those responsible were still in the service—and he had heard that one of those responsible had been rewarded by five months' leave of absence—it was time that something farther was done in the matter. He agreed with all the member for Ivanhoe had said. The question was not being dealt with in the manner it deserved and faith was not being kept with the House. Members carried a resolution and the matter should not have been ignored as had been the case.

The MINISTER FOR MINES did not presume members would expect him to answer in detail every charge or statement made by the member for Ivanhoe in connection with the department. It would be presumptuous even to think it would be a fair thing to ask him to go into all these details in reply to the charges without having those charges placed properly before him.

Mr. Scaddan: They had had experience of the Minister's replies.

The MINISTER: The reasons which had actuated the member in connection with the matters were easy to be understood.

Mr. Scaddan: State them.

The MINISTER: The hon. member had given the reasons himself. In connection with the explosion at the Gwalia mine, reference had been made to the retirement of Mr. Lovegrove. He also regretted that that gentleman had left the service. He was an officer in whom he had had a good deal of confidence and who had done very good work for the department; but when there was a case of the head of the department, in whom one had to place all the responsibility for the work, and on the other hand an officer, and there was a disagreement between the two, the Government must get rid either of the head of the branch or of the officer. In this case on the recommendation of the chief inspector the officer had to leave the service.

Mr. Scaddan: What was the nature of the disagreement?

The MINISTER: He would not enter into those details now. Although Mr. Lovegrove was in the department for nearly two and a half years, during the whole of that time by the special request of the chief inspector he was retained on the temporary staff and not put on the permanent staff. With regard to the boilers at the Collie, instead of the officers of the Machinery Department being criticised so adversely as was the case, the member should have gone through the file and he would have been satisfied that the officers had done specially good work and had been specially careful. The member for Ivanhoe had been greatly mistaken in assuming that no examination was made of these boilers. Mr. Gill had advised him with regard to the matter and in connection with the boilers in question the factor of safety had been reduced. The Board of Trade gave the factor of 4 as sufficient, but after the examination of the boiler but after the examination of the boiler it was decided to reduce that factor to  $5\frac{1}{2}$ . The facts of the case were contained in the following report which was written by Mr. Gill, the officer of whom the member for Ivanhoe had spoken so highly:—

"The facts re inspection are as follow:—December 20th, 1902: Both



boilers were thoroughly examined immediately after removal from trucks. Granted 12 months' certificate at 100 lbs., expiring August 25, 1904.—Note: Boilers are believed to have worked from June, 1903, until October, 1903, about 4 months. Boilers were not worked again till April, 1905, when they were reset at Scottish Colliery. April 8, 1905 : Letter received from Scottish Collieries stating that boilers had been removed from Collie Boulder and had started at Scottish Collieries, and asking for permit to continue working. April 11, 1905 : Wrote Colliery saying inspector had been advised to attend early and make inspection. Permit refused. May 3, 1905 : Inspector attended, found boilers at work. A working inspection was made and certificate granted for 3 months, viz. till August 24, 1905, at 100lbs. Note : Boilers had only worked 4 months since leaving makers' yard.—September, 4, 1905 : Inspector received letter from Colliery asking that inspection should be deferred. He had evidently asked that boilers be prepared for this inspection. September 5, 1905 : A working inspection was made and certificate granted expiring March 24, 1906, at 100lbs. Inspector forwarded letter from Mr. Dick, Mine Manager, and Secretary, Mr. Watson, along with above report, both explaining that it was impossible to close down on account of water. Mr. Dick also explained that 'Within last 3 weeks our engineer inspected the boiler and found it in good condition,' see page 41, file 950. March 9, 1906 : Made working inspection—Certificate current. March 12, 1906 : Letter received from inspector enclosing one from manager, Mr. Hutchinson, begging as water trouble still continued and a new boiler was about to be erected, that certificate be extended for a term of three months. March 22, 1906 : Working inspection made and certificate granted expiring 8th June, 1906. Pressure reduced to 70lbs. in absence of thorough inspection. Letter dated 12th April, 1906, from manager (see page 67, file 950), stating boiler 950

was blown off on March 29th 'and found to be in good condition, free from scale and corrosion.' April 24, 1906 : Inspector wrote enclosing letter from general manager dated April 12, 1906, objecting to a reduction of pressure. May 4, 1906 : Replied to general manager explaining necessity of reduction owing to boilers not having been opened up for thorough inspection. June 13, 1906 : Letter from general manager, stating new boiler in course of erection and would be ready in one month, and asking for inspection to be postponed till then. June 13, 1906 : Inspector attended and made working inspection granting certificate expiring 13th July, 1906, at 70lbs. This certificate was not taken up and fee was not paid. July 31, 1906 : Letter from general manager saying 'New boiler now completed ; we shall be glad if you will arrange with your inspector to visit our mine and inspect boilers as early as is convenient to you.' August 1, 1906 : Wired reply, 'Inspector leaving for Collie Thursday ; have boilers prepared for inspection.' August 4, 1906 : The new boiler now having been erected both boilers were thoroughly examined. 950 reduced to 60lbs. and 951 refused certificate until repairs are made."

There was clear evidence from this, if the report were correct, that the boiler was examined. If what Mr. Gill stated were true the examination of the boiler inside and outside was made when it first arrived. It was shown on the file that the working pressure of the boiler was only given at 80lbs., whereas it had originally been allowed to work at 100lbs. The inspector finding that the water was very inferior believed that injury would be done to the boiler, and knowing that if he compelled it to be closed down for examination it would mean the closing down of the mine, he took the precaution of reducing the factor of safety. Mr. Gill also said in his report:—

"Under ordinary circumstances the boilers should have been in almost perfect order and the inspector is to be commended for having exercised

special caution by—(a) Inspecting the boilers immediately on arrival when new. (b) Submitting them to a hydraulic test immediately after erection. (c) Issuing certificates of short duration when thorough inspection was not practicable. (d) And obtaining reports from engineer as to internal condition of boilers during temporary stoppage, *see* pp. 41 and 67, file 950.—Had the inspector not been suspicious of the feed water and as a consequence, taken the precautions he did, it is quite possible that he might have been tempted to have granted longer certificate and so have courted a perhaps serious accident."

He concluded by saying that the remarks made by Mr. Scaddan were not as correct as they might have been. As to the matters which had been brought before the House he was not in a position to deal with the technical work of the department and he had not the slightest hope of ever doing so. He, however, had every belief that the inspectors had been carrying out their work fairly well. The department had cost the State a little more than it should, but for that he would blame the fact that there had been too much wet-nursing, too much of what the hon. member desired. There was wet-nursing at the present time and the records which were needed were almost interminable. There had to be a knowledge of the boiler from the time it came into the State, every person who handled it had to be dealt with, and the most minor details had to be obtained and filed. More care was taken of a boiler and its life than of an infant. If the member for Ivanhoe had his way there would be far greater restrictions still. There was no place in Australia where the water was so bad for boilers as in Western Australia, but at the same time he would like to ask what serious accident had there been in the back country owing to boiler explosions? He did not think there had been one serious accident in connection with the department. There was the accident at Gwalia, which might have resulted seriously, and another at Kalgoorlie; but he could not remember any case where harm had resulted. Although the de-

partment had not been able to satisfy the member for Ivanhoe he could understand why they had not been able to. They had done particularly good work and certainly had prevented any of those dreadful accidents which had occurred even within the past few weeks in the Eastern States.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Minister suggested that he could give the reason which had actuated him (Mr. Scaddan) in complaining of the department. Let him enlighten members and the public. Every criticism or action of his in a private or public capacity in connection with the department was open to the criticism of everyone. Rather than infer things let the Minister say straight out what he meant.

The MINISTER: There were no insinuations. What he believed the member wanted was to have greater restrictions in regard to all those matters affecting the inspection of machinery. The hon. member knew that he was antagonistic to certain of the additional restrictions which were desired by him and he was quite sure that those were the reasons why the member for Ivanhoe had taken the action he had done that evening.

Mr. SCADDAN: Shortly after the Act was brought into force he gave an interview to the Press concerning complaints which were being made as to the inspection of boilers. He said that if the Act was administered in the spirit intended by Parliament there need be none of the inequalities now stated to exist. He stated to the Press representative that he had drawn the attention of the House when in Committee to the fact that it would be impossible to carry out the inspection and certification with rigorous punctuality in all cases unless a small army of inspectors was appointed. He had suggested that in cases where it was impossible for the inspection to be carried out in time it should be permissible for the mine manager in conjunction with the certificated engine-driver to make a provisional test. There was no desire on his part to restrict anything. If there were to be restrictions it was only in the direction of the proper protection of life. In connection with the other matters, the

Minister could peruse the documents as closely as he liked, and he would find there was no desire to restrict. The inspector and officers of the department ran away with themselves. The expenditure of the department was continually increasing, but the work did not increase in proportion to the expenditure. There was no need for technical officers in the head office in Perth surrounding the chief inspector, who did nothing but simply write the words "I concur." The Minister could do the same amount of work with a rubber stamp. The inspector did no thinking for himself. The desire he (Mr. Scaddan) had was to purge the department, and he would not rest until he had done so. As to the Collie boilers, the summary placed in the hands of the Minister, although correct as far as it went, was not a full copy of the file and did not give the Minister a correct idea as to the boilers. When the owners of the boilers applied for a farther extension, they had thrown the boiler out of commission and examined it themselves, yet the Machinery Department lost sight of this matter. The Minister had said members ought to commend the officers because they examined the boiler, when that duty was imposed on them by the Act. The Minister commended them because they put the boiler to a hydraulic test, yet that was another duty imposed on them by the Act, and the Minister farther commended them because they condemned the boiler, when the boiler had just previously been working on a working certificate. He brought these matters forward to try and get the Act administered as it ought to be. The officer should do something for the salary received. We should not pay a large salary to the chief inspector, who did no work but simply concurred in the recommendations of inferior officers.

Mr. ANGWIN: The remarks of the Minister reflected discredit on the department. Not long ago Parliament put a man in prison for refusing to give evidence before a select committee. Owing to a disagreement between the chief inspector of machinery and one of his officers, which no doubt took place because of certain evidence given before a select

committee, the subordinate officer was dismissed, really because he had given evidence against the chief inspector. Both officers should have been dismissed. It was entirely wrong for the department to dismiss an officer or cause him to lose his position because he gave evidence before a select committee. This was a serious matter.

Amendment put and negatived.

Item—Inspectors (district inspectorial staff), £2,726:

Mr. SCADDAN: The Public Service Commissioner had classified the district inspectors, in some cases recommending increases and in others decreases. If the Minister desired to obtain men of experience with a knowledge of machinery and boilers it would be impossible to do so for the salary proposed by the Public Service Commissioner. Inspectors had thousands of lives in their hands. On the fields the inspector of a winding plant should be a man of exceptional ability, so should an inspector of boilers; for the explosion of a boiler in a populous centre might mean the loss of many lives. If we offered inspectors the miserable salary proposed by the Public Service Commissioner we should not retain the officers we had, nor obtain capable officers in future.

Item—Examination of engine-drivers, inspectors, etc., £300:

Mr. STUART: Did the examination include the medical examination under the regulations?

*The Minister:* No.

Mr. STUART: Could not some provision be made so that the men would not have to bear the expense of the medical examination themselves.

*The Minister:* It did not often occur.

Mr. SCADDAN: In regard to the Holman hoist, if it was the intention of the Minister to stand by the regulation he had made, would he ask the associations in the various districts to appoint one engine-driver to conduct the examination? Because instances had been brought under his notice where positions had been jeopardised. Engine-drivers had refused to examine individuals, and if a manager asked an engine-driver to

examine a man in charge of a Holman hoist and the engine-driver refused to pass the man the position of the engine-driver was jeopardised.

The MINISTER: Inquiry would be made into this matter. He wished to feel satisfied of the statements given to him that certificated engine-drivers, who were asked to give a certificate to men working Holman hoists, had refused. He understood these men were declining to act in the capacity of examiners. The result was that we would not get men to use the Holman hoists. If the member for Ivanhoe and the Leader of the Opposition would go to Kalgoorlie with him (the Minister), we could go round and inquire into both sides of the question. If a first-class certificated engine-driver refused to give a certificate, he (the Minister) would amend the regulations and take the certificate from the engine-driver altogether. It might be dangerous to allow persons under the present conditions to use the hoists at a great depth, but no action would be taken at present. He wished a good limit of safety.

Mr. BATH: It was just as dangerous to use a Holman hoist to raise men as the best engine in the world.

Item—Incidental, including postage, stationery, advertising, equipment, instruments, travelling, shoeing, forage, printing, etc. £2,250:

Mr. ANGWIN: A motor car was included in this item. Some time ago the Government had a motor and had difficulty in getting rid of it.

The MINISTER: This would be the third motor the department had.

Mr. ANGWIN: What was done with them? On the goldfields tracks one might take a motor bicycle but not a motor car.

The MINISTER: The introduction of these motor cars was a great saving to the department. For a long time he tried to urge on the machinery department the advisability of having motor cars, but the machinery officers would not take them. He (the Minister) sent one to the inspector of mines at Kalgoorlie and there were two there now.

Mr. Hudson had told him of the marvelous work done with these motors. They could run to Bulong in the morning and be back at mid-day. One day an accident occurred at Burbanks; the inspector left at half-past two and although the train left at the same time the motor car arrived at Burbanks before the train. If this motor car was a success he would get more.

Other items agreed to; vote put and passed.

This concluded the votes for the Mines Department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

### BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council, and read a first time.

### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 6 o'clock Wednesday morning, until the afternoon.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 13th November, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the *Hon. S. J. Haynes* farther leave of absence for three con-