

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.***First Day.*

**MR. LEAHY** (Hannans) [3.40]: I move—

That the following Address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to Parliament:—“May it please Your Excellency: We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament.”

At the outset, I desire to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the honourable and responsible position of Speaker. I feel quite confident that you will carry out your duties with credit to yourself and to the age-old traditions of your high post. I wish also to congratulate the Hon. A. H. Panton on his elevation to portfolioed rank as Minister for Mines and Health. I can assure hon. members that the new Minister occupies quite a responsible position, and he will find much hard work ahead of him, particularly in dealing with mining questions. Throughout the State to-day mining problems are amongst the most important that require attention. I feel sure that, big, strong and healthy as the Minister is, he will find it necessary to work overtime to keep up with his duties. As Minister for Health he will find himself confronted by many obstacles with which he will have to grapple. I suppose he will overcome them in the same way as he has successfully dealt with other matters during the course of his political career. I wish to refer also to the passing of men prominent in Parliament and in other spheres of public effort in Western Australia. I particularly allude, with extreme regret, to the death of the Hon. S. W. Munsie, late Minister for Mines and Health. I suppose that, throughout the State, very few men will be so sadly missed. Throughout the whole of his career as Minister for Mines, he carried out his duties in a manner certainly not bettered by any other occupant of that office. His services were most valuable to the mining industry because of his first-hand knowledge of its ramifications. He had had practical experience of it in all its phases, and he realised just what the miners had to put up with. Furthermore, he appreciated the possibilities of the min-

ing industry. It will be remembered that the advent of the depression resulted in the mining industry being hit very hard indeed. As a matter of fact, some of the most important mines were on the point of closing down. Investors throughout the world, who had made a special study of mining investments, were more than dubious about the prospects of the industry, and the history of goldmining in Western Australia shows that at that particular time no one would invest a single penny in mining ventures here. It looked quite a forlorn hope for some of our big producers on the eastern goldfields particularly, but Mr. Munsie, backed by a sympathetic Government, went to their assistance in many ways, not only by guaranteeing cash for developmental and other purposes, but by assisting them in every way possible, with the result that gold mining in Western Australia to-day is flourishing. Within the last few years I suppose that 18 or 20 shows have closed down and that appears to be quite a serious position, and is, indeed, a serious position. Yet it is not so serious as it might have been when one realises the number of big properties that were assisted by the Labour Government through the commonsense, honesty of purpose and desire of the late Mr. Munsie to lift the mining industry into a flourishing condition in this State. Mr. Munsie knew very well that if some of those big properties closed down at that particular time the State would have been in a very bad way indeed. Only those people who think for a little while and realise just what mining has done for Western Australia, can possibly imagine the disaster that would have overtaken the State had those big properties been allowed to close down at that particular juncture. To-day, although as I say, several mines have closed down, our big producers are in a very fine position. In 1934 we thought that from a mining point of view we were almost perfect in the treatment of ores and in reducing costs. A student of mining economics would say that at that particular period we had got as low as we possibly could in the way of treatment cost per ton, but we find that to-day we have reduced the cost considerably, we are paying bigger dividends and we are digging out more gold per man at work in the industry than ever before in the history of the State. The Government also went to the assistance of Wiluna, another big field,

by providing financial help for a railway. The Big Bell mine was also assisted and Norseman, one of the most prominent mining camps outside of Wiluna and Kalgoorlie at the present day, was given a water supply by the Government that I can assure members has proved of considerable benefit. Before that water supply was provided, the town did not look at all prosperous. The big mining companies at that juncture were seriously thinking of shutting down for a portion of the year because of the lack of water. The Labour Government, after fully investigating the circumstances and seeing the possibilities ahead of the field, tapped the goldfields water main and carried water down, with the result that to-day Norseman is one of the finest goldfields in Western Australia, a standing monument to the courage of the Government that, after perceiving the need, provided a water supply to enable the company to treat its ore. The Big Bell Mine is dealing with a low-grade proposition and I can assure members that with economic treatment, efficiency in development, and general all-round efficiency, we can now produce gold from ore of a lower grade than was ever thought of in 1934. I feel confident that in the future we shall produce from still lower grade ore and continue to show the profits that are being made to-day. Years ago we thought that the south end of the Golden Mile was worked out. People were quite confident that we could not go on, but we find to-day that although we are down 3,700 feet, the lodes are still as strong and big and look like carrying on indefinitely.

Again, take the conditions existing on the Golden Mile. Mr. Munsie and the Labour Government stood solidly behind the staff—that is the inspectors and the technical experts—who at all times were anxious to improve conditions in the mining industry from the health point of view. It is very well known that a few years ago a man did not work very long in the mining industry before he contracted that dreaded complaint, silicosis, or one of the other complaints that eventually claim miners at an early age. This position to-day has been partly overcome as the result of rigid inspection, but for a while it was very hard to put into operation a satisfactory system of inspection. By that I mean that the companies had to be forced to realise the danger to the men's health and that

was brought about by the splendid system of inspection, carried out by workmen's inspectors, Government inspectors and ventilation officers. Those were the people that made the industry a reasonably healthy one. Unfortunately, it will never be a properly healthy occupation; I realise that. But to-day the position in this respect in Western Australia is fairly satisfactory. I have no fear of the future. People seem to think that just because there was an increase in the price of gold, that was one of the most important things in connection with the industry. But in my opinion it is not. In my belief the most important factor of all is that, due to modern methods, we can produce from lower grade material at a profit. I think that is even more important than the price of gold. In the matter of prospecting, too, the Government went to the assistance of the unemployed people. I believe it was the intention of the Government when the prospecting scheme was inaugurated to use every endeavour possible to deal with the unemployment question. The result is that to-day there are men all over the bush doing very good work indeed and those men have produced a considerable amount of gold. The Government rendered further assistance by raising the scale of remuneration from 15s to £1. That is little enough, it is true, but if a man has initiative or an intention to benefit himself, and goes into the bush, the opportunities are there, and should he look for it he might find something worth while. Not only that, but the opportunity now exists for a man without much knowledge of the business to get experience. Many of the men are going into the mining industry, finding employment in the big mines, and we are consequently getting them off our hands gradually.

A matter of considerable importance, particularly to the workers on the Eastern Goldfields is the need for a regular fortnightly pay. I do not know why the present custom exists. I have had innumerable arguments put up by way of justification but I have never been convinced. The custom is to pay wages on the 3rd and the 18th of the month. In every other industry employees are paid regularly on a Friday once a fortnight. I ask that this matter be given consideration during the session and would point out the reason. People

on the minimum rate of wage on the Eastern Goldfields, and having big families to care for, find it difficult to make ends meet. It is commonly thought that a goldfield is a flourishing place. There are those who do make quite a lot of money. But the man with a minimum wage and a large family has a struggle. Now every week-end on the Eastern Goldfields, and indeed on other goldfields, cheap lines are put on the market, and if a housewife had her money at the week-end she could save possibly 5s. or 6s. in the pound and stock up her home. Occasionally three week-ends pass before the woman receives her next housekeeping money and she has to deal on the credit system in the dearest market. If the matter is discussed during the coming session, I feel sure that it will be seen that some change is necessary. The mining companies put up the argument that they would have to employ too many paying officers, but it would only mean two more pays a year and that would not be a very great strain. Housing conditions on the eastern goldfields constitute another important matter. People there on the minimum rate of wage are paying exorbitant rents. They are lucky to get an old shack, a windy shack not fit for human habitation, for 25s. or 30s. a week. If anybody can prove to me that that is a fair rent to pay for an old shack on the eastern goldfields, then I do not know what I am talking about. The Government is to be thanked for what has been done through the Workers' Homes Board on the eastern goldfields, but I maintain that more should be done. We have plenty of land available there for the purpose. I am sorry the Government did not launch out on a big workers' homes programme four years ago. If that had been done so many people who are now paying from 25s. to 30s. a week for a mere shack would today be living in clean and comfortable circumstances. It is not too late now for something to be done in connection with housing on the Eastern Goldfields, and I hope the Government will take the necessary steps to that end. If we cannot find some system of providing workers' homes or other kinds of homes, a Bill to regulate the rents charged will have to be brought down. We cannot allow this sort of thing to continue. If a man is earning £5 a week, and has to pay £2 a week out of it for rent, he finds him-

self deprived of a considerable proportion of his wages. The position on the goldfields to-day warrants something in this direction being done. I wish also to approach a somewhat delicate matter, namely that of roads to the goldfields. A conference was held recently on the question of decent roads being constructed. Those who travel on the road from Perth to Kalgoorlie know quite well that the section from Merredin eastward is in an awful condition. If rain has fallen one has very little chance of getting through on the road at all. The Eastern Goldfields are so important to-day that we could well stop some of the works in the metropolitan area, and concentrate upon the construction of a decent road at least as far as Kalgoorlie. Very shortly we shall be having a month's festival there; therefore I should like the road put into passable order as soon as possible. I was over it quite recently and can vouch for its being in a bad state of repair. I presume we shall have a good "chew" over this matter sooner or later. I am not going to weary the House just now with a number of amendments that are urgently required to existing Acts, but I am sure that in due course they will receive consideration from both sides of the House. All these matters will be discussed later on in the session. I now come to an old sore. I believe this House has on several occasions endeavoured to secure the passage of a State Insurance Bill. It seems very strange to me that a Bill of that nature cannot be got through another place. I cannot understand what logical objection there can be to it. If anyone can advance reasonable arguments to show that this is not a necessary Bill, and a good Bill too, I shall be inclined to listen to him for a long time. I hope the next time such a Bill is sent along to another place we shall be able to get it through. I trust also it will not be mutilated beyond recognition, such as has happened to other Bills sent to the Council. There is another item with which the Minister for Railways could very easily deal. I refer to the men who are turned down on the Eastern Goldfields. It is not always easy for a turned-down man to travel at the time when excursion rates prevail on the railways. They feel they should be entitled to excursion rates at any particular time of the year when it is possible for their wives and families to travel, either to the coast at

this end or to Esperance. That, however, is a small item. I hope this request on behalf of the turned-down men, who deserve the very best we can give them, will be taken seriously into consideration by the Government and granted. I could growl concerning other matters for another hour, but I do not think at this stage much notice would be taken. I will, therefore, suspend the growling for to-day. I hope all the matters to which I have referred will be seriously considered. I do not think any of them would be difficult of accomplishment, but I assure the House they are all of an urgent nature.

**MR. RAPHAEL** (Victoria Park) [4.2]: I formally second the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton) [4.3]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.1 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 9th August, 1938.*

	PAGE
Chairmen (temporary) of Committees	18
Questions: Betting fines	18
Youth employment	18
Motions, Condolence: The late Hon. S. W. Munsie, M.L.A.	18
The late Hon. C. G. Elliott, M.L.C.	20
Address-in-reply: second day	21
Bill: Supply (No. 1) £2,500,000, 1r	31

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

#### CHAIRMEN (TEMPORARY) OF COMMITTEES.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to announce that in accordance with the Standing Orders

I have appointed the following members to act as temporary Chairmen of Committees during the current session, namely, the Hon. J. Nicholson, the Hon. V. Hamersley and the Hon. G. Fraser.

#### QUESTION—BETTING, FINES.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have all fines imposed by the courts since the 1st July, 1933, in connection with starting-price betting been paid? 2, If not, how many convicted persons have defaulted since that date? 3, What is the total amount of fines still unpaid?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, None, but in ten instances the fines are wholly or partly outstanding. 3, £242 2s. 6d.

#### QUESTION—YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Since the taking over by the Government of the work of placing youths in employment previously carried out by the Boys' Employment League what were—(a) the number of applications received; (b) the number of youths placed in positions in both the metropolitan area and the country; (c) the rates of wages paid? 2, What is, or are, the name or names of the officer or officers allotted to this work, and what other positions, if any, do they fill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) 539. (b) 246 in metropolitan area, 90 in the country. Of the remainder, 178 youths have not re-applied, and presumably have obtained employment, leaving 25 unplaced. (c) Where an industry is covered by an award of the Arbitration Court, the award rate is paid. In cases where there is no award, the wages range from 10s. to 30s. per week. For country work the wages range from 10s. to 30s. per week, plus keep. 2, Mr. J. C. A. Hodgson, an officer of the Department of Employment.

#### MOTIONS (2)—CONDOLENCE.

*The late Hon. S. W. Munsie, M.L.A.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.45]: I move—

That this House desires to place on record its sincere appreciation of the public services rendered to the State by the late Hon. S. W. Munsie, member for Hannaus in the Legisla-