Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 25th September, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

PAPERS—PERENJORI AND KULIN HOTEL LICENSES.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.40]: As many hon. members of the House may desire to have before them particulars regarding the Perenjori and Kulin hotel licenses, it is my desire to lay the papers concerning them on the Table of the House.

QUESTION—REPATRIATION BILL.

Mr. MONEY (without notice) asked the Premier: In view of the undertaking given by the Premier to the House on the 3rd September that a Bill to repurchase estates and settle soldiers on the land would be introduced immediately the Address-in-reply was finished, when will that Bill be introduced?

The PREMIER replied: The Bill has already been introduced, and is set down for the second reading. It is my intention to proceed with the Bill at the earliest possible moment.

BILL—INTERPRETATION.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

SITTING HOUR, ALTERATION.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.44]: I move—

> That for the remainder of the session the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet on Thursday, as well as on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, at 4.30 p.m., instead of at 11 a.m., as previously ordered, and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

We have tried this innovation, and I think hon. members will agree that it has failed. The old order of things is frequently found to be the best. I was not aware at the time I agreed to this amendment that this departure had been tried some years ago without success.

Mr. O'Loghlen: We were surprised to hear that you were in favour of the experiment.

The PREMIER: It is certainly most inconvenient for Ministers, and I think it is most inconvenient for the large majority of members of the House. Those who spoke against the amendment were perfectly right in their contention that to meet at 11 a.m. would be inconvenient to Ministers and also to many private members. When hon. members were returned to this House, they must have been seized of the position, that they would come to a House which sat every afternoon at half-past four o'clock. Business people, and others who are closely occupied during the day, find it most inconvenient to come to this House in the forenoon. I think hon. members will agree that the innovation has failed to achieve its object. No doubt it may have convenienced one or two hon. members, but certainly it has inconvenienced a large majority of the House, and therefore I have thought it my duty to ask the House to return to the old order of things, which has obtained so long, and which has proved in the main a success.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.48]: The Premier has taken me entirely by surprise in submitting this motion so soon after the introduction of the change. The occasion is one on which I might reasonably indulge in the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so." When the change was mooted, I held the view that meeting at 11 a.m. would prove entirely inconvenient to the House as well as to Ministers. That view was not then shared by the Premier, who has now come round to the view I held a month ago. I, on the other hand, have now adopted the point of view which the Premier held a month ago. While the hon. gentleman is now convinced that I was right a month ago, I, as the result of experience gained during the past four weeks, am convinced that he was right a month ago, and I hold that we should continue Thursday's morning sitting. The Premier has said that the innovation has proved a failure; but have we given it a fair trial? Four weeks is hardly a sufficient time to justify the wisdom or otherwise of day sittings. It is true that on Thursday forenoon the attendance of hon. members has not been over-large; but that, I think, has been due merely to the fact that members have not yet settled down to the new order of things. How will the reversion to the old order meet the views of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston), for whose convenience, chiefly, the change was made? There is the same need now as there was four weeks ago for that hon. member and other hon. members of the Country party to catch trains on Thursday evening. The day sitting suits me personally very well, but in the interests of the Premier and his Ministers I am disposed to be considerate and to abandon Thursday's day sitting. Let me point out that in this matter the Government have really had no assistance from those members to whom they might have looked to make day sitting a success. In the quarter from which the demand for day sitting came, there has been absolute indifference, except on the part of the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering). Particularly has the day sitting received no support from the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) and the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse), who were loudest in demanding the change; and the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) we have not seen at all on Thursday forenoons. Perhaps those hon. members caught the train which left on Wednesday evening. Certainly, the attendance during the day sittings has reflected no credit on the House—six or

seven members conducting the country's business! In particular, the members of the Country party were conspicuous by their absence; possibly they were to be found at the Shaftesbury theatre.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [4.56]: As the leader of the Opposition has selected these cross benches for special attention, may I say that his memory has proved as unreliable as his judgment frequently does. I was not present during the debate on the amendment for day sitting. It was thought at the time, I understand, that day sitting would suit country members; but the train service has made it of little use to us. We now feel that it would be better, if only in the interests of Ministers, to revert to the old sitting hours. As regards keeping a House, we do not admit the accusation that we have failed to assist in making the House on Thursday forenoon. These cross benches have been well represented on every Thursday since the change was made.

Mr. Stubbs: I have never been away from the Chamber on Thursdays.

Hon. P. Collier: But you were in the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PIESSE: In the best interests of the House we should return to the old meeting hour of 4.30 p.m. on Thursdays.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [4.58]: Despite what has been urged by the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, I do not find myself in accord with their view. Of course it would be hopeless to oppose the motion, having regard to the expressions of opinion which have been given; but, in my opinion, the Premier's remark that day sitting has proved a failure is merely an expression of his desire that day sitting should prove a failure. If meagre attendance makes a failure, then the attendance last night made yesterday's sitting a failure. There is a great deal of hypocrisy on that point. This House has been counted dozens of times during evening sittings because of non-attendance of members. In no sense have day sittings proved a failure.

The Minister for Works: But they have proved a great inconvenience to Ministers.

Mr. TROY: To Ministers it may be; but that is the only ground for the accusation of failure. The attendance at day sittings has been something like that at evening sittings. The day sittings on Thursday have been in force for only one month, and I regret the deprecating tone of the leader of the Opposition as to the convenience of members. The Government are bringing forward the present motion merely because it suits them.

The Premier: No. Day sitting inconveniences a number of members.

Mr. TROY: When hon. members were elected to this House, they did not come here on an understanding that they must assemble at a certain hour of the afternoon, but with the knowledge that they could fix the hours of sitting. Members have a right to arrange the sitting hours to suit their own convenience, irrespective of the convenience of Ministers. Although it seems hopeless to oppose the motion, nevertheless I do so. If one day sitting per week suits the convenience of a number of members, that fact should receive consideration. My opinion is that day sitting has not proved a failure. If it has been a failure, then many other sittings have equally proved failures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.0]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat, having occupied the Speaker's Chair for a number of years, no doubt has had many opportunities for observation which have been denied to others. I am not going to contest the question as to whether the House is or is not right in fixing the times at which the sittings should be held, but I take it that in fixing the hours there should be taken into consideration the fact that day sittings materially interfere with the work which Ministers have to perform. There is no possibility of taking up the office work in the evening at the conclusion of a day sitting. The House would not expect the officers of departments like the Public Works or Water Supply to work all day and then to be at the call of Ministers after five o'clock in the evening. Ministers can carry out their work in their offices and attend the sittings of Parliament afterwards, but if they are to be here during the day, when are they to perform their Ministerial duties? The only time would be at night, when it would be unreasonable to expect the officers of the departments to attend after having devoted the whole day to their work.

Mr. O'Loghlen: If you had made that speech a month ago the result might have been different.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I had been here I certainly would have made it. There are 800 or 1,000 men in the departments which I control and any delay in dealing with matters affecting the working of those departments means additional expense to the State. With day sittings of Parliament it is absolutely impossible even by putting in extra hours at night to keep things going. The leader of the Opposition knows that one or two Cabinet meetings must be held each week and the time occupied has to be taken out from the hours given by Ministers to their work. In addition to that if we take a whole day a week to devote to Parliamentary duties we cannot carry on our work in either an economical or business like way. For many years past a certain number of members have expressed a desire that there should be sittings in the day time. We have tried the day sitting, and I am glad to say it has failed. If it had been insisted upon Ministers would have been nothing more than rubber stamps in their departments. If hon. members want something more than that they cannot continue to expect day sittings.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams - Narrogin) [5.5]: So far as I can see the numbers are up and the vested city interests have won again. I would not have spoken but for the characteristically inaccurate speech of the leader of the Opposition, who saw fit to allude to myself and some of the members sitting on the cross benches. The hon. member said that he had seen a number of members of the Country party at a theatre on Thursday evenings. If

he did, they were there after having done a hard day's work, and if some hon. members missed their trains and chose to go to the theatre, I fail to see that that is a reflection against them. So far as I am concerned, I have always advocated day sittings of Parliament and day sittings only. The Federal Parliament can carry on its work in the daytime, and other Parliaments do so as well. I have not seen any sign of failure in the day sittings which we have had. It might have been that while some hon. members opposite were wearying the House with long and discursive speeches, I was outside the Chamber attending to some of my correspondence, but the same thing occurs in the evening. The system of sitting at night is a relic of the ancient days when there was no payment of members, when members looked after their own businesses during the day and came along to give the public the fag-end of their energies after their own work had been attended to.

The Minister for Works: They did not do badly either.

Mr. JOHNSTON: To-day we are well paid for looking after the people's business, and day sittings should have first claim on the energies of the representatives of the people. I prefer day sittings, but as I said at the beginning, the numbers are up and vested city interests have won again.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.8]: I supported the innovation when it was submitted at the beginning of the session, and of course at this stage I intend to oppose the motion. We have not given the change a fair chance. We received an assurance that the work on Thursday would be confined to the daytime, and it was expected that the House would adjourn at about five o'clock, but on two occasions the business was carried on until after the tea adjournment, and on one occasion we sat until after nine o'clock. If the day sitting proved a failure it was because the Government themselves did not give it a fair chance. I do not see that the remarks of the leader of the Opposition about the attendance of members at theatres after the adjournment cut much ice, inasmuch as the Government kept us here longer than it was thought would be done. I supported the motion originally to suit my own private convenience and also because on two of the sitting days Ministers could attend to their official duties and devote the evenings to parliamentary work, and on the third day they would perhaps welcome the change here after perhaps late sittings on the two previous evenings. I thought also that it would have the effect of removing some of that irritability from which the Minister for Works sometimes suffers, or that at any rate it would not be so pronounced if we released him from one late evening's sitting. It seems as if the motion had been introduced for the purpose of conveniencing city members. They have been elected to give the best of their time to parliamentary work and if it is necessary to do that work in the daytime it should be done then. Parliamentary duties are sufficiently important for members to attend to during the day, instead of which we sometimes find that they are treated as a side line. It seems clear that the innovation is being discarded because city members are being inconvenienced. I see no reason for supporting the motion of the Premier.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.12]: I do not see how it is possible for Ministers to come here during the daytime. We know that on Monday Ministers spend a good part of the day in Cabinet; on Tuesday morning they have to look after the questions which have to be answered in Parliament; on Wednesday the Executive Council is held, and on Thursday they have to give up the whole day to Parliament, while on Friday the greater part of the day is taken up by receiving deputations. Under these conditions how is the work of Ministers to be carried on? Are Ministers expected to take their work home on the free nights that they have? It has to be remembered that what is wanted just now is administration, and we cannot expect that if we keep Ministers here for a whole day. I am pleased that the Premier has brought the motion forward; in fact I was surprised at the beginning of the session that he gave a thought to day sittings. The experiment has not been a success because it will be remembered that on two occasions in the morning I found it necessary to call attention to the state of the House.

Mr. Troy: That has occurred hundreds of times on Thursday nights as well.

Mr. Willcock: What about last night? Half the time there were only six members present!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In order that the business of the country may be carried on properly it is necessary that Ministers should be able to devote the day to their office duties. I intend to support the motion.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.14]: It was originally thought that the Thursday sitting would be confined to the day time, whereas on two occasions the House has sat until after the tea adjournment and on one occasion did not rise until nine o'clock. I intend to support the motion, because Ministers are hampered in their departmental work. That being the case it is impossible for us to continue the practice of sitting during the day time on Thursday.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.15]: If we desire to give greater attention to our parliamentary duties we can meet on Monday and on Friday at the same time as we meet now. But I share the opinion that Ministers have not time to give to their administrative work. Not only does the Minister for Works carry home his files with him, but I believe that, as a matter of fact, he carries his under secretary with him also.

Mr. Troy: But there is no work going on in the Works Department.

Mr. LAMBERT: Apparently the Minister is going on all the time in one form or another.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister for Works is not under discussion.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yet it would seem that he is the Minister most concerned. However, I think that possibly the best hour at which

to meet is 4.30 p.m. If the session is at all likely to be prolonged, I think the Government should consider adding another sitting day, say Monday or Friday.

Hon. P. Collier: That would not get over the difficulty of the Minister for Works.

Mr. LAMBERT: When the Minister for Works is working he is all right; it is only when talking that he goes astray. I would certainly like the Government to consider the advisability of sitting an extra day each week, if by this means we can obviate any undue prolongation of the session.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.17]: The innovation has not had sufficient trial. I appeal to metropolitan members to show a little consideration for those who live in country districts. Country members are prepared to come here and do their duty, but frequently we have to waste our time here during the day, whilst metropolitan members attend to their private businesses until 4.30 p.m., and then come strolling up to the House. In all seriousness, I say that some metropolitan members seem to regard politics as a pastime, a side line. Those of us who have to leave our homes for the whole week are not asking anything extraordinary when we appeal for the day sitting on Thursday. The system obtains in the Commonwealth Parliament, and also in the State Parliament of Victoria. I hope the House will consider the convenience of country members, and give this innovation a little longer trial. There is no reason why we should not meet at 11 a.m. on Thursday and adjourn not later than tea time.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [5.20]: So rare a privilege is it for me to be able to agree with the member for Katanning that I cannot resist the temptation to add my quota in condemnation of the motion. There can be no doubt that the day sitting on Thursday has not had a fair trial. If, after only three weeks the House shows the country that it does not know its own mind, we shall be holding ourselves up to ridicule. I am convinced that if Country party members decide to attend more regularly on the Thursday mornings, we shall not again hear the complaint as to the small attendances before noon on that day. Just as we are becoming accustomed to running the business in accordance with the interests of the members on the cross benches, it is rather hard to have to alter the system at so short a notice. I plead for another three weeks' trial of the day sitting. If, at the end of that period, it is decided to revert to the old system, we can then do so without loss of dignity.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Agricultural Lands Purchase Act (1909) Amendment.

2, Church of England Diocesan Fund and Land.

Introduced by the Premier.

MOTION—SMELTING WORKS AT GERALDTON.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.24]: I move—

> That in the opinion of this House, in order to encourage the production of base metals in the northern portions of the State, a State smelting works should be erected in Geraldton.

Before dealing with the actual motion I should like to briefly relate the history of lead mining in this State. I notice in a curious old alamanc, which was referred to by the member for Greenough the other day, that so far back as 1858 the Geraldine mines were in active existence. At that time they were able to produce lead, and mine it profitably at £10 per ton. Successful mining operations were carried on for eight or ten years, when, owing to the price receding to £6 per ton, the operations had to cease. However, as the result of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 the prices of lead again rose and, in consequence, there was a resuscitation of the industry in the Geraldine district. Those mines continued working successfully for eight or nine years, when the price fell to £7 per ton, and lead mining once more became unprofitable. In 1902 lead was required in various parts of Australia, and a motion was moved in this House for the erection of a smelter in Geraldton for the encouragement of the mining of lead ore. However, the movement was not successful, and the proposed smelter was not erected. But, as the result of the discovery of telluride ore in Kalgoorlie, it become necessary to establish smelting works for its treatment. The smelter was erected at Fremantle. In the course of the treatment of telluride ore at the smelter, lead had to be mixed in certain proportions. The question arose as to where the lead was to be obtained. None was being produced in the State at the time, and it was seriously proposed to import the metal. However, the Government, who to some extent were behind the smelting company, desired that an attempt should be made to procure lead in Western Australia before any orders for it should be given abroad. The Fremantle smelting plant was not erected for the purpose of dealing with lead ore at all, but principally for the purpose of dealing with telluride and kindred ores. Even at the present time the whole of the capital cost of that plant, only about 25 per cent. of which is in use, is made a charge on the lead mining industry.

The Minister for Mines: How do you work that out?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Only about one-quarter of the plant is being used at present. The smelting company have a very large plant at Fremantle.

The Minister for Mines: For which they pay.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They have to pay interest on the money, of course. But the plant is not being utilised to anything like its full capacity, and those who use it have to pay charges covering interest and sinking fund on

the capital value of the plant, which, I am quite safe in saying, is not being utilised to anything like 50 per cent. of its capacity.

The Minister for Mines: The original owners are not the present owners.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Still, if the plant were being used to its full capacity the charges, presumably, would be reduced considerably. One of the greatest complaints in connection with the Fremantle Trading Company is that their plant is not a smelting works in the proper meaning of the term. That is to say, they only pay on returns for one purpose, namely the extraction of lead. According to the official records, the original Geraldine mines were known to contain as much as 20 ozs. of silver to the ton. However, by reason of the plant at Fremantle being unable to extract any silver, the whole of that product is being wasted, and as I say, the mines at Geraldine in close proximity to those worked in the olden days possibly produce half the value of ore which was obtained in the olden times. Instead of 20 ounces of silver they may only get ten ounces at present. About two years ago serious attention was given to the old lead mining fields at Geraldine, and after prospecting and working in that centre for some time, something good was discovered, on which miners are working at the present time. The member for Greenough and the member for Kalgoorlie gave some figures as to the output of these mines during the last twelve months, and a return has been laid on the table of the House in regard to them, therefore, I shall not say much in reference to the amount of lead that is being produced there. One of the things which the people have to complain about is the prices charged for smelting. Before the war the average price charged at the Cockle Creek Works in New South Wales was £1 11s. a ton. I have copies of the invoices here. For lead from White Peak the Sulphide Corporation charged for a particular shipment £1 11s. a ton. I have here a letter in reference to a shipment by Webb & Co. of White Peak, which gives these particulars—

> Referring to Mr. Webb's shipment, I have on our file the smelting charge of 30s. debited against Webb for this charge. This was in January, 1915; war was on then, why these tremendous increases since?

The net assay value of the ore was 48.21 per cent. The value of the lead was £18 3s. 9d., and according to the figures which I have, the net return would be £6 15s. 6d. per ton less the smelting charge of £1 11s., which would give an average return of £5 4s. 6d. per ton. Unfortunately the quantity treated was not large, and did not give much encouragement to go on. Out of a total of over 10½ tons the amount received was only £39. I do not say that I altogether agree with the views of the correspondents on the matter, but there is a serious cause for complaint in the way the smelting charges have risen in three or four years. One man in writing says—

> I suppose you will laugh when I say my opinion is that German influence undoubtedly is the cause to cripple all lead mines by excessive smelting charges; therefore to stop Australia exporting lead is their aim.

The fact that the price has risen so considerably from £1 11s. per ton to £6—a matter of 300 per cent.—is peculiar. Various opinions have been offered, but people do not know how to account for it. This man has the idea that there is some German influence at the bottom of it. We should have some satisfactory explanation as to the reason why the charges have increased. The cost of firewood and labour, which are the main things in smelting works, have not advanced considerably. The correspondent from whom I was quoting just now says—

> We find from statistics that 47 years ago lead was sent from here to England and presumably made to pay, at £6 per ton. We are advancing, are we not, in commerce and science—47 years of it in lead commerce does not seem to have benefited the industry.

I have another invoice in connection with lead which has been smelted from the same ore of which I was speaking previously, and it is very illuminating in regard to moisture. That is one of the complaints as to the treatment at the Fremantle Trading Works. Instead of there being three or four per cent. of moisture in this particular shipment, the percentage of moisture was .3, or one-tenth of what it was in the previous quantity treated. The journey of a fortnight or three weeks is not much, and would not account for it altogether. The difference between the moisture in two or three weeks is excessive. One result is ten times as much as the result from the ore from another place. As was suggested before in connection with silver, this particular shipment, which no one ever dreamt contained silver at all, was sent to the Sulphide works at Cockle Creek, and they gave credit for one ounce per ton of silver in the shipment, and this was a shipment which it was not thought contained any silver at all. The return, according to this particular invoice, was only about £4 6s. per ton on 50 per cent. ore. I have here the prices charged for lead to be treated at the Sulphide Corporation Works at Cockle Creek, and they do not compare very favourably with the charge at Fremantle at the present time. But there is a different method of arriving at these charges. The two companies operating have different methods. The Sulphide Corporation charge £2 5s. per ton on a basis for smelting, and on top of that charge there is 1s. 7d. for every unit they treat of 50 per cent. stuff, which would amount to £3 19s. 2d., or £6 4s. 2d. per ton, to treat the ore at these works.

The Minister for Mines: Where is that?

Mr. WILLCOCK: At the Sulphide Company's smelting works at Cockle Creek. This invoice and scale of charges has been obtained within the last twelve months. It is a printed document which anyone can see.

The Minister for Mines: They charge £6.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They charge £6 now; that is the basis of the smelting charge. I say there is a peculiar inconsistency in the two companies operating. One company charges at a certain rate per ton and then advance the price for every unit of lead per ton of ore; while the Fremantle Trading Company have a base charge on 70 per cent. stuff and advance the price as the quality of the ore comes down. They base their charge on a different method

altogether. For lead which contains about 50 per cent. of ore the Sulphide Corporation charge £2 5s. per ton and 1s. 7d. per unit., which works out at £6 4s. 7d. per ton. The Fremantle Trading Company have a standing charge of £6 per ton for 70 per cent. ore, and an additional penalty of 1s. per ton is charged for every unit under 70 per cent., that is on 50 per cent. ore. This would be 20 units below the standard for which they have a fixed charge and a penalty of 1s. per ton; and on 20 units, that would amount to £1. The 50 per cent. ore and the advance in charge is unfavourable to the Fremantle company to the extent of 16s. per ton, and on top of that the most important feature of all—for products such as silver, gold, copper, or anything which may be in the ore there is no consideration given by the Fremantle company, because they do not treat it in that way. They do not treat the ore to get silver out of it at all. It was estimated that the original Geraldine ore contained 20 ounces of silver, but taking 50 per cent. of that away—say that the shows working around that district turn out ore containing only 10 ounces of silver—at the market price of silver to-day—which I admit is abnormally high, because I received from the Mines Department within the last week information that silver was 4s. 5 7/16d. per ounce—the Sulphide Corporation charge 7s. 6d. Say that the ore contains one-half the amount of silver compared with the amount contained in the ore previously worked, and with the extra treatment charge of 2½d. per ounce, we have a net return of silver of 4s. 3d. per ounce. If this ore only contained 50 per cent. of the amount of silver which the ore previously contained, we get an additional return for silver of £2 2s. 6d. per ton. That is one of the reasons which has actuated the people of this district in asking that smelting works be established at this particular place.

The Minister for Mines: What charges would you suggest should be made at a State smelter at Geraldton?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not concerned about what charges I would suggest. I am not a smelting expert at all. Nevertheless, I do think that with an up-to-date plant, and bearing in mind the cost of the production of lead prior to the war, considerably less than £6 per ton should be charged for treating lead ore, even at the present cost of materials. In connection with silver, if only half the quantity is contained in the ore which used to be found, there would be an advantage of £2 2s. 6d. a ton as a result of that precious metal being mixed up with the lead ore. At present that sum of money is wasted, because there are no means available in this State of recovering the precious metals which are now known to exist in the lead ore. Another aspect in connection with privately owned smelting works is that people have not the confidence in them that they have in an institution of the kind run by the State. I do not say that this particular private institution is not run honestly, nor do I suggest such a thing, but other people, who have had more experience than I have had, have not that confidence in batteries or smelting works or any other undertaking that is run by a private enterprise such as they have in similar works run by State enterprise. In an undertaking run by the State no particular individual, no matter what his return may be, will get a greater benefit than will the individual whose returns are smaller.

The Minister for Mines: I have known of want of confidence in State batteries.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Possibly. At the same time, there is not the same necessity for people to talk about State batteries as there is in the case of private batteries. I have known of a very serious want of confidence in private batteries. My experience of both, and that of prospectors who have had to do with either or both, is that the State battery is preferred to the private battery, and people will send a distance of 50 miles, passing a private battery en route, in order that their ore may be treated by the State undertaking.

Mr. Foley: The general feeling about privately owned batteries in this State is good.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is nevertheless a fact that people have been known to send their stuff from their gold mines right past a private battery in order that it may be treated by a Government battery.

Mr. Foley: I do not know why they do it. In my opinion the prospectors have had a fair run from private batteries.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not laying too much stress upon this, but most people have a greater confidence in an institution run by the Government than they have in one run by private individuals. The policy in connection with the erection of smelting works for the treatment of ore has always been to have such works at the nearest point at which satisfactory fuel can be obtained for the operations to be carried on. In the case of Broken Hill the silver ore is sent to Port Pirie, which is the nearest port where a satisfactory fuel, in the shape of Newcastle coal, can be obtained. In the case of Cobar and the copper mines there, instead of the coal being trucked from Lithgow to that place, it pays the persons operating at Cobar better to ship the ore direct to Lithgow, where the coal is mined, and to establish smelting works there. In the case of Cockle Creek, the works are established in close proximity to a coal mine. I do not think I am far out in saying that all the lead ore produced in Western Australia at the present time is produced from in and around the districts of which Geraldton is the natural port. In view of the fact that fuel has to be brought to that port in order that the ore may be treated, the natural place for smelters, if they are to be worked on a profitable basis, is at Geraldton.

The Minister for Mines: The lead itself would have to be taken away from Geraldton.

Mr. WILLCOCK: That does not alter the position. The production of lead in this country is considerably in excess of that required to meet the local demand, and this commodity would therefore have to be exported. Although possibly at the present time Geraldton is under a cloud so far as shipping is concerned, after the war and

more shipping becomes available, there will be just as many facilities for shipping ore from Geraldton direct to other places, where the product is needed, as there will be at Fremantle. That is the experience so far as wool and wheat are concerned, and I do not think there will be any difference in regard to lead. Some years ago when Mr. Dooley represented the Geraldton electorate he brought forward a motion that freezing works should be established at Geraldton. The Government of the day said, "If you show us the products we will establish the freezing works." I propose to show that there is sufficient lead being produced, or about to be produced, to warrant the establishment of a smelter at Geraldton. According to a report published in the Press to-day, the Minister for Mines, who has just returned from a trip to Cue, was asked to establish a State battery in Cue. He replied that so far as he was concerned, if he were satisfied that sufficient ore would be produced to warrant the erection of a battery, a battery would be erected. He also said in effect, "Go on and produce the stuff and we will deliver the goods in the shape of a State battery." I should like to know from the Minister what quantity of ore he would require to be produced in the district for him to consider the establishment of a State smelter at Geraldton. In connection with the quantity of lead produced during the past 12 months, we have certain particulars placed before us in the return which was laid on the Table of the House to-day. This showed that the total amount of lead ore produced in Northampton and district during the six months ended 30th June last, was 4,451 tons. I quite agree that most of this lead ore was produced by the Fremantle Trading Co., and naturally having smelting works of their own they will not be prepared, unless they can have the ore treated at much less cost than at present, to have it treated at State works at Geraldton. They would naturally, if there is a plant already in existence, and if they can treat the ore there profitably, want to treat it at Fremantle. Outside the ore treated by the Fremantle Company there were 1,201 tons produced in and around that district during the same period of six months. That would give an average for the six months, at a time when lead mining is only in its infancy and only just beginning to feel its feet, of 200 tons per month, or about 50 tons a week. The prospects of the fields are distinctly encouraging. I note with pleasure that many members of the House have already been through this field. The Minister for Mines has been there, as well as the Premier, and several members of both sides of the Chamber have done likewise. During the period under review, according to this return, the average production from Gallagher's mine was 35 tons per month. Since 30th June, the average has risen from 35 tons per month to 15 tons per week, or about 60 tons per month. In the case of the Surprise mine, during the period under review, the return shows a production of 878 tons. I have here the latest information with regard to that show. The total tonnage to date is 1,500 tons. The proprietors now have 12 months' work in the stopes, and the average is 100 tons per week. The lode under foot is better and of a greater width. Mr. Green, one of the proprietors of the mine, recently made extensive inquiries in the Eastern States in regard to the difference in the treatment charges between those existing here and those found there. He says that the difference in the treatment charges is approximately £3, and that no deduction is made for refractory ore, although an advantage is paid for this refractory ore at the Port Pirie works. He concludes a telegram I have received from him on the subject by expressing the hope that Parliament will agree to a motion giving some small assistance to this great industry. The people connected with this mine have not been very liberal in their estimates. They say that they have an average of 100 tons weekly, and that the mine is opening up considerably better than it appeared to be going to do some six months before.

The Minister for Mines: Do you say that Port Pirie treats the ore for less?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Mr. Green expresses the opinion that the difference in the treatment charges is approximately £3 a ton, without any deduction for refractory ore.

Mr. Munsie: That is the difference between Port Pirie and the Fremantle smelters?

Mr. WILLCOCK: That is so. There are other considerations besides the basic charge of £6 per ton for smelting. We have a 10 per cent. deduction, which the Fremantle company makes on all ore sent down. We also have the difference in the moisture which is supposed to be in the ore, and several other differences which Mr. Green estimates as representing a difference in value of about £3 per ton.

Mr. Foley: Do you add freight to these charges?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. With regard to the general outlook, we find that these people, who have ever been conservative in their estimates, and all of whose estimates since the mine was first launched have always been well within the mark, say that during the next 12 months they will have a weekly output of 100 tons for the period during which they expect to be working. There are many other shows in the district. The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley), in speaking to a motion for a return to be laid on the Table, gave some figures with regard to many of the mines. The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green), when speaking upon the Address-in-reply also gave many figures, which no doubt members of the House will recollect. There are four or five other places that I could mention. Gallagher's mine is turning out 15 tons a week. The Three Sisters is another mine worthy of mention. Mr. Trude, a man who it must be admitted knows something about lead mining, had a look at this mine the other day, and without very much inspection was so satisfied with the prospects that he took an option over it for £3,000. Mr. Hans Irvine—and everyone will admit that he knows something about mining possibilities in Australia—said, after having viewed the Surprise mine, that as far as his

experience went there was nothing like it in Australia.

The Minister for Mines: Ask the member for Cue about his opinion?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not referring to gold-mining propositions. Possibly Mr. Irvine is not as good an authority on gold-mining as he is on other things. He certainly has had a great deal of experience. Possibly he will back up his opinion with money in the next few months. The developments which have taken place—I could give particulars of them—show that there is now over £100,000 worth of lead actually ready to be broken down at any time. The Government have assisted the Fremantle Trading Company by guaranteeing their overdraft, and presumably the company are at present working on a profit, though they say they are working at a loss. As we know, figures can be made to prove anything. In connection with price-fixing in New South Wales and Victoria, only the people producing meat have been afforded an opportunity of giving evidence as to what the price of meat should be. They have proved to the satisfaction of the price-fixing Commissioners in the Eastern States that meat should now be about double the price it was in pre-war times. Undoubtedly the Fremantle Trading Company will, in the same way, put forward the worst side of the case in the event of any inquiry into their costs. The Government allowed them to increase their charges by 50 per cent. one or two years ago. In the matter of by-products, the Fremantle Trading Company's plant is absolutely out of date, utterly obsolete. It entirely fails to extract the precious metals known to be distributed throughout the lead ore. If the Government could prevail on the Fremantle Trading Company so to alter their plant as to allow of its recovering the silver ore known to exist in the lead ore, some considerable measure of assistance would be rendered to the lead mining industry. At present the cost of treating the ore from this field is so great that there is practically no inducement to people to work their mines on a proper basis. They are practically compelled to pick the eyes out of the mine. In the case of the Surpise mine, fortunately, most of the ore is of good quality; but, as stated by my motion, in order to assist the production of lead ore in the district, by far the better course would be to erect a smelting works locally, so that the low grade ore could be treated for a reasonable charge. On the present charges, it costs at least £7 per ton to treat lead ore. We ought to be able to obtain for Geraldton a more up to date plant than even that of the Sulphide Corporation in New South Wales. Then the ore which is not of very good quality and has not a high percentage of lead could be treated, and the process of picking out the eyes of the mines need not be continued. The erection of a smelter at Geraldton would result in a considerable benefit to the State in the matter of railway revenue alone, increasing the traffic on a line which, but for the lead mining industry, would be one of the worst paying in our entire system. While lead maintains its present high price, every encouragement should be given to these people to produce lead and obtain the maximum price, so that when the slump does come they will be established on a sufficiently sound basis to be able to continue even if the price of lead falls by £10 per ton. Possibly the Government may object to the establishment of smelting works at Geraldton, on the score of expense. But we have it from the Federal Government that they are prepared to encourage the production of base metals. Mr. Watt, the Acting Prime Minister, said the other day that the Federal Government stood committed to the encouragement of the production of base metals in Australia. What greater encouragement could be given to our lead mining industry than the establishment of smelting works at Geraldton? The Federal Government have stated that in connection with repatriation they have available a sum of two million sterling which they do not expect will be used for land settlement this year, and which therefore they are prepared to use in other directions. Consequently, if proper representations were made, doubtless some arrangement could be arrived at whereby the Federal Government would advance money for the encouragement of the production of lead in the Geraldton district. It is not only Northampton and Geraldine, and the districts to which I have particularly referred this afternoon, that are interested in the establishment of smelting works at Geraldton. Even Meekatharra, over 300 miles from the coast, is interested in that project. During the past 12 months Meekatharra has produced about 400 tons of copper ore, which has been sent over the railway to Geraldton, or occasionally to Fremantle, for shipment to the Sulphide Corporation's works in New South Wales. With up to date smelting works at Geraldton, there would be no necessity for the Meekatharra copper ore to incur these heavy railage and sea freight charges.

The Minister for Mines: Can you estimate the cost of a smelter that would treat copper, and lead, and zinc as well?

Mr. WILLCOCK: On that matter I prefer to consult the expert knowledge available in the Mines Department. In Yalgoo also there is a copper mine which was worked in the old days. Ten or 12 years ago I myself went down a copper show at Yalgoo. If treatment charges were any way reasonable, work would proceed on that show, which was closed down only on account of the costs being too high; and this was due to the railway freights and extra handling charges entailed by the necessity for sending the ore to New South Wales for treatment. Omitting the Northampton district, we have copper ore being produced as far south as Arrino, which is situated about 100 miles south of Geraldton. Naturally, that ore would gravitate to Geraldton if a smelter were established there capable of so treating the ore as to leave a decent return. Then there is White Peak, some returns from which I have quoted to-day. Again, there is a show at Maynard's, in the Upper Chapman district,

which I hear is of considerable promise. I think I have said sufficient to convince the House that there is ample inducement for the Government to erect a smelting works at Geraldton as promptly as may be. A feeling of uncertainty exists regarding what will happen after the next 12 months. The Government, of course, have an agreement with the Fremantle Trading Company for the treatment of ore during that period; but, after that, no one knows what will happen. From answers to certain questions asked in another place by Mr. Hickey, it appears that the company have been sufficiently financial to reduce their overdraft by £11,000 or £12,000 during the past two or three years. It is possible that during the next 12 months they will be able to wipe out their overdraft, and start off scratch. Then the Government will have no control over them, and they would be able to charge for smelting just at their own sweet will. If the company raised their charges so high that the people now producing lead would find it unprofitable to continue, then perhaps the Fremantle Trading Company would be able to come along and take up the shows which had been closed down and abandoned and work them for the company's profit. Let me stress once more that on a conservative estimate there will be during the next 12 months, and after that for a number of years, of from 100 to 200 tons of lead ore available weekly for smelting works established at Geraldton, leaving aside altogether the copper ore which will continue to be produced in Meekatharra and Arrino. Besides, there are well known copper deposits in the Northampton and Geraldine districts, which are not being worked at present because the expense of sending the ore over considerable distances is too heavy. Given reasonable smelting conditions, the future of our lead mining industry is assured. According to all experience, the price is assured for the next two or three years; and if only the Government will do something practical in furtherance of their policy of assisting production, they cannot find a better field for their energies than that afforded by the erection of smelting works at Geraldton.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. C. A. Hudson—Yilgarn) [6.15]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	10
Majority for	..	..	..	14

AYES.

Mr. Davies	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Duff	Mr. Money
Mr. George	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Johnston	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. R. T. Robinson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Rocke	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Smith	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Teesdale	(*Teller.*)
Mr. Thomson	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr Jones	(*Teller.*)
Mr. Lambert	

Motion thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.19 to 7.30 p.m.

PAPERS—ELECTORAL OFFENCES.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [7.30]: I move—

That all papers relating to the prosecutions of persons for offences against the Electoral Act during the present year be laid upon the Table.

It will be within the knowledge of members that a number of prosecutions have taken place on the goldfields during the past five or six months for offences against our Electoral Act. I desire to see the papers I am moving for to ascertain, if possible, the motive, or the power behind the throne, if I may use that term, which has been responsible for the extraordinarily long list of prosecutions. Action was commenced somewhere back in May last and week after week, right down to the present time, electors on the goldfields have been brought before the court charged and fined in most cases for breaches of the Electoral Act. I feel constrained to say that the impelling force of these prosecutions has been mainly political. In this respect I exempt the Attorney General, who is administering the Electoral Act, of any charge of that description. I have spoken to the Minister on several occasions with regard to these prosecutions, and in some of the instances he has met me by reducing the amount of the fine, where he thought he was justified in doing so. I know also that each individual case has not been submitted to the Attorney General for his approval or otherwise before the taking of action. Therefore, I make no charge against him of political feeling or bias, but I do say that there has been a political force at work which has urged on the officers of the Electoral Department in a manner which I have never known to take place in this State before. For the past six months the Chief Electoral Officer has been paying many visits to the goldfields, where he has spent a considerable time investigating these cases of wrongful enrolment. We have had practically the whole power and influence of the Police Department at the disposal of the Electoral Department making investigations as well. As a matter of fact, one constable at Boulder has had practically the whole of his time taken up for months past making a kind of fishing inquiry with regard to the qualifications of electors who have had their names placed on the roll. Even out in

the back country police officers have been pursuing a similar course of action, and in every case these investigations have concerned electors who have been known to be prominent supporters of the Labour party. The Electoral Department say that a list of electors is submitted to them, and that on the face of it these electors appear to have been guilty of breaches of the Act, in which case the department has no alternative but to take action. I understand their explanation is that the initiative is not taken by the department in order to ascertain whether these people are qualified or not, but the facts having been brought under their notice they were in duty bound to take notice. I do not know how the Electoral Department conducts its business, but if the officers of that department consider that to be a satisfactory method of administering the department, practically closing their eyes to breaches of the Act, and taking no action whatever unless they are prompted to do so, or urged by some political organisation to do so, it is an entirely improper method to follow. Others on the goldfields have pointed out that a long list could be compiled showing that many people who are not supporters of the Labour party are equally guilty of similar breaches of the Act. The Electoral Department say, "Why do you not submit the list to us; we will investigate the cases, and if we think action is justifiable, it will be taken." But neither I nor the party with which I am associated believe it is part of our duty to act as pimps in that direction. Moreover, I should be ashamed of myself for the rest of my days if I were to be responsible for any action which would result in bringing citizens of this country before the police court merely because they have endeavoured to exercise their full rights of citizenship, even though in that effort they had been guilty of a breach of the Electoral Act. We have not taken up the attitude of indicating who should be prosecuted; we say that even if these people were not legally qualified, they were at any rate morally qualified, and it is not a sufficiently serious offence to justify our acting as spies and pimps for the Electoral Department.

The Minister for Works: What has been the offence?

Hon. P. COLLIER: There have been two classes of offences. One is that a number of people were charged with having signed claim cards and testifying thereby that they had witnessed the application for the right to vote, when they actually did not see the applicant sign the card. This has not been regarded as a serious offence, yet it is one charge. The other is for sending in a card to the effect that the sender was qualified to vote by reason of the fact that he occupied premises of a clear annual value of £17. A number of these people claimed enrolment and were enrolled, and it was asserted, and the court upheld the assertion, that they were not occupying houses of a clear annual value of £17. In these cases the roads board valuation was taken and the prosecuting officers put that in. In many instances the valuation was £12, £14, or £16; at any rate it was under the £17, and the court held that the people enrolled were not qualified, and consequently were guilty of an offence. In this connection, however, the Electoral Department themselves are to blame. They do not know where they stand with regard to the clear annual value qualification. There is no standard to judge by; sometimes they take the rateable value and sometimes they do not. The rateable value is not necessarily the determining factor. It is recognised that local bodies assess their value at 33 per cent. lower, so that a person who may appear on the roads board books as occupying a house of the value of only £10 or £12 a year, may actually be the occupier of premises worth considerably more than £17, in which case that person would be qualified for enrolment. I admit that, in some instances, on the goldfields, the values were low, but I have a list before me of 34 names, and many more could be added, and the names on the list are those who are known to be political opponents of the Labour party, and the rateable value of the premises occupied by them, according to the roads board assessment, runs from £10 to £16. Clearly, then, these people are in the same category as those against whom action was taken by the Electoral Department.

The Attorney General: If you let me have that list I will investigate each case.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I prefer not to do so. I do not want to drag more people before the court. I have no desire to see people prosecuted, even if, according to the roads board valuation, they are not qualified for enrolment. Morally, however, these people are qualified, and if we take the standard of citizenship, they certainly are qualified. I would not be a party to prosecuting any person, whether that person be a political supporter or opponent. It is extraordinary that these prosecutions have been dragged on week after week for a period of six months, and fines aggregating over £100 have been inflicted. And although the whole machinery, both of the Electoral Department and of the Police Department, has been at work making investigations in order to secure prosecutions, in addition to that a firm of solicitors has been engaged in connection with every case. For what purpose? In order that citizens on the goldfields, who happen to be living in houses rated £2 or £3 per annum less than the qualification, shall be dragged before the court. Compare the ordinary working man on the goldfields with the working man in, say, Perth, in regard to the qualification. Any householder in the City is qualified under the Act, for one cannot here get a house fit for a family to live in which has not a clear annual value of £17. But on the goldfields it is entirely different. A man in the humblest walk of life in the City, receiving a minimum wage of, say, 9s. 7d. a day, lives in a house which qualifies him for a place on the roll of the Legislative Council. On the goldfields a man may be in receipt of £5 or £6 a week, notwithstanding which the house he will there occupy apparently will not qualify him, according to the departmental interpretation of the Act. It points to the fact that the qualification is a geographical one. A man in the coastal districts is entitled to enrolment, but if he should go to the goldfields to earn his living he will not be qualified as an elector for the Legislative Council. So I say that some influence has been

at work in order, not to see that offenders against the law are brought to justice, but in order to wreak vengeance, political spleen and spite, against a certain section of the people of the goldfields.

Mr. Teesdale: On the part of the department?

Hon. P. COLLIER: On the part of a few prominent individuals in a political organisation, who apparently kept on submitting this list of names to the Electoral Department, kept on pressng the officers of that department to institute prosecutions, until apparently the department yielded to the pressure. I have here a couple of instances which I will read to the House, and so allow members to judge of the manner in which our State Electoral Department deals with these cases, as compared with the manner in which similar cases are deal with by the Commonwealth Electoral Department. Here is a report taken from the "Kalgoorlie Miner." The heading, it will be noticed, is a simple one, "A breach of the Electoral Act." The report proceeds—

> A plea of guilty was entered by David Douglas in the Kalgoorlie police court yesterday morning to a charge that he, on 5th April, signed his name as a witness on an electoral paper under the Commonwealth Electoral Act, to wit, on a form of electoral claim, without having seen the person whose signature he purported to witness sign the said paper. Mr. J. Roberts, Commonwealth Electoral Officer, did not press for a heavy penalty, the offence being practically an irregularity. The magistrate imposed a fine of 1s. with 3s. costs.

That was a Commonwealth case, heard on 23rd July. On 10th September, a State case was heard. Mark the different character of the heading. In this instance it runs, "Roll Stuffing; a Kalgoorlie case." The report proceeds—

> William John Burnett was fined £10 with £2 7s. costs in default two months' imprisonment, by Mr. P. L. Gibbons, R.M., in the Kalgoorlie police court to-day for having at Boulder, on 23rd March, made an untrue statement in a Legislative Council claim card that he had seen a claimant, John Kinsella, sign the claim, whereas he (defendant) had not. This matter was connected with one of the recent cases of roll stuffing on the goldfields, where several persons were fined heavily.

Here the charge was precisely similar to the earlier one.

Mr. Teesdale: Was it the same bench?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. I think the magistrate in the Commonwealth case was Mr. Walter; in this case it was Mr. Gibbons.

The Attorney General: Mr. Walter is the man for whom you never have a good word to say.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not making any comment in regard to the view the magistrates have taken of these cases. It may have been due to the manner in which the cases were presented. In the one case the Commonwealth Electoral Department was represented in court by only an electoral officer, who said that the offence was not a serious one, that it was merely an irregularity. In consequence of this, the defendant was fined a few shillings. But in the State case the Eelectoral Department was represented by a firm of solicitors, and, on a precisely similar charge a fine of £10 was imposed with £2 7s. costs. I have another Commonwealth case which was heard on the 16th of the present month. Here is the newspaper report—

> John Daniel McCaffrey pleaded guilty at the Kalgoorlie police court to-day to having signed a Commonwealth electoral claim as a witness without having seen the applicant sign it. A fine of 5s. and 4s. costs, in default one day's imprisonment, was imposed.

There are the two Commonwealth cases. In the one instance there was a fine of 5s. and in the other a fine of 1s., whereas in the State case a fine of £10 was imposed with £2 7s. costs.

The Attorney General: In lots of our cases there have been fines of only 5s.

Mr. Munsie: Not on the goldfields.

The Attorney General: Yes; I have in mind four or five.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There were a few such, but in the majority of cases the fines ranged from £2 to £10. Whereas the Commonwealth Electoral Department apparently consider the offence a mere irregularity, not of sufficient importance to warrant the retention of a firm of solicitors, the State Department goes on contributing to the State deficit by engaging a firm of solicitors to appear in every case, and to press for heavy penalties. If there be any satisfactory explanation in respect to the difference in treatment meted out as between the State and the Commonwealth departmens, at all events I have not heard it.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Mr. Hardwick: Are they not false declarations?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Whatever they are, the charges are all similar. I suppose it is really a false declaration. Of course I shall be told by the Attorney General that these are all cases of men obtaining enrolment by gross fraud, and that the department has no alternative to seeing that the law is administered. I even anticipate that the Attorney General will be somewhat indignant with me for complaining against the prosecution of men for what he will describe as gross fraud. He will say that they have been dealt with properly and in justifiable manner. In retort I say that many of our laws are permitted by this Government, as well as preceding Governments, to remain in abeyance. Breaches of our statutes are being made every day, and are winked at. If the law must be enforced because it is the law, let me remind hon. members that within the past few weeks, while these very prosecutions were taking place, race meetings have been held in Kalgoorlie, in Boulder, and in other places within the State,

where whole armies of people were engaged in breaking one of our Acts of Parliament, engaged in deliberate breaches of the law in connection with betting. If the Government can shut their eyes to such doings, and permit betting to go on in direct contravention of our statutes, then I say that in cases where men and women are guilty of a no more serious offence than attempting to exercise the whole rights of citizenship, the law dealing with such offences can be and ought to be administered with some discretion, some degree of sympathetic consideration for the people who, after all, are merely endeavouring to have their names placed on the electoral rolls. We talk about fighting to make the world free for democracy. It is the greatest possible hypocrisy, for the best of our manhood have gone to the other end of the world to fight for freedom and liberty and citizenship, only to find that, during their absence, their parents and wives have been dragged before our courts for endeavouring to have their names placed on the electoral rolls. If there are any cases in which latitude might be allowed in the administration of our laws, it is in cases of this kind. I can come to no other conclusion than that these prosecutions, which have been dragged out over a period of six months, have been undertaken at the behest of prominent political agitators on the goldfields. No other argument or explanation can I see for this action, none whatever, and it is about time that officers of the Electoral Department were engaged in some duties more conducive to the welfare of the country than in spending their time at considerable cost to the taxpayers in endeavouring to drag before the courts honest law-abiding citizens for no other more serious offence than I have indicated; and the contrast between the two departments is most striking. It is little wonder that the Colonial Secretary's Department, and other departments as well, show increased expenditure month after month and year after year when these highly paid officers can spend so much of their time in pettifogging cases of this kind.

Mr. Teesdale: You admit that there is a percentage of deliberate falsifying at times.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not saying that they have been wrongly convicted in many cases of the offences of which they have been charged, but this must be remembered, that the Electoral Department has not been able to give a clear interpretation or clear decision as to how this clear annual value is to be arrived at. I know in the past that the officers of the Electoral Department have taken the view that if a dwelling place or a house is worth, say, £17 a year, which is about 17s. 6d. a week, if the individual occupying that considers that it is worth that to him, he is entitled to be enrolled. It may be a wrong interpretation, but that is the view that has been equivalent throughout the goldfields, and accepting that interpretation in good faith a large number of people have sent in their claim cards with a desire to become enrolled believing honestly that they are entitled to be enrolled, and the department knew that perfectly well. And until the department are able to define some method by which the clear annual value may be arrived at, they could be better employed than pursuing the matter to the extent to which they have done. The law would have been vindicated if a few cases had been taken and the matter ventilated in the courts. That would have been sufficient; it would have been a warning; it would have placed the matter before the people of the goldfields that under certain conditions they are not entitled to have their names placed on the electoral roll. I am quite certain that people would not have offended again. What appeals to me to be a kind of political persecution is the fact that the department does not seem to be satisfied with having exposed the thing. They want their pound of flesh, and week after week they drag further citizens before the court. What purpose is to be served? They have vindicated the law and made it clear to everybody on the goldfields, according to the decisions of the court as to what they are or what they are not entitled to, and having made it clear why should not the prosecutions be stopped rather than pursue them. More particularly is that the feeling when we have cases which contrast in this direction. I could get any number of cases where the Commonwealth Electoral Department say it is merely an irregularity and do not press for a heavy penalty and the majority are fined a shilling. The next week the magistrate sits on the bench and someone appears for the State Electoral Department, and the accused is fined anything up to £10. I know there are certain individuals in Kalgoorlie and Boulder who appear to have nothing better to do than to be examining the Legislative Council rolls and picking out cases of this kind to show that people do not possess the necessary qualifications. These people appear to think they are serving the nation and the Empire and helping to win the war by spending their time in this direction and placing the particular cases they have sifted before the Electoral Department. If they hear nothing from the Electoral Department within a week or two they want to know why and they urge the matter in order to drag the last man or woman before the courts so that the cases shall be heard. If they like to pursue that policy, it is their concern. For my part, I am proud to say that none of the people who are associated with the party to which I belong on the goldfields would be responsible for dragging any honest citizens before the courts because they are endeavouring to exercise their right. Had this been a democratic country it is a right people would have possessed years ago. We have this wretched property qualification for citizens to-day. If young men, and a majority of the young men, single men, sit back they have been told they are slackers if they do not go to the war, because the call comes first of all to the single men. The single man is told it is his duty to go and fight and the majority are cases of the single men who do not possess the property qualification, and the majority it would be found have no right to exercise the vote for one branch of the Legisature of the country for which they have offered to sacrifice their lives. In some of these cases a man is away fighting and his wife is

prosecuted; in other cases the mother or the father is prosecuted. In innumerable instances of this kind the charge I make is one of political influence being brought to bear. I do not lay that at the door of the Minister because I believe his instructions were of a general character. He has not looked into all these cases individually and decided which ought to go on and which ought not, but his instructions have been of a general character and only where gross fraud has taken place has he directed that action should be taken. But the interpretation or decision as to what constitutes gross fraud rested with the Chief Electoral Officer or with the solicitor who is advising the department. I do not know who is responsible. Mr. Stenberg has been on the goldfields for days drawing his 15s. or 16s. a day travelling allowance while absent from the city. There is the local electoral registrar as well. Neither Mr. Stenberg nor Mr. Sanders, the local representative, is thought to have sufficient capacity to go into the court and conduct the prosecution but so that no mistake shall be made, a firm of solicitors is engaged, while in the Commonwealth cases no one appears in the court except the electoral officer and he is quite satisfied to state that the offence is merely an irregularity and asks for a nominal fine. I ask for these papers so that I may see what correspondence has taken place because I believe a considerable amount has taken place in connection with the breaches of the Act. I want to see the nature of the correspondence and the parties who are responsible for it. I move the motion standing in my name.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [8.11]: The leader of the Opposition has been kind enough to say that I am not personally associated with any of the prosecutions and any one after occupying the position of Attorney General must know that in petty prosecutions that come along the Attorney General is not in a position to look into each case. I regret that the leader of the Opposition has brought this motion forward, because only about three days ago the hon. member in company with other goldfields members of Parliament waited on me with reference to three or four cases, including one which has been cited here to-night, and I undertook personally to look into the cases which I had never heard of before and see that a fair thing was done.

Hon. P. Collier: The trouble is that they are going on every day; several have been heard this week.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He also asked me to consider whether sufficient prosecutions had not taken place and, as a matter of fact, I have already notified the department that I thought sufficient cases had been taken and that there was no need for further prosecutions. Therefore I am rather astonished to find the leader of the Opposition detailing all this information before the House, because he knew what my personal opinion was. If the hon. member wanted to make a demonstration he has done that, but I should like shortly to explain what the state of affairs is. I am entitled to ask for an adjournment if I like so as to bring up the papers and to bring facts before the House, but I have sufficient knowledge necessary to explain what has taken place. The hon. gentleman says an attempt has been made by certain individuals on the goldfields to exercise the rights of citizenship. There are hundreds of men and women on the goldfields who never had the right to vote or possessed the proper qualifications, yet they have the impudence to put forward claims that they were entitled, and other persons, in many instances of the agitator class, and some gentlemen, who have been described as irresponsible persons, have been sent round to take signatures and these irresponsible persons have not taken the trouble to see whether the person signed the card or not. A number of cards have been sent in and these irresponsible persons not knowing the claimants rights or qualifications, sit down and sign as having witnessed the signature and that the person was possessed of the qualification. The leader of the Opposition comes along to the House and asks members to believe that this is a mere irregularity. That man, the witness, should be put in gaol. He is a danger to the community. He is a fraud and has committed a fraud. He signs and certifies to something about which he knows nothing more than the man in the moon. That is what I call a gross case. It is not a matter of one or two cases, but there were hundreds of such cases on the Goldfields. There has never been known such a crusade in Western Australia before as has taken place amongst a certain class of the community, who were determined to capture the Goldfields seats at any cost.

Hon. P. Collier: What nonsense! Who said that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was said in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. P. Collier: By those who were enforcing the prosecutions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: By members of Parliament, coupled with an irresponsible person they had picked up, and about whom they have told me, and who was enrolling all and sundry upon the Legislative Council rolls, knowing full well that when cards are put in the day before the roll closes it is impossible to investigate all such cases before the day of the election. The consequence was that there was no chance whatever, without an army of 100 men, of sorting out all these claims, and all that could be done was to issue instructions to candidates on both sides—and this was done in each case—to the effect that, if they had any reason to believe that any person coming up to vote was not entitled to do so, they might challenge that person and ask for the usual declaration. Moreover, knowing that there were so many cases, I took it upon myself to make a public statement in the Press in Kalgoorlie, and throughout Western Australia, warning people in connection with that very election that anyone who attempted to vote, who did not pos-

sess the qualifications, would be proceeded against. I was aware that many claims had come in that could not be sifted out within the time.

Mr. Munsie: That has not been done.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The leader of the Opposition says, "Why does not the department do this itself." As he knows, the Electoral Department is a very small department, and has a very small staff. In these times, as head of that department, I will not allow any more men to be employed, even for the purpose of investigating cases, than were then being employed. If, as the leader of the Opposition suggests, they were to endeavour to treat all alike, they would have to start on the Goldfields roll from the beginning and go on to the very end, and investigate every case. This would cost a mint of money, and I would not be justified in paying that amount at the present time, or employing the necessary number of men. Where the attention of the department has been drawn to any particular individual, or set of individuals, as having voted or attempted to vote, or made a claim where they were not entitled to, the department has investigated such cases. Certain claims and lists were put forward by one political organisation, to which the leader of the Opposition has referred. He, and his organisation in Kalgoorlie, were also asked to send in a list, and were informed that each case would be investigated. The secretary of the organisation told the electoral officers that he had a number of cases, but did not care to give the names, just as the leader of the Opposition says he does not care to give the names. We cannot imagine who these people are, but we said that the cases would be investigated if the names of those who were wrongly on the roll, or who had wrongly claimed to be put there, were supplied. There is not a single case that my friends opposite have asked should be investigated by me personally that I have not investigated personally. In a number of cases, where I thought the fine was more than the circumstances warranted, I advised His Excellency the Governor to remit a portion of the fine, so that as far as possible the scales have been held evenly in that direction. The leader of the Opposition says that certain instructions are issued, but that the department itself cannot define what is clear annual value. Clear annual value is in fact what is the annual value; not what anyone may think it is, or what I as the owner may think it is, but what, in fact, it is.

Hon. P. Collier: Who determines that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Court.

Hon. P. Collier: How?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: On ordinary evidence. It is idle for members to come here now and make these accusations, when the very instructions that are issued to-day are those which were drawn up during the regime of the Labour Government, and have not since been altered in one letter. The form that goes out for the enrolment of electors for the Assembly, and the green form which goes out for the enrolment of electors for the Council are the same old things that have been in use for years. I have not touched them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The card is in the Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am referring to the instructions. These instructions were compiled cleanly, reasonably, and cleverly by departmental officers years ago, and have not been touched. The clear annual value, which is defined in the Act in those plain words, means not what a man thinks. An agitator man may go round to an individual who is living on a lease in a bough shed and say to him, "That place of yours is worth £52 a year. Are you not on the roll? You ought to be," and so that man puts in a claim and says that he is entitled to go upon the roll. He knows, however, when he puts in that claim that he is not so entitled.

Mr. Troy: Everyone should be entitled.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is another thing. We are discussing the law as it is at present. One of the cases brought under my notice by the leader of the Opposition, which I have found time to look at even this morning, was that in which either a man or a woman claimed to be entitled to enrolment in respect of certain premises as freehold. These premises were not freehold at all, but were mere leasehold premises. That claim was signed and certified to by the Chief Electoral officer as being a gross case, and the prosecution went on. Who will say that a man with sufficient intelligence to know how to claim a vote does not know the difference between leasehold and freehold, and does not know the difference between one candidate and another?

The Minister for Works: Until he was told.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When these prosecutions, which were authorised by me in general terms, were first started, after the first batch had appeared at Kalgoorlie, I think also one or two in Perth, and three or four at Fremantle, I, of my own volition, without any requests from members of Parliament, issued a direction to the Electoral Registrar, and I think a notification in the Press, that I thought the law was sufficiently vindicated in the case of carelessness or inaccuracy, or irregularity, and requested him not to take any more such cases before the court, but only to proceed in gross cases or in the cases against witnesses who made, what I would call, a false statement, and alleged that they saw cards signed and knew the particulars thereon to be true, when in fact they knew nothing about them and had not seen them signed. The leader of the Opposition has made a great point, as he did in the deputation to me three days ago, and which I investigated this morning although I have not the details here, with regard to the action of the Commonwealth in such cases. I did not know that he had a good word to say about the Commonwealth.

Hon. P. Collier: You never heard me say anything against it. Do not draw upon your imagination.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Other hon. members have heard the member for Boulder. At all events the leader of the Opposition held up a Commonwealth case against a State case. He omitted to say—I cannot imagine that he forgot—that in the Commonwealth case, every man and every woman is entitled to vote, but in the State case for the Legislative Council only persons with certain qualifications are entitled to vote. In the Commonwealth case there was an irregularity about the witnessing of a claim on the part of a man who is entitled to vote, but in the case of the State the man was not entitled to vote, and the man who witnessed the claim card falsely and wickedly signed that which he should not have signed. There is a vast difference.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no difference at all.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: One is a gross case, and the other may be described as an irregularlity. I do not know the details of the Commonwealth case, but have asked to be supplied with them. I can imagine this. If the leader of the Opposition asked a friend of his, or asked me, to witness his signature to a document, although I might not have actually seen him sign that document, I know his signature so well that I could certify to his having signed it. Only the other day when a new member was being sworn in I happened to say to one of the witnesses, "You did not see the member sign his name." The witness could not do so because he could not see through that member. In such a case it might be said that there had been an irregularity, because, although the witness knew in fact that the signature had been written by the person concerned, he did not actually see it done. Take the case of a man who signed a document miles away from here. That card is then brought in to another individual. That individual does not know the man who lives miles away, or his qualifications, or whether he can read or write, neither does he know his signature, and yet he certifies that he saw the man sign. Will the leader of the Opposition say that this is an irregularity? I call it a gross case of fraud. I would not be worthy of the shoe leather I stand up in if I were to occupy the position I do and see such cases pass unnoticed. At all events, while I occupy this position, I intend that they shall not pass unnoticed.

Mr. Troy: That all depends.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It does not all depend. The hon. member will have an opportunity later of venting his spleen.

Mr. Troy: I will show your character and stir you up.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is a nice sort of thing to come from an ex-Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Troy: I will show you up. The scoundrel!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Mt. Magnet has referred to me as a scoundrel. I ask that he shall stand up and apologise.

Mr. Troy: I withdraw.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And apologise.

Mr. Troy: I will not apologise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Hon. P. Collier: You do not control the House, you little bantam cock! Keep cool, do not bounce about.

Mr. Troy: You old scoundrel.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Boulder must keep cool. The member for Mt. Magnet must withdraw.

Mr. Troy: I withdraw it. It was said in the heat of the moment.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member should apologise to the House.

Mr. Troy: I apologise to the House. I am not one to make a fuss about things, but I will stir him up all the same.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Troy: Apologise to a man of your reputation!

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Magnet must keep order.

Hon. P. Collier: Let that Puritan go on.

Mr. Troy: It is time the country was told about it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not like these remarks which I hear from beneath the breath of the hon. member.

Mr. Troy: You will get it later on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mt. Magnet must keep order. I am surprised at the hon. member.

Mr. Troy: Do not be surprised at me, Sir.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not going to liken the Commonwealth cases to the State cases. But there are frequently cases coming before our courts which the general public, seeing only a short half-inch or perhaps two-inch report, do not understand. No one can understand such a case unless hearing it right through. Occasionally we see that a person has been brought before the Supreme Court, or a court of assize, on a charge of stealing, and has been given a sentence of, say, two years, or three years, or five it may be; and that in the same session to some other person charged with stealing which looks to the public the same sort of charge, the judge has said, "You will be discharged on your own recognisances." For us readers of the newspaper it is very hard to understand the difference between the two cases. I would have no doubt that the judge had very good reason for what he did, and that if the complete facts were known the difference would be apparent to everybody. But in the meantime we trust the judge. Similarly, in these electoral cases, in one case the magistrate fined the defendant £10, no doubt because in the magistrate's view it was a grave case. In the other case, the Commonwealth case, it is alleged to be merely an irregularity—what class of irregularity we are not told.

Mr. Munsie: Both cases were identically the same. The same charge was laid in each case.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. The leader of the Opposition has also alleged against the Electoral Department that it makes what he calls a geographical distinction, that the ordinary working man living in the suburbs of Perth on a wage of £4, or £5 per week,

necessarily lives in a house that gives him the £17 qualification.

Mr. Jones: But that would not be an ordinary working man, earning £4 or £5 a week.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am just taking the illustration which the leader of the Opposition gave. Obviously, such a working man would be qualified for the Legislative Council. The leader of the Opposition asks why such a man should not be equally qualified to vote if he lived on the goldfields. If he lived on the goldfields in the same class of property, the same class of house, he would be qualified to vote.

Mr Munsie: Nothing of the kind

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Now let me take the other proposition If a man living in a hessian house, or on a leasehold, in Kalgoorlie, living in a property worth perhaps £5 per annum, if so much, were to come to the coast and live on the confines of Perth on some leasehold place of the same value as the goldfields property, live in a hessian or a bough house, he would not be qualified to vote in Perth any more than he is qualified to vote on the goldfields So that the geographical qualification does not apply. The leader of the Opposition has, further, accused some persons of political spleen. He has excepted me on that, and I would also pray the House to except the departmental officers and all persons connected with the department. I propose to lay on the Table whatever papers here may be in connection with this matter. There is nothing in those papers that hon. members cannot see; and I say, let hon. members judge for themselves, but the hon. gentleman wanted to make his charges against individuals, or, as he says, individuals in a particular organisation. Who the individuals are, I do not know.

Mr. Munsie: You will find out when we get the file.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think we will.

Mr. Munsie: The letters sent to the department are on the file, and we have proof of it. Of course, the silverfish may have eaten those letters since.

The Minister for Works: If you know who those people are, why do not you give the names?

Mr. Troy: It would not be the first time papers had disappeared.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. Collier: It is easier to get a Kulin liquor license than to get on the roll. I will give you something to go on with, before long.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General may proceed.

Hon. P. Collier: It is easier to take down the Agricultural Bank through political pals than to get on the roll.

Mr. Troy: It is easier to boom land, too.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The leader of the Opposition also said that certain individuals were engaged in doing what he called egging on prosecutions. I do not know whether in that remark he was referring to any departmental officers, or was still referring to outsiders and political organisations; but I desire to say that I do not know of any fairer minded men than the Crown Solicitor and the Chief Electoral Officer. The Crown Solicitor has had a say in a good many of the prosecutions which have taken place—not all of them. The Chief Electoral Officer always takes what I consider an unbiassed view of all political matters, which necessarily hover about the Electoral Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Prosecutions are sometimes taken to prevent people from voting, where there is any doubt.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: So far as I am aware, there was no prosecution taken to prevent any person from voting.

Hon. P. Collier: It is so. That signing of declarations also prevents people from voting. I know of several reputable people on the goldfields who have been prevented by that means from voting.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will take one case at a time. I think I am right in saying that, owing to the paucity of officers in the department, no claims were investigated until after the election and no prosecution was launched against any person until after the election. I may be wrong, but I think I am right.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was not there a case at Fremantle?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There may have been a case at Fremantle. I believe there was. But there was none on the goldfields. Now let us take the other phase of the matter. I venture to tell hon. members that there was no animus in the department—that there was no wish to hold anybody up; that there was no wish to attack any particular person. On the contrary, the departmental officers said, "We are willing to investigate any claim that may be sent along." If one side of the two sides to the controversy in Kalgoorlie charged those connected with the other side with being wrongly on the roll, those things are investigated and gross cases are prosecuted. The department have also said to the other organisation, the Labour organisation, "Give us the names of any persons who you say are wrongly on the roll, and we will investigate those cases."

Mr. Munsie: That is not our policy, and you know it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The leader of the Opposition holds up a list of what he calls 34 claims.

Mr. Munsie: I can give you 50 cases in Boulder where declarations were signed and the claimants were not eligible to vote.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is no use for the hon. member to hold up that list. Let him hand me the list.

Mr. Munsie: I will not. I do not want to see those people prosecuted.

Mr. Lambert: I know of 30 persons in Coolgardie who voted without being qualified. The Chief Electoral Officer knew of those cases also.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: How could the Chief Electoral Officer know of them? Such cases, when made known, are investigated. Some cases of that kind are in process of investigation now. As I said previously, owing to a deputation which waited

on me, comprising Mr. Collier, Mr. Cunningham, and two other gentlemen, I am having investigation made into cases to which my attention was drawn by that deputation; and I informed the deputation that I would consider whether the time had not arrived when we might stop the electoral prosecutions. Instructions have been issued accordingly. I do not know exactly why the leader of the Opposition asked for this information, any more than by way of endeavouring to ascertain who it was, or what organisation it was, that supplied particular information to the Electoral Department. I do not know that there is any particular reason why that should be hidden. There are two organisations on the goldfields fighting each on one side, and the fight is pretty bitter.

Mr. Lambert: Do not you think it is difficult to avoid taking either side?

Mr. Troy: Taking the side of the rats.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know which side the rats are on. But most certainly I contend to hon. members that if a proper political organisation, recognised by all parties, lays a complaint to the Electoral Department that certain persons have voted who have no right to vote, or that certain persons are on the roll who have no right to be on the roll, the department should investigate those cases. In this instance the department did investigate a number of those cases.

Mr. Lutey: It shows their democratic feeling.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The whole lot have not been investigated yet. However, I offered before, and I offer again now, if there are any claims on the other side, or if the other side say they have a number—I cannot be expected to know—and if the other side will send them along, each case will be investigated.

Mr. Lambert: But would it not be much better for the Chief Electoral Officer to get the advices from either the municipal council or the roads board than from the political organisation?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Chief Electoral Officer has never been to any political organisation in his life. He knows his business too well for that. But if a political organisation writes to the Chief Electoral Officer, or to the Crown Solicitor, on certain matters, the official written to takes notice of that. Similarly, of a member of Parliament asks me to look into a case for him, I do it. Why not? It is the proper thing to do. Now, I want hon. members to recognise that the Electoral Department has been assailed in a way which is wrong. I feel sure that when the papers are laid on the Table, any members who peruse them will see that the cases which are called gross cases are, in fact, gross, and that cases which are called mere irregularities are in fact such.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [8.45]: I am pleased to know that the Attorney General intends to lay the papers asked for on the Table of the House. I do not know that I would have touched on the subject but for the fact that the Attorney General did not reply to one of the most serious of the charges made by the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: He camouflaged it with indignation.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Attorney General entirely evaded the subject of the heavy costs allowed the solicitor who was appearing in these prosecutions. In many instances these costs were well over two guineas, and they were awarded by the bench to the solicitor for doing something for which there should not have been any prosecution at all. There are several other phases of the question about which I intend to have something to say. I do not know of an instance in any other State where similar tactics have been adopted with regard to such prosecutions. What right has a constable to go to the door of a house, and more particularly to a war widow's house——

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that under the motion before the House the hon. member can deal with prosecutions which have taken place. I have allowed considerable latitude already.

Mr. MUNSIE: We are asking for the papers on account of these prosecutions, and it is necessary to refer to the prosecutions in order to justify our attitude.

Hon. P. Collier: These papers deal with the prosecutions now being referred to.

Mr. MUNSIE: Exactly. I want to draw attention to the attitude adopted by the department. I do not believe that the police would act as they did without receiving instructions from the department. The police went along to people's places with a typed statement which was not given to the people to read. The police asked questions which were typed, and wrote down the replies, and then handed the statement to the individual to sign. In many instances these signed statements were put in as evidence against the people themselves. What kind of an attitude is that to adopt? The war widow to whom I have referred, only three days before the visit of the policeman, was fined 1s. and 4s. costs for not having her name on the Federal roll. The usual questions were asked her and she answered them. She filled in the claim card, signed it, and it was witnessed. Then when she appeared before the court she was fined and 21s. costs were awarded against her. This was a woman, whose husband lost his life while fighting for the freedom of his country. The same policeman who asked her questions at her front door cross-examined her in the court. The woman owned the house and this house could not be purchased for £150. She did not put it there for £150. She signed the card as being a freeholder, because she owned the house. It was suddenly discovered that she did own it but that it was situated on a gold mining lease, and that is what she was prosecuted for. Cases of that kind are scandalous, and more particularly when the police are employed to pimp. That is one of the cases which was brought before the Attorney General. The Attorney General stated that the two cases which were quoted by the leader of the Opposition were not identical. As a mat-

ter of fact they were absolutely identical. I do not care what transpired before. I admit that the man who was fined £10 was connected with some other cases prior to that one coming on, but in any fair-minded man's opinion that should not have had any influence so far as the other case was concerned. The fact might also be mentioned that both these men pleaded guilty. And what was their plea of guilty for? Merely for signing their names on claim cards as witnesses to signatures when they did not see the claimants sign the cards. The Commonwealth and State cards are identical.

Mr. Teesdale: Had not he been signing dozens of cards?

Mr. MUNSIE: He had not, and this was the only instance where he did not see the signature. If there had been another case the Electoral Department would have got it. They looked for it for all they were worth.

The Attorney General: I do not think they investigated any other case.

Mr. MUNSIE: They have been making careful inquiries. The charges laid against those two men were identically the same, but there was a big difference in the penalties which were imposed. The Commonwealth Act provides for a 50 per cent. greater fine than does the State Act. Under the State Act a penalty of £10 with £2 7s. costs was imposed, while under the Commonwealth Act the fine was 1s. with 3s. costs.

The Attorney General: You want to know the precise facts of the case.

Mr. MUNSIE: I happen to know the precise facts of both cases. There was no evidence called in either case, as both men pleaded guilty.

The Attorney General: Was it the same magistrate who imposed both fines?

Mr. MUNSIE: No; but I do not care whether it was the same magistrate or not. The Attorney General said there was no comparison in the charges; I say they were identically the same. Neither person saw the claimant sign the card, and a plea of guilty was entered in court. The Attorney General declares that people are putting in claims for hessian houses. I can quote another case, a Kalgoorlie one, in which the individual, prior to election day, wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer in Kagoorlie asking that his name be expunged from the roll, and stating that he had no intention of voting. Still, this man, because he happened to sign a claim card which he believed to be true, and swore in court that his house was worth 8s. a week to him, was fined £3 and £2 16s. 6d. costs. This is a scandal also, and it is time it was stopped. It was admitted that the house was of corrugated iron. Such a house is not a hessian house, as quoted by the Attorney General, nor is it a bough shed.

The Attorney General: I did not say they were all bough sheds.

Hon. P. Collier: One would gather from your remarks that they were.

Mr. MUNSIE: Mr. Cook, the prosecuting solicitor, said in court that the proceedings were taken under Section 188 of the Electoral Act. The defendant's claim was in respect of a three-roomed corrugated iron house on the Paringa lease, assessed by the Kalgoorlie road board at the annual value of £5. A man named Fahey was canvassing the district to get the names on the roll, and induced the defendant to sign the card which was returned by Fahey. On 5th May mounted constable McGuffie saw the defendant and put certain questions in writing to him, wrote down the answers, and defendant signed the statement. The defendant in court gave testimony on his own behalf, and said that at the time he signed he understood that his house was worth to him at least 8s. or 10s. per week rental value, and he claimed he was therefore entitled to enrolment, believing that his propery was worth £17 clear annual value. He obtained a claim card from Fahey in Hannan-street, and was not induced by Fahey to put in the claim but he signed the card in the presence of Fahey. He did not vote at the North-East Province elections because he was convinced, by reports he had seen in the Press, that he was not entitled to record his vote. Then he was fined, as I have stated. I do not know why the Attorney General failed to say anything about the appointment of a firm of solicitors to prosecute these people for what he himself admits were trivial offences. The Attorney General tried to make hon. members believe that he made big reductions in the penalties when the facts were represented to him, but let me inform the House that while the penalties totalled £54 the reductions amounted to only £7. The Attorney General has been wonderfully generous.

Mr. Jones: And what about the costs?

Mr. MUNSIE: Not one penny.

The Attorney General: I shall know what to do next time.

Mr. MUNSIE: If ever I bring a case before the Attorney General again, irrespective of what I am saying to-night, I know that the Attorney General will not hesitate to consider it on its merits.

The Attorney General: I only know of the cases that you people have brought under my notice.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Attorney General said nothing at all about the employment of a firm of solicitors to do the work which should properly have been done by the officers of the department. It is a scandal to put people to these costs. The Attorney General said these were breaches of the Act because those who signed the claim cards did not own property of the clear annual value of £17. In answer to an interjection asking who was responsible for fixing the annual value, the Attorney General said that the court decided it. I wish to dispute that. That has not applied in any of the prosecutions on the goldfields. In each case the prosecution has brought forward the gentleman who was responsible for fixing the rateable value, namely, the acting secretary of the Kalgoorlie Roads Board, and his statement as to the valuation has been taken. Both prior to and after the election, even when the prosecutions were going on, everything possible was done to secure from the Crown Law Department or from the Electoral Department an interpretation of the £17 clear

annual value. Neither department was prepared to give it.

The Attorney General: It cannot be set out in clearer language than it is.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Chief Electoral Officer has told me personally that if a man owns a reasonable dwelling house worth to him more than 7s. 6d. per week, that man, in the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer, is entitled to claim a vote for the Upper House. When the Chief Electoral Officer puts that interpretation upon the provision, I believe he is interpreting the Act as was intended by Parliament when the Act was passed. Who is to judge of the clear annual value? Here is a man who swears in court that his house is worth 8s. a week to him. He is prosecuted, but the man occupying a house a hundred rent, that man is entitled to a vote. It is time we ended this ridiculous state of yards away, for which he pays 10s. per week affairs. If no one can give us a satisfactory interpretation of the qualification, we should be well advised in wiping out the provision altogether and adopting adult suffrage for another place. If any other Minister speaks on this question, I hope he will give us some reason for the employment of a firm of solicitors in those prosecutions, involving the imposition of heavy costs, whereas the Commonwealth Department employed only its own officers to prosecute. I wish to emphasise the point that every defendant brought before the court was a well-known supporter of the party of which I am a member, and that there has not been one from any other political party. I am positive that the man who has looked through this voters' list knows of dozens of men in that area who, notwithstanding that their houses are rated at under £17, voted at the last election. Yet there has been no inquiry in the case of any of those men. It is time these persecutions —for they cannot be termed prosecutions— ceased, especially when we remember that it is persecution of people who are merely trying to get their just rights, to obtain a vote for the Legislative Council.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.6]: From past experience we cannot be too careful in seeing that only qualified persons shall be on the roll. At the same time I am of the opinion that the prosecutions which have taken place this year have not been made in the interests of the protection of the roll, but have been made for the purpose of affecting elections held immediately afterwards. In Fremantle we had prosecutions only a few days before the election. One of these cases should never have been brought into court. I drew the attention of the Attorney General to that case, and he graciously reduced the fine by one half. As to the imposition of heavy fines in these cases, I think the blame to a large extent lies with the House, that we trust too much to those who have to administer the law. We provide heavy maximum penalties never intended to be imposed in the case of minor offences, and the mere provision of those heavy maximum penalties is liable to mislead the magistrate dealing with a minor charge. In the Fremantle case to which I have referred, a man was living in a house far above the qualifying value. There was also a woman living in the house, and most people took them to be man and wife. This man filled in an electoral claim as occupier of the house, and the canvasser who was going round with the cards witnessed the signature. But the claimant had forgotten the number of the block on which the house stood, and it was agreed that it should be filled in afterwards. However, the police took up the matter and discovered that the man and the woman were not husband and wife, learning further that it was the woman, and not the man, who had taken the house from the landlord. In the witness-box the claimant swore that he was paying the woman £2 per week. The defendant was fined £5 and, as I say, the Attorney General subsequently reduced the fine by one half. Probably there is not a member of the House who would have refused to witness that card.

Mr. Teesdale: Did they fine the tenant?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The reason the man was fined was that the card was not properly filled in when it was signed. It was not a case of roll-stuffing at all, it was merely a technical breach of the Act. The card was signed while still lacking the particulars regarding the block. It shows that due care is not taken as to what cases shall be brought into court. I agree with the leader of the Opposition that there is no necessity for employing a lawyer in these cases, that an officer of the department could put the case before the court equally as well as a lawyer. The lawyer is there to press for a conviction.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, no.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He is there to press for a conviction. Once the prosecution is entered upon, a conviction is required. There is no necessity whatever for a solicitor. If the prosecution was undertaken by an officer of the department, the costs would be greatly reduced. No doubt many people are exposed to prosecution by reason of the difficulty in getting an interpretation of "clear annual value." I had hoped that the Attorney General would give us an interpretation of the phrase. What does it mean? I tried repeatedly to find out what was meant by annual value. I could not get anyone to tell me anything, except what the rateable value was. The annual value, however, is that which is fixed by the local authority.

Mr. Davies: The annual value is five per cent. of the capital value.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. I understand from the records of decisions in England which I perused in the Public Library that the annual value is the annual amount of rent paid for a property, less rates and taxes. I have acted in accordance with that interpretation ever since.

Mr. Nairn: How would it be assessed in the case of a man who was living in his own house?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I only made inquiries so far as tenants were concerned. When inquiries were made of me I would ascertain what rent was paid, and I could then say whether the persons were qualified or not.

Mr. Troy: That is a very reasonable definition.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is generally the rule with local authorities, particularly in the case of municipalities, after the annual value is fixed, to deduct 33 and a third per cent. to allow for outgoings, and rates and taxes, etc., which reduced the annual value to the rateable value. There are thousands of names on our Council roll, because we accepted the ratepayers' roll.

The Attorney General: The rateable value must be of a lesser value than the other.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are thousands of names on the roll because of the ratepayers' qualification, which names should not be there. At the time the ratepayers' roll was made up, and at the time the Legislative Council rolls were made up, many people who were on the former list had gone to another district, but because they were down on the ratepayers' list they were put on the Council roll as being qualified to vote, whether they owned any property or not, or whether they were still ratepayers or not. The ratepayer's qualification is a wrong one and should not have been introduced. I remember the Hon. Sir Henry Briggs, when standing for the West province, telling me that one of his officers had counted no less than 500 names of persons who had gone out of the Province. No doubt many of those persons voted. The wording of the Constitution Act Amendment Act is very clear to the ordinary layman until the solicitors get at it, and then it becomes difficult. The Act reads:—

> Where any premises are jointly owned, occupied, or held on lease or license, within the meaning of the last preceding section, by more persons than one, each of such joint owners, occupiers, leaseholders, or licensees, not exceeding four, shall be entitled to be registered as an elector, and, subject as aforesaid, to vote in respect of the said premises in case the value of the individual interest therein or any such person separately considered would, under the provisions of the last preceding section, entitle such person to be registered as an elector.

As a layman I read that to mean that in the case of any house or dwelling that was bringing in a clear annual value of £35 per annum and occupied by two persons, there was joint occupation, and as there was joint occupation both of the persons were entitled to vote. I believe that has been the practice in the State for many years. Last year, just before the rolls closed, we were told that both persons must be jointly responsible for the rent to the owner. The member for Swan, for instance, could not take a residence worth £40 a year and then say that the place was too big for him and share half of the house with another man, for that man, although a joint occupier, would be disqualified, but the hon. member would have the vote. The clause to which I have referred was printed in pamphlet form and distributed to every householder in the metropolitan area, and yet there is a possibility of a person wrongly claiming to be put on the roll, and of being prosecuted for so doing. We must have something definite in regard to this, and stop these prosecutions. I hope before the session closes that the Act will be amended so that we shall have something clear and definite to go on. There are many persons on the roll who occupy offices in the city. These persons are not qualified to go on the roll, because there are no leases in existence and they have no right to claim unless they have a lease. I was sorry to see some of these prosecutions take place, and especially surprised at those which took place on the Goldfields. Some also took place in Perth last week. It was distinctly stated in the Press that the Attorney General would not allow any more prosecutions. Every person thought that the matter was finished so far as this affair was concerned. I think the instructions the Attorney General gave should be carried out. I am of the opinion that none of these men would ever sign a card again in the same manner. The time has come when these prosecutions could very well cease. In respect to the declarations at election time, many persons, particularly women, refuse to sign them. I know of a case in which the scrutineer said that a woman would have to sign a declaration before she could vote.

Mr. Nairn: What was the declaration?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That the person was qualified to vote. I went to one of the returning officers in the West Province, and drew his attention to several of these cases. I pointed out that the persons in question had been residing for 20 years in the same premises and yet had been challenged. In some instances I had the matter put right. Many people are frightened at this request for a declaration, think they are doing something wrong, and walk away. These things do a lot of harm, although perhaps they are necessary in some instances. Where there are presiding officers who know the people in the district, these things could not take place. These circumstances, at all events, had a tendency in the case of the last Province elections to deter people from exercising their vote, which they would otherwise have done.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [9.25]: I am glad the leader of the Opposition has brought forward this motion, because it presents an opportunity for the people of the country to realise what the policy of the Government is in regard to those who differ with them in politics. I am in cordial agreement with the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) that these prosecutions have all the elements of persecution. There is no question about that. The hon. member has pointed out that it is a well known fact that these were labour supporters, supporters of the party on this side of the House. The Attorney General himself admits that these charges were laid in the first instance by persons on the Goldfields belonging to the rat section of the Labour party, which stands behind the present Attorney General, and that these persons were prompted by a spirit of pure vindictiveness and malice, towards

the people on the goldfields who supported the party represented by this side of the House.

The Minister for Mines: That is a gross reflection.

Mr. TROY: Let the Minister mind his own business. He is not responsible for his actions and is evidently incapable of looking after himself. He should be grateful that, so far, no one on this side of the House has thought it worth while to notice his presence. If any evidence is wanted that these actions were prompted by a spirit of persecution, I would point out that this is not the first time in the history of the country that persons have been found guilty of voting illegally. On these occasions the persons who were found to have voted illegally voted for the particular party represented by the opposite side of the House, and in that particular interest. Were they prosecuted, or was any action taken against them? No! Let me take the case referred to by the member for North-East Fremantle, the instance in which a justice of the peace and a postal vote officer took the hand of a dying man and wrote the name "J. J. Holmes." Was that man prosecuted, or removed from his position as a justice of the peace? No; he was sheltered by that party which pretends to be so pure, so just and fair. Let me take the case of the election of the Hon. H. Gregory. That gentleman secured his election by the votes of men, his own supporters, who voted illegally and in defiance of the returning officer, and in defiance of the scrutineers of Mr. Buzacott, the Labour candidate, who warned them against voting. Were they prosecuted? No, they voted again on a second occasion, protected by that party which pretends to stand up for purity, fair play and justice.

Mr. Harrison: How long ago was that?

Mr. TROY: That does not matter. Cannot hon. members realise that every fibre of a man's body twinges with indignation when he finds these people——

Mr. Harrison: Be accurate.

Mr. TROY: Supporting a persecution whenever the opportunity arises? Take the prosecution of the leader of the Opposition during the last few months. This was prompted by vindictiveness, and is another instance of that spirit to which I have referred. God knows history is full of such instances. Take our statutes here, the very records of the Speakers, and you will find instances, and thousands of them, of people of the privileged classes more especially being supported and protected when they had voted illegally and fraudulently, and then sat in the House in defiance of public opinion outside. Every fibre of my being is indignant when I think that the men who go into the back country, the widow of the soldier mentioned by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), the people living in hessian houses and bough sheds making this country, cannot get a vote. I say they are entitled to a vote, and I claim the vote for them. If I could give them the vote, I would give it to them, illegal as that might be. They pay taxes and build up the country, living in the arid portion of the State under the worst possible conditions. And yet any thief and boodler, so long as he keeps within the law and acquires property, can get the vote. What arrant hypocrisy the whole thing is! Because these poor people, in the honest belief that they are entitled to vote, exercise their supposed right, they are persecuted. There is the case of the soldier's widow mentioned by the member for Hannans; she did not even vote, and yet she was prosecuted. A thief can rob the widow and the orphan, so long as he escapes the law he is a man honoured in this country and can vote; as long as he has wealth and power, he can do what he will. But it is the people living in little hessian and bough sheds that made this country, and I will stand up for them while I have breath in my body. Because they live in little hessian shanties, they are sneered at in this House by people who have not done half so much for this country, who are not worthy to unloose the latchets of the shoes of the dwellers in little hessian houses. Whenever I hear the people dwelling in the back country sneered at, I shall take instant action to defend them. In the history of this country the party now in power have persecuted the supporters of the party now on this side of the House. As soon as the other party have found themselves on this side of the House, they have pandered and crawled in order to get favours. If this motion has done one thing, it has brought this about, that the people of this country know just where they stand as taxpayers and as electors of Western Australia. They know that though they may be called upon to pay taxation and to bear the burdens of the State, yet as stated by the Attorney General to-night they are wasters, wicked people, unworthy, and frauds. I hope the people will lay that information to heart. If they do, we may hope for a radical change in the near future. I hope the persecution will cease. If it does not, I shall on every occasion emphatically express my opinion regarding it. I cordially support the leader of the Opposition in the action he has taken to-night.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.35]: I had not intended to speak on this motion, but as a member of the Country party, and as one who has himself battled, I rise to repudiate the assertion of the last speaker, and to declare that I would not be a party to any persecution.

Mr. Troy: I do not say you would be.

Mr. PICKERING: We members of the Country party are not responsible for persecution by the Electoral Department. Personally, I am not a supporter of persecution in any shape or form.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder—in reply) [9.36]: It is plain that in moving the motion I was a little too generous to the Attorney General. I gave him credit for having no concern with what I characterised as political prosecutions. But the speech of the Attorney General has convinced me that in this respect I was utterly over generous. I now withdraw the statement I made in opening, and say that everything I have uttered regarding the police and the Electoral Department in the matter of these prosecutions I apply to the Attorney General also. His whole speech shows that I was mistaken, that behind these prosecutions has been the malic-

ious persecuting spirit of the Attorney General himself. He charges me with having brought this matter before the House in order to make charges. Why? Why is the Attorney General indignant? Because these matters have been exposed to-night? Because of the rotten administration of this department by himself? There never has been disclosed in this House, since I have been a member of it, such a case of malicious administration as in this instance on the part of the Attorney General. And that is the cause of his anger, that the country has been made acquainted with the facts. So long as I was content to interview the Attorney General personally in the endeavour to get justice for these people, he apparently was quite content to fool me by making promises and failing to carry them out. But his indignation boils over when his incompetent administration is exposed to the country. It is over two months since the Attorney General made to me a promise that before any more prosecutions were launched, he would communicate with me and with other members who had approached him on the subject. But that promise was not kept; prosecutions were launched without any prior intimation being given us by the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: I wrote to the officers a minute in terms with which you agreed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Attorney General gave a promise that no more prosecutions should take place——

The Attorney General: Except in gross cases.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And that if prosecution was found necessary, I and those associated with me would first be communicated with.

The Attorney General: I do not know anything about that. I read out to you what I had written in the minute, and you approved.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Attorney General shows the cloven hoof now. It proves that people exercised back-stairs influence with him. He asserts that cards were put in wholesale by irresponsible individuals, and even by members of Parliament, just prior to the closing of the rolls. Who are those people? Who are those members of Parliament? It is just the tittle-tattle of political partisans, who have poured this into his ear, or have conveyed it to him through some other channel. The indignation of the Attorney General! "Fraud, wicked fraud, and the perpetrators ought to be in gaol!" Of course they ought to be in gaol; they live in bough sheds.

The Attorney General: I referred to the witnesses, not the others.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The people who have pioneered this country ought to be in gaol, according to the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: No; the witnesses.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The people who now enjoy lives of luxury, and notably so the Attorney General, as the result of the toil of these dwellers in hessian huts and bough sheds, sneer at those who made the country.

Mr. Nairn: Are you prepared to back up the action of the witnesses?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member interjecting, as father of the wretched National party, naturally, when the whip is on them, comes to their relief. I tell the Attorney General that he is not going to adopt the schoolmasterly attitude in this House. When he stands up in his school-masterly fashion, with his arrogant, bumptious, conceited little-pretender's style——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order. The hon. member must withdraw that statement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; I withdraw it. I tell the Attorney General that his schoolmaster tactics will not go down here. He is too well known for such methods and such tactics to have any effect in this House, or in the country either. Now, what is the position? I have proved up to the hilt that this Electoral Department, over which the Attorney General presides, has been working, throughout these five months, at the instance of a political organisation. The Attorney General's defence is "How could we do otherwise? The Electoral Department have only a small staff, and it would require a large army of officials and cost thousands of pounds to examine and investigate the rolls, so that prosecutions might be launched against all who are deserving of prosecution." That is either a deliberate misrepresentation of the position——

The Attorney General: You have misunderstood me.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Or it shows the grasp which the Attorney General has of his duties in the matter.

The Attorney General: What I said was, to investigate every case.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How are we to know? says the Attorney General. When the Electoral Department put these people in the court, what was done by the department? They brought along the annual rateable valuation of the roads boards, and put that in as evidence, and relied upon that to prove the fact that these people were not qualified. If that is the proper procedure, all that would be required in order to determine the number on the roll who are not qualified, would be to take the Legislative Council roll and compare it with the roads boards' lists of annual rateable values. One man could do it in an hour and he would be immediately possessed of a list of those persons whose rateable value was less than £17 per year. One hour would enable the Electoral Department to obtain all the information which the Attorney General says would take hundreds of officials and cost thousands of pounds to discover. The fact that that has not been done, and the further fact that in not one of those cases has a political supporter of the Ministry been prosecuted, are evidence that justice has been prostituted, in this instance, and dragged in the gutter, and that by the Attorney General. As regards these cases, too, he has a list of them, his officers know of them. But in not one case has action been taken. Why? Why have prominent supporters of the party with which I am as-

sociated been singled out for prosecution, if it is not a malicious political persecution? If it is not that, why has it been done? The Attorney General, after having occupied the floor of the House for about three-quarters of an hour, had not explained, or even attempted to explain, the matter. He merely got indignant. He tried to cover up the rotten administration of which he has been guilty, by a show or a pretence of indignation. These people committing frauds! They should be prosecuted for living in bough sheds, for attempting to get on the rolls! Everybody cannot live in mansions and make an arrogant and ignorant display of wealth. These bough shed people, however, are honest and deserving citizens just as much as the Attorney General is, with all his arrogant show of wealth in this country. He talks about bough sheds! It is not the first time he has made this remark. The Attorney General has the utmost contempt for the class of honest toilers on the goldfields. I remember not long ago, when referring to these people, he said they were nomads and wanderers, who should not have a vote for the Legislative Council. That is the spirit in which he has approached this matter; it is the spirit in which he is administering his department, that these people on the goldfields are nomads and wanderers, that they live in bough sheds, that they have not a mansion and half a dozen motor cars to enable them to display their wealth. These are the people who should not have a vote for the Legislative Council. That is the attitude of the Attorney General. He has now given instructions that no more prosecutions shall take place. No thanks to him, because the six months limit has expired. He has carried on his prosecutions as far as he can.

The Attorney General: Prosecutions may take place where the offences are indictable.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why not amend the Act and make it a crime and then the Attorney General can get them all? The Attorney General has made a pretence of impartiality, but is not going to be accepted so far as I am concerned, under the suave exterior which he displays. He is capable of just as much maliciousness and political partisanship as any member in the House or out of it. He has involved these people who have been prosecuted in costs of £2 and £2 10s., and even £3, in connection with trumpery cases like that referred to by the member for Hannans. The poor soldier whose widow was prosecuted would turn in his grave in France or wherever his remains may be lying, if he knew that a Minister of the Crown in this State had dragged his widow before the court and had her fined in the manner which has been described. The Attorney General should be ashamed of himself. He has tried to camouflage the whole thing by talking about bough sheds and fraud, the deliberate, wicked fraud of attempting to exercise a vote! There are any number of wicked frauds going on if he wants to put the law in motion and see that justice is vindicated, wicked and corrupt frauds which I hope to have the opportunity of exposing before many more days are over. The Attorney General will then have an opportunity of saying how he intends to administer justice. The whole purport of the Attorney General's speech was to convey the impression to the House that these people were all guilty of wicked frauds and that they ought to be in gaol.

The Attorney General: No, no!

Hon. P. COLLIER: He tried to draw a distinction between the Commonwealth and State cases, but there is no distinction. How is it that the Commonwealth provides a greater fine than does the State? To say that because there is adult franchise and not a property qualification for the Federal Parliament a person who signs a claim is of necessity entitled to be enrolled, is absolutely incorrect. It may be that he has no more right to be placed on the Federal roll than the man who signs a claim for the State roll. There are any number of disqualifications in connection with Federal enrolment. I want to say that, having regard to the fact that these prosecutions have been going on for six months, the Attorney General has known all about them. They have been carried on with his consent and approval, and his department have been pushing them on for political motives and no other object. If justice can be vindicated in this country by actions such as have been described to-night, we are in a sorry position so far as the administration of justice is concerned. It is not the first time that justice has been dragged in the gutter, and it is not the first time that the Attorney General has been responsible for dragging innocent people before the courts in order to inflict punishment on them. We had cases like these in the past twelve months, and where the Attorney General was not beyond or beneath handing over the prosecution of his own firm or to a member of his own firm. I refer to the I.W.W. prosecutions.

The Attorney General: That was a Commonwealth matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Crown Law Department of this State handled it for the Commonwealth, and it was only a coincidence that these cases were built up by the work of the police of the State under the administration of this Government, and that the prosecution was in the hands of the firm of the Attorney General. Then we have the virtuous soul of the Attorney General boiling over with indignation when he thinks of those men who live in bough sheds daring to attempt to get their names on the roll. The time will come when these men living in bough sheds will have the right to have their names on the roll, and when the men living in palaces of bricks and mortar will not occupy such prominent positions in the land as they do to-day.

Question put and passed.

BILL—PRESTON ROAD DISTRICT SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL.

Second Reading.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.55] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill, which I am submitting for the consideration of hon. members, is to legalise the transference of certain funds from one specific object to another. A sum of money was origin-

ally raised by public subscription and by means of entertainments and sports, for the purpose of building a cottage hospital at Donnybrook. The money was found principally by the people of the Donnybrook district, and it amounts approximately to £320, which is the total plus the accumulation of interest. Repeated applications were made to the various Governments to assist in the erection of the cottage hospital, but each Government refused the application. A letter was forwarded to the secretary of the committee of this fund by the Colonial Secretary's office when Mr. J. M. Drew was Colonial Secretary, in which this occurs—

> With reference to the deputation which waited on me while in Donnybrook recently relative to the establishment of a hospital at your centre I have, since my return to Perth, been in communication with my colleague, Hon. W. C. Angwin, on the subject. Careful consideration has been given to the request of the deputation for Government assistance, but it is regretted that the application cannot be approved. There is a well staffed and equipped hospital at Bunbury, and at East Kirrup a building has been erected for the accommodation of urgent cases. The equipment for this building will be sent forward at an early date. Donnybrook is not a suitable locality for a base hospital. The town is not a centre of industry, and as cases from East Kirrup would have to be brought in by train, no advantage would be gained by detraining patients at Donnybrook as against taking them on to Bunbury.

It was evident that there was no prospect of the Government conceding sufficient funds to enable the hospital to be erected. In view of that fact the committee got into communication with Mr. Frank Wilson, then member for the district, and asked his advice as to what should be done with regard to the funds. Mr. Wilson consulted the Solicitor General, and replied as follows:—

> I have conferred with the Solicitor General in connection with the cottage hospital fund. The position is that money having been subscribed for a specific object cannot be diverted from that object without the consent of the subscribers or by Act of Parliament. The easiest course to pursue will be for your committee to call by advertisement a public meeting of the subscribers to the cottage hospital fund, and place before them the resolution that the funds be diverted to the soldiers' memorial. This being approved of, it would be necessary then to put a small Bill through Parliament legalising the transfer, because you would, I suppose, find it impossible to get into touch with all the subscribers to the original fund. If there are any large subscribers they could be approached by letter asking for their sanction to the transfer.

The committee took the advice of Mr. Frank Wilson and published an advertisement convening a meeting of the subscribers of the fund. The advertisement appeared in the newspaper circulating in the district, and read as follows:—

> A meeting of the subscribers to the cottage hospital fund will be held at the Agricultural Hall Donnybrook, on Saturday, September 15th, at 3 o'clock, to consider the question of transferring the money to the proposed soldiers' memorial fund.

The meeting was held, and the subscribers appointed a committee to formulate a scheme for utilising the funds. It was then decided that the money should be devoted to the erection of a memorial for soldiers. A further meeting was held, and it was agreed that the memorial should take the form of a library and reading room, and that in the vestibule there should be provision for an honour roll, and that there should also be a room for the roads board office. This decision was arrived at by a large majority, and the position now is that the people of Donnybrook are entirely in accord with the Bill which has been submitted. The committee also got into communication with Millars' Timber and Trading Company, who were among the largest subscribers, and that company offered no objection to the transference of the money. They wrote as follows:—

> We have received your letter referring to the sum of £10 donated by this company towards the sports held at Donnybrook to raise funds for a cottage hospital. We shall be pleased to fall in with any arrangements that may be considered best so long as the funds are devoted to some patriotic object of a similar nature to that for which they were intended.

All the formalities, as laid down by the Solicitor General, have been complied with, and the people of Donnybrook are almost unanimous in the direction of appropriating these moneys in the direction I have outlined. The suggestion has been made that when this building is completed the returned soldiers shall be constituted life members of the library and the reading-room. The money subscribed is not to be expended until after the war. At present it is lying at fixed deposit in the bank at Donnybrook; but the period is expiring, and the trustees want to invest that money in war loan bonds until the declaration of peace. A committee has been formed and a trust elected to deal with these funds when the Bill shall have passed. It is purely a measure to enable the transfer of funds from one object to another, and as the residents of the district are in accord with the scheme I have placed before members I think there can be no objection to the passage of the measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; Mr. Pickering in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Application of funds:

Mr. JOHNSTON: Will the hon. member give us a brief explanation, showing where the money is to go?

Mr. PICKERING: As I explained just now, trustees have been appointed to deal with the money as soon as the Bill shall have passed. The funds will be invested in war loan bonds, and on the declaration of peace the money will

be devoted to the erection of the building I have described.

The Attorney General: How much money is there altogether?

Mr. PICKERING: At present we have £320.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

MOTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, CLAREMONT.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 18th September on motion by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones), "That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into affairs concerning the Hospital for the Insane, Claremont, in general, and the death of Francis Andinach in that institution on 29th June, in particular."

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [10.7]: I appreciate the manner in which the hon. member brought forward this motion. He said it was not a party question. I appreciate that attitude. After all, the activities of a hospital such as the one under review should never be made a party question. The hon. member said that all men of humanitarian views are bound to unite upon the question of the proper care and treatment of those mentally afflicted. I think it is possible to get even a wider definition. I should say that all men of normal mentality agree on that proposition. As a matter of fact, I think I could say that every member of the House recognises that this is the most dreaded of all diseases, and therefore one of the most difficult to deal with. Whatever sympathies we have must go out to those who are condemned by Nature to finish their lives in that institution or even to reside there for a time. The reason why we have more sympathy for those people than for many others, is the impossibility of giving relief. In almost all other diseases some measure of relief can be given; there is something that we understand. We understand something about this disease, but the patients are different. Very often they are antagonistic. Physically they are often quite well, and at times they appear to be absolutely normal. That may last a considerable time. Still we have to depend upon our medical officers, on those in charge of our institutions, to say whether or not the patients are quite well. In this particular disease we often find that laymen are prepared to pit their opinions against those of the medical profession who are attending to the cases. Right down the last couple of centuries we have had most searching inquiries in regard to hospitals for the insane. Many books have been written, the main theme of which has been the wrongful incarceration of some person in one of these asylums. All will remember "Valentine Vox," the "Doctor's Double," and many books of that description, the main feature of which deals with the possibility of a sane man being confined in a hospital for the insane. I myself have known many cases in which for weeks men have been apparently sane, while at times they are insane. These are cases in which the layman should not claim to know more than the medical profession. Even the "West Australian," one of the most careful newspapers in the Commonwealth, once made statements regarding this very institution at Claremont. I think it is the only case the "West Australian" ever fought and lost. Their information must have been apparently sound. They made statements regarding the treatment of a patient in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. An action was brought, and the newspaper fought the case. When it came to evidence before the court, the allegations of the newspaper were blown away as chaff before the wind, and substantial damages were awarded to the then Chief Inspector of Insane. It was, I think, the only case the "West Australian" ever fought and lost. I merely mention this to show the liability of any layman to get into trouble by accepting information from patients in the institution. Let me say that I know of no position which I would be less inclined to occupy than that of superintendent of a hospital for the insane. Possibly there are some compensating conditions which I know nothing of, but I would infinitely prefer to be working in a ballast pit than managing an asylum for the insane. When hon. members ask for a Royal Commission, they require to bear in mind that the superintendent of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane has the most difficult position in the State to fill. That is my opinion, and I ask hon. members to give that point of view full consideration before voting on this queston. I have here papers concerning this case, and I intend to ask permission to lay them on the Table so that members may go through them. The Colonial Secretary has done his best to put all the information that is obtainable before members of the House. Coming to the case put up by the hon. member for Fremantle, he says, "If all things are well an inquiry can do no harm." I want to say that if all things are well an inquiry is not warranted. An inquiry at any time must cause a considerable nervous strain on those about whom the inquiry is made and will also upset the patients. The hon. member says that if one grievance exists, there may be many more. I desire to say that in running an institution of this description there always will be grievances. If we had a continuous Royal Commission sitting, grievances would occur, and I do not care who the Government or Ministry are, in an institution of this description there must be grievances, and always will be grievances, and a Royal Commission will not tend to overcome them. The main complaints made by the hon. member, and also made by a deputation which waited on the Colonial Secretary were: (1) Overcrowding of the institution. (2) Insufficient attendants. (3) Insufficient medical supervision. In regard to overcrowding I can

assure the House, and I am sure the leader of the Opposition and other late Ministers on the Opposition side of the House will agree with me, that there is no necessity to have a Royal Commission to show there is overcrowding in this institution.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been known for over three years.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): It has been known for a long time. The hon. Mr. Drew reported it, to my knowledge, three years ago, and the Scaddan Government were aware that this institution was overcrowded. An overcrowded institution is not likely to be conducive to good management, but the proposition that is before us is, can we provide accommodation; will our finances enable us to provide accommodation? If this House could provide the Government with something approaching £200,000, we have a splendid site and we could get the plans—we have them—and specifications of an up to date hospital which would remove all question of overcrowding. But unless we have the money we cannot do it. I am sure members opposite agree with me on that point. It may be possible to make shift by putting additions to our present institution, but to do so would not be making a complete job of the matter. It would only be a temporary matter. However, Parliament has shown that we have not the money to-day to make even the additions. I can say for the Colonial Secretary and for the Government that if Parliament is prepared to vote £30,000 or £40,000 for additions to this institution we can make such additions that will provide accommodation for a year or two. That will relieve the present pressure and unless Parliament is prepared to grant us the money, and can find it, we must do the best we can under existing conditions. In regard to the complaints made; after all when we analyse them they are not serious. Before dealing with the file—I might say the points are all replied to—there are one or two matters referred to by the hon. member. He says, for instance, in regard to restraint, and it is also asserted that a fine form of restraint is the administration of a medicine known as "white house." That will keep the unfortunate people docile for the period of a week or 10 days. "White house" is a well known remedy in every hospital in the world, and consists of a dose of salts; that is what "white house" is, and it is very often administered. As a matter of fact salts are a standard remedy, and I do not know of any better one. That is the last medicine I took. This is the main part of almost every patent medicine. The hon. member said that the Inspector General was attacked and had his head cut open when he had a bodyguard of six men. This statement is to an extent correct. The Inspector General, was attacked. One of the patients put some small stones—seasonable sized stones—in a stocking and went for the Inspector General from behind a door and hit him with them, but the Inspector General had no bodyguard. I want to say that I have been through that institution with the present Inspector General and we went through single handed. I will not say that he was relying on me. If the Inspector General was compelled to have a bodyguard then every attendant would need a bodyguard and if a bodyguard of six was not sufficient to protect the Inspector General, when he had to move about, then the attendants would have to move about in gangs of 10 or 12. The experience of the world is that it is not necessary to employ so many men in that way. The hon. member said that there was grave danger in patients being allowed out woodcutting. I want to tell members that no accident has ever happened to date in that regard. Further, the hon. member said the patients were too much confined and that they should be given outdoor work. In reference to this institution I desire to say as far as outdoor work is concerned, it possibly stands ahead of any institution of the kind in the Commonwealth. This is the institution that provides the Government milk supply. This institution is breeding, and has bred some of the finest strains of milking cows in the State. The pigs bred at this institution are known from the Gascoyne—the member for Gascoyne has some of the breed—right down to Albany. There is scarcely a farming man in the House who does not know of the asylum pigs and these are to a considerable extent looked after by the patients. The one charge defeats the other. In one instance the hon. member says the patients should not be allowed out to cut wood, and then he says they do not get enough outdoor work, they are too much confined. In regard to the charge of insufficient attendants, we can only judge whether there are sufficient attendants by comparison with other institutions, and I have here the figures of three States of the Commonwealth. The number of attendants, and when I speak of attendants, I mean those attending on patients, the nurses, orderlies, and that class of people—I do not include cooks, tailors, engineers or mechanics of any description, but attendants on the patients. In Western Australia the proportion of attendants to patients is—Males, 1 to 6.09, females 1 to 5.98, average 6.06. New South Wales, males 1 to 8.5, females 1 to .69; in chronic cases 1 to 12, or a general average of 1 to 10. Victoria gives the same as a general average of 1 per 10. In New South Wales and South Australia the attendants per patient are 1 per 10. That means 1 attendant to 10 patients. In Western Australia it is one to six. I am not complaining about this. It stands to reason when it is explained that it is quite reasonable. We must have a higher percentage of attendants than has any other institution of its kind in the Commonwealth, for we have adopted the principle of eight hours work for attendants in the institution and having adopted that it brings the average down. Allowing for the fact that our attendants only work eight hours while in other institutions they work 10 or more, we still

have as many attendants per patient as the other institutions of Australia. I think, if we can show that, we are showing that the present Government and previous Governments have not neglected this institution. I think I am right in saying that the Scaddan Government introduced the eight hours principle in this institution and the present Government are following that principle; they have not attempted, nor do they desire to depart from it. It is perfectly true that we are short of medical officers. There is a shortage in this direction throughout the world. All the allied countries are short of medical officers, and I hope that Germany is also short of them. We are short of one or two men, and at the Perth Public Hospital we are short of considerably more than that. This is a position which cannot be overcome until we have overcome the Kaiser. It is no use complaining. We have to do the best we can with the medical officers we have on hand. There are many parts of the State which are without medical assistance at all, and will have to remain without that assistance. I am sure that this institution will be short of medical officers until the war is over, as will also the Perth Public Hospital. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones), when bringing forward this motion, said that he was only quoting a few of the complaints and that there were many more he could bring forward. I propose to go through some of the complaints which have been made by a committee which visited the institution, and reported, I think, to the Metropolitan Council of the A.L.F., and later waited as a deputation upon the Colonial Secretary. The union concerned, that is, the union of attendants at the hospital, was never consulted in regard to this committee, and did not agree with a great majority of the statements made by that committee.

Mr. Jones: I will deal with that presently.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The secretary of the union caused that statement to be published. It will be found, by anyone who goes through these complaints, that they are confined almost solely to the matters I have mentioned, that is, the insufficiency of attendants and overcrowding. The first complaint they put up was under the heading "Hospital Ward"—

> In this ward there are approximately 50 beds and only one man is in charge during the night. On some occasions 20 or 30 patients may be bad cases at various stages of insanity, and the nature of their cases may be such that they require frequent changing. The attendant may also have to apply dressings to about half-a-dozen during the night. Included among the pateints in the hospital may be several patients under various forms of restraint with a few suicidal cases and escapees thrown in.

Not an alluring proposition for the attendant.

> At times the attendants on night duty in the hospital have to attend to inmates suffering from various forms of foul and loathsome disease. The attendants are not allowed, under any circumstances, to leave the ward, and as there are no conveniences provided for washing themselves, the attendants have to carry the germs of contagion, and risk contracting some awful disease.

The reply is—

> It is correct that there are about 50 beds in this ward with one man in charge. On no occasion can I recall where 20 or 30 patients required changing during the night. To apply half a dozen dressings during a shift of eight hours can hardly be described as excessive work. The statement of attending inmates suffering from various forms of foul and loathsome disease is grossly incorrect. There has been only one unpleasant dressing in this ward in the last four years, and that was a man who eventually died from cancer of the face. If the attendants should not do this who on earth are to do it?

I want to ask, who would do this? We cannot prevent cancer, for if we could, we would. If there is a patient suffering from cancer someone has to dress that patient, and if the attendant does not who would do so?

Mr. Jones: What they complain of is that they cannot use anti-septic washing.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): It will come to that. The reply goes on—

> The statement that there are no conveniences provided for washing is untrue, as in the hospital ward a basin, jug and soap are provided, as well as a cupboard, of which the attendant holds the key, containing all the modern antiseptics.

And that seems to be what would happen. It is quite natural that such a basin should be there, and as a matter of positive fact it is there, and the attendant can wash his hands as often as he likes.

> I might add that if any attendant has contracted any "awful disease" he certainly has not got it in this institution. Further, I am not aware of any attendant having contracted any "awful disease" from his duty here.

Then we come to the second complaint, "Forms of restraint."

> The methods adopted in the hospital of placing patients under restraint are out of date and obsolete, and should be abolished. When visiting the hospital we saw men under restraint with their ankles tied with a piece of sheeting. It is said that this sheeting has been torn on several occasions by the violent patients. Proper appliances should be provided for placing inmates under restraint.

Mr. Smith: What do they want, wire?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The reply is—

> If a patient requires to be restrained—

Bear in mind he has to be restrained.

> We endeavour first to effect this by placing a sheet across his chest, under his arms, and fixing that to the head of the bed, a clove hitch of the sheet is placed on his ankles and attached to the foot of the bed. I know of no more humane and comfortable means of restraint than this method. It is certainly much more comfortable and cool for the patient than a straight jacket, the latter being used only as a last resort.

I ask, do the committee require chains to be used? Could there be anything more soft or less likely to injure than a sheet?

Mr. Teesdale: Certainly not.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): You, Sir, know what a clove hitch is, and how it holds, and that it is the easiest knot for relaxing. As a matter of fact I cannot conceive of any better method of restraint than a sheet across the chest and a sheet round the ankles, with a clove hitch round the legs and tied at the bottom of the bed. Of course sheets have been torn; it is quite possible they have worn out. When the hon. member is replying perhaps he will tell us what other methods he would use, or what other material, always bearing in mind that these patients who are restrained have to be restrained owing to the dreadful disease from which they suffer. Again, it is said that all hot water in the institution is turned off at six p.m., after which time it is impossible to procure hot water in any quantity. Let me point out to hon. members that these complaints are really trivial, absolutely trivial. That the hot water is turned off at six p.m. is true; but it would be unreasonable to keep a large boiler going as well as a calorificator working in order to supply the few attendants who might wish to wash their hands during the night. Hot water in any quantity necessary can be obtained every hour by being brought to the wards by the roundsmen. That, surely, is sufficient. I think the House will agree that it is sufficient. I do not consider it necessary, and I do not believe a Royal Commission would consider it necessary, to keep the hot water supply on night and day.

Mr. Jones: I did not use that part, you know.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): No. It is the committee put this up. The member for Fremantle said, "I have given the House a few instances; I could give many more." But I have to look for them all. If I had only to deal with the few that were given by the member for Fremantle, there would be nothing more for me to answer. Those few I have answered already. What I am now doing is to answer the instances put up by the committee that went to the hospital in order to find if they possibly could, anything wrong in it. Here is something more from that committee's report—

> Deaths in hospital. If an inmate of the hospital dies during the night, he has to be laid out and washed by one of the attendants who is on duty in the ward. When a patient dies, a screen is placed round him to hide him from the other patients while he is being washed and dressed. During the period that the attendant is attending to the dead body, none of the patients in the ward are under observation, and it would be a simple matter for an inmate to either escape, or attack an attendant.

With regard to escaping, I have to state that if an inmate did escape from that ward there would be another door to get through in another ward. As for attacks on the attendant, there has not been an attendant killed since the institution was opened, nor one seriously injured.

Mr. Jones: But you do not want to wait until an attendant has been killed, do you?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The laying out of the dead body is not specially an immediate duty. It can very well be left, and is left, until the roundsman arrives on the scene; and the roundsman comes every hour. In the event of the work of laying out being urgent, there is an attendant sleeping in the ward, who may be called. No case is known where there was any necessity for this step being taken. The next complaint refers to the overcrowded state of the institution. That is admitted, and we do not require a Royal Commission to find out whether it is true. Regarding assistance in the hospital wards, the committee stated—

> At the present time an inmate is provided in the hospital ward at night to be on hand if the attendant requires help in the event of being attacked by an inmate. This shows the authorities recognise that assistance is required in the ward at night, but their reasons for putting a lunatic there as an assistant will be very interesting to know.

The Inspector General of the Insane replies that the statement is untrue, that patients have not been put there as assistants. Again, regarding the hospital ward the committee report—

> In this ward there are practically 50 beds, and only one man is in charge during the night. On some occasions 20 or 30 of the patients may be bed cases in various stages of insanity, and the nature of their cases may be such that they require frequent changing. The attendant may also have to apply dressings to about half-a-dozen during the night. Included among the patients in the hospitals may be several under various forms of restraint, with a few suicidal cases and escapees thrown in.

Regarding No. 2 ward, it is stated by the committee that in this ward there are 130 patients, about 60 of them being in an observation ward under one attendant, and that in this observation ward there are over 50 beds and four cells; that the ward is so over-crowded that the beds in some cases are not more than six inches apart; that the patients in this ward are suffering from various forms of mental disorder, including among them patients of homicidal and suicidal tendencies. The Inspector General's reply is that the committee's statements on this ward are correct; that the observation ward contains about 50 beds and also four single rooms; it is not denied that the ward is over-crowded, but it is denied that the over-crowding is to the degree stated by the committee, of the beds being only six inches apart. At each end of the ward there is an attendant's bedroom, with an attendant sleeping there. In the event of emergency, all that the officer on duty would have to do would be either to tap on the bedroom window, which opens to the ward, or call out, and he would get assistance. Further, there is no occasion for him to leave the ward to call for assistance, if such is required, since the telephone is placed in a handy position in the passage leading from the ward. There is another similar statement about the observation ward, with which I do not propose to trouble the House. As I have

said, hon. members can refer to these papers, which will be laid upon the Table. With respect to No. 4 ward the committee report that it contains about 61 beds and also seven cells, and that only one man is in charge at night. The patients in this ward, the committee report, are suffering from various mental disorders, and include epileptics, imbeciles, idiots, and sufferers from senile decay, and general paralysis. It is also asserted that among the patients in this ward are some very dangerous cases, requiring constant observation. Again, it is said that many of the inmates in this ward need frequent changing at night, thus necessitating the performance by the attendant of some very dirty and disagreeable tasks, whilst he is unable to leave the ward until relief arrives. No washing facilities being provided in the ward, the attendant, it is stated, frequently has to wait a considerable time before he is able to wash the filth off himself. The reply is that this ward contains no dangerous patients, and that, if it did, there is an attendant sleeping immediately over the ward. It is true that a number of the patients in this ward are dirty; but as regards washing facilities the same remarks apply here as in other wards. I do not know whether it is necessary for me to go further with these charges and the replies to them. The whole of the complaints are, as I have said, summed up in the two statements that the number of attendants is insufficient and that the institution is over-crowded. Every statement made by the committee has been answered, as hon. members can verify for themselves by paying a visit to the institution and having a look round it. We are told by the committee that emergency men are needed, and various other things; but we have to bear in mind that the Claremont institution has more attendants in proportion to the number of patients than has any other institution of the kind in the Commonwealth of Australia. I feel absolutely confident that when hon. members have gone through the files they will say that no inquiry is warranted so far as the Hospital for the Insane is concerned. The expense of such an inquiry would represent a sheer waste of money. We come now to what is known as the Andinach case. The member for Fremantle, in introducing this phase of his complaint, said that he desired to know what and who were responsible for the death of Francis Andinach. I do not know whether the hon. member desires that a Royal Commission should inquire into the question whether an attendant at the Perth Public Hospital, or a member of the Police Force, was responsible for the death. It seems to me it would be rather a new procedure to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into who was responsible for the death of some man. Anyhow, so far as Andinach is concerned the first thing we have on the file is a report from Dr. Martell, who says:—

> In reference to your request re the Andinach case I have much pleasure in submitting the following for your information. As nearly as I can remember on the morning of the 16th May last I received a telephone call at about 7.30 to go to the Madrid Coffee Palace, in High Street, Fremantle, to see Francis Andinach, whom they considered was insane. Owing to electrical troubles I could not get my car to start, and after wasting some time I proceeded on foot to the Madrid Coffee Palace. On making inquiries I found that the patient had been removed by the police to the lock-up. On asking the reason for this sudden action when they had sent for me I was told by a young lad (who I was given to understand was his son) and another man, apparently about 30 years of age, that Andinach had become so violent that they were afraid he would seriously harm himself, and that in order to protect him against himself they had sent for the police to remove him. I was also informed that they had had trouble with him all night, and that for some hours he had been "knocking himself about," and that they had sent for me because he had become so violent.

I desire to call attention to this report and also one or two others in views of the fact that efforts are being made to blame a hospital or an asylum attendant for Andinach's death. Dr. Martell goes on to say—

> When I heard this, I passed the remark that under the circumstances, and especially as the people had sent for a medical practitioner the police, for their own protection, should have waited and had the patient examined.

The next report on the file with reference to Andinach deals with his arrival at the Perth Public Hospital. Dr. Barker, Chief Resident Medical Officer, states—

> In reply to your questions re ex-patient Andinach, (a) Did the patient receive adequate medical attention and examination during the time he was in the institution, and (b) before he received injuries on May 20th? I beg to state this patient was admitted at 5 p.m. on 16/5/18 on a charge of unsound mind. He was obviously suffering from acute mania, being very violent and singing songs in a foreign tongue. The attendant Dundas placed him in the padded cell and I did not see him until night time when the night attendant, McGowan, was on duty, and as the man was quiet at that time, I did not open the door of the cell, but put the patient on Haust. Pot. Brom. with chloral. The next morning he was again violent, and as soon as the attendant opened the door he made a rush at me, but the attendant quietened him and he then burst forth into more singing interspersed with some violent talk and ordering me out. The next day it was the same, always being very troublesome, and his voice was much hoarser, and I expressed the opinion to Dr. Clement that the man would die of exhaustion from acute mania. You might ask why the man was not sent to Claremont earlier. The reason for this was that Mrs. Andinach came up to see me and she asked me not to send the patient to Claremont if I could possibly avoid it, and I promised her that I would do what I could. At that time I thought drink might account for his behaviour,

but she said that although he might have had some, she did not think he had had enough to bring him into that condition, or words to that effect. As to adequate medical examination, I do not quite understand what this comprehends, but I might point out that the man was sent in for mental observation and one could do this from a distance without any physical examination being necessary. After he received such injuries on the 20th, the only injuries reported to me were a slight cut over the left eyebrow and contusion over the right, and those were adequately explained to me by attendant Eacott by the slamming of the padded door in Andinach's face as he was making a wild dash at the attendant. When I saw the man on the 20th, he showed no signs of other injuries than those above, and from his general appearance I did not deem it necessary to go over him (a) because he always seemed to become more violent when I showed myself in the ward, and the attendant remarked on that fact, and (b) it would have necessitated the employment of still further force to have got the man into such a position that I could have made a further examination, and from the appearance of the man I did not think it necessary or wise. From this explanation I think you will find that his medical examination and the treatment were adequate, always remembering, which critics seem to lose sight of, that the man was an acute maniac.

Further on Dr. Barker writes—

Did Eacott make an adequate report to me regarding the injuries deceased had sustained in the struggle? In my opinion, yes, but here I might state that Eacott committed an error of judgment in not sending for an orderly or orderlies to assist him before entering the padded cell to put Andinach in a strait-jacket. In my opinion, if the ribs were not fractured on admission, it is possible that the unfortunate fracture occurred in this struggle, but there is no evidence to prove it, and I do not think that Eacott used unnecessary force or was malicious in the exercise of his duties.

After that the patient was sent to the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont.

Hon. P. Collier: How many days was he in the Perth Public Hospital?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): From the 16th to the 20th. Then Dr. Moxon reported as follows:—

I saw the deceased man, Andinach, at the time of his admittance walking without any assistance, together with another patient who was admitted at the same time. There was no indication that he was suffering from serious injuries, otherwise I should have been sent for, as in my experience the staff are particularly careful to notify the medical officer immediately of any signs of illness. I first saw Andinach professionally on the morning of the 21st. He was then in a somewhat weak condition, typical of post-maniacal exhaustion. I ordered him to be kept perfectly quiet in bed, and treatment was directed to combating the exhaustion present. In view of (1) the impossibility of obtaining any true insight into his medical state at that time, (2) his mental and physical exhaustion, (3) the absence of any indication of serious physical injury or disease, I postponed a complete mental and physical examination of the patient until a more favourable opportunity presented itself. No improvement being apparent by the 24th, I submitted him to a very thorough physical examination with a view, if possible, to finding some further cause for this. On the 23rd I had him kept absolutely quiet, as I considered it highly inadvisable to disturb him by a lengthy examination, in view of his exhausted condition. The results of my examination on the 24th are fully recorded in the case book and elsewhere, results which were confirmed at a further examination by the Inspector General of the Insane and myself on the 25th, and subsequently on the post mortem table. There was no delay in commencing treatment, which was directed, as already stated, to overcoming the urgent condition of exhaustion present. Regarding the general question of treatment, in the absence of severe haemorrhage from the lung, and often even when this is present, it is, as you are fully aware, a completely wrong surgical procedure to attempt any active local measures. To do this is not merely to risk, but to invite further injury. A perforation of the lung from a fractured rib, if unaccompanied by pulmonary haemorrhage, is not fatal per se; and if, as in this case, haemorrhage be not present, the majority of the cases progress to complete recoverey. In Andinach's case the determining factor at this stage was the post-maniacal exhaustion.

The report goes further, but I will not weary hon. members with more of it. It has been said over and over again that not sufficient attention was paid to Andinach, that he should have been examined. Dr. Moxon has explained why he did not examine, and so, too, has Dr. Barker.

Hon. P. Collier: Why, because he was exhausted?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): And to have examined him would only have increased the exhaustion, because force would have to be used to restrain him during the examination. This would have done him harm.

Hon. P. Collier: But he could not have resisted very much, if so completely exhausted.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The hon. member does not understand.

Mr. Troy interjected.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): You shut up.

Mr. Troy: I have.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Well, shut up. What you have to say, get up and say it; do not sit there muttering to yourself. Critics have said that an exam-

ination should have been made. Let us see what Dr. Birmingham has to say, a man appointed visitor to the hospital, one who has done a good deal of work and who is well known in Fremantle. Here is his report:—

> In connection with the Andinach case I, W. P. Birmingham, was present at the post mortem and am fully convinced that Dr. Moxon was correct in certifying that the cause of death was primarily acute mania. My reasons are (1) that the condition of the brain was such as is found in cases that have died from acute mania; (2) that death from exhaustion, the result of acute mania, is by no means uncommon; (3) that the state of the lung was not such as would warrant the belief that the pneumonia had reached the stage of the disease at which death is likely to occur; (4) and, finally, the whole course of the case points to acute mania, rather than pneumonia, as the primary cause.

Hon. P. Collier: Who said it was pneumonia?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Dr. Williams. I have here the report of the visiting committee, who were appointed under an Act passed by this House. It is as follows:—

> The other case was that of Francis Andinach. In this case adverse comment has been made by persons unacquainted with the facts, or unfit to judge those facts correctly, with reference to the three days' delay in making a complete examination of the patient. When the patient arrived he was suffering from exhaustion, the result of maniacal excitement and restlessness; the patient was still maniacal, and any attempt at a complete physical examination would certainly have provoked resistance with more or less struggling. This would have increased the exhaustion present and gravely prejudiced the patient's chances. The one indication for the management of this patient that stood out clearly was to counteract the physical exhaustion. To do this rationally one had to avoid the risk of provoking a struggle, and, bearing this in mind, we are convinced that the course followed was a wise one and judicious. We think that the custom of allowing a single attendant to handle a violent patient, especially when repressive measures have to be employed, is unwise.

That is signed by S. A. Casson, B. H. Darbyshire, and W. P. Birmingham.

Mr. Jones: But they never saw the patient.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I do not know whether the hon. member is prepared to say that they reported without having seen the patient. Now we come to the question of the burial of the deceased. This, in my opinion, is what caused the outcry. In going through the files it will be found that the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont comes out of the trouble absolutely clear. One of the doctors—I forget his name—reported to the Chief Inspector that this man had died at about ten o'clock in the morning. About 10 o'clock in the morning he reported to the Chief, who immediately rang up the Coroner, Mr. Davies, P.M. Mr. Davies was at the time on the bench. He came to the telephone at the special request of the doctor and discussed the case with him. The doctor explained that this man had died and that he had external bruises upon him, and that he knew it was his duty to report the case to the Coroner. The Coroner asked him on the telephone—telephone messages are always unsatisfactory—what in his opinion was the cause of death, and the doctor, who attended the case, stated that the cause of death was acute mania, but that he had reported the case because these external bruises were on the deceased. Mr. Davies said, "Will you give a certificate of death?" and the doctor replied "Yes." The Coroner then said "That being so, I do not require an inquest." The Chief Inspector proposed that they should make a post mortem examination themselves, but the Coroner said, "I do not think that is necessary. Go on." Things then went on. The deceased was to be buried, his body then being at Fremantle, I believe. The people of Fremantle, however, said, "If this man is buried without an inquiry we are bringing a charge against the police." Inspector Sellenger then rang up the Coroner, as he should do. Mr. Davies by that time had received a written report from Doctor Anderson, and, of course, stopped the burial. I think members will agree with me that Mr. Davies does not come out of the matter very well, although allowance is made for the fact that he was busy at the time he was rung up, and that telephone messages are always unsatisfactory. His first report did not go to prove that his memory was good, and when the case was put up by the chief inspector we find that in his second report Mr. Davies' memory fails in one or two parts. There is one thing he entirely overlooked, and that is that it is unnecessary, and has been unnecessary for the last year, to report deaths at the hospital, and the fact that a report was made should have shown him that there were some special circumstances in the case. Ordinarily, when people die at the hospital at Claremont, they are buried without reference to the Coroner.

Hon. P. Collier: On the certificate of the doctor at the hospital?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: That seems to be undesirable.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): As shown on the file, it was customary for many years to report all deaths. The clerk of petty sessions then called the attention of the chief inspector to the fact that it was not necessary either under the Act or the regulations to follow such a course. The fact, however, that this case was reported to Mr. Davies should have been sufficient to show him that it was not an ordinary case. When he found Inspector Sellenger taking a hand in it he became pretty active. I think the member for Boulder will admit, if he peruses these files, that the institution did all that was possible in the matter. The doctors there saw bruises on the man when he was admitted. He died, and they reported the case because of the bruises on the body, notwithstanding the fact that Dr.

Bentley was prepared to give a certificate of death, and actually did so. The coroner, however, said "Go on. I do not require an inquest." They went on until Inspector Sellenger came into the case. The hospital for the insane at Claremont is in my opinion absolutely cleared by the papers, which I shall presently lay upon the Table. In regard to the question of an inquiry, it has been said that the hospital is all right and that an inquiry could do no harm. I am quite prepared to assert that an *inquiry could do no harm so far as the hospital* for the insane at Claremont is concerned. These files prove that statement. I have never endeavoured to shield any public servant if I thought he was in the wrong. The Colonial Secretary has done his best to ascertain the full facts of the case. The cost of a Royal Commission would be pretty considerable. The cost of such an inquiry would provide one or two extra attendants, and some necessary furniture, but that is not all. An inquiry of this description has a most unsettling effect upon the patients themselves. It has a worrying effect upon the medical officers, not only at Claremont but at the Perth Public Hospital. It interferes with the general working of the staff and of the medical officers.

Hon. P. Collier: You would not urge that any of these reasons were good grounds for not holding an inquiry?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I am trying to combat the statement that if everything is all right an inquiry will do no harm. I say that everything is all right.

Hon. P. Collier: Then an inquiry is not wanted.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I claim that an inquiry is not wanted, and that it is unnecessary. It may be interesting for hon. members to note the action taken by the Colonial Secretary. The verdict of the jury is that Andinach came to his death by injuries received at the Perth Public Hospital.

Hon. P. Collier: They disagreed with Dr. Birmingham?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The Colonial Secretary says—

> Since the verdict of the jury in this case may imply censure on certain institutions under the control of this department, I have carefully perused the inquisition papers and desire that full inquiry should be made and reports submitted to me on the following points: 1. Perth Public Hospital—(a) Did the deceased receive adequate medical examination and treatment during the time he was in this institution (1) before he received injuries on May 20 and (2) after he received such injuries? (b) Is the observation ward at the Perth Public Hospital, from the points of view of accommodation, equipment, and staffing, adequate for the purpose it has to serve? (c) Did attendant Eacott, according to his own evidence and the known facts of the case use unnecessary violence? (d) Did he act properly in attempting to put the strait-jacket on by himself, instead of calling for assistance? (e) Did he make an adequate report to the R.M.O. regarding the injuries the deceased had sustained in the struggle? (f) Was his evidence at the inquest candid and satisfactory? Claremont Hospital for the Insane—(a) What is the explanation of the evidence that although deceased on his admission on May 21st was obviously suffering from recently received injuries he was not thoroughly medically examined until the 24th? (In this connection I think it should be understood that the subsequently ascertained fact that no treatment could have been of any avail, cannot be regarded in any way as excusing delay in treatment.) (b) Is it customary or proper for a doctor to give a certificate of death when such death has been caused, or contributed to, by injuries of which he does not know the origin? (c) Was Dr. Moxon justified in giving a certificate of death in this case? (d) Was the result of the telephonic communication between the Inspector General of the Insane and the Coroner to issue a certificate of death and to allow the burial to proceed, or was it a request from the Coroner for a written report on which he would base his decision as to whether or not an inquest was necessary? Messengers' Exchange—A complete history of the written report of the Inspector General of the Insane whilst it was in the hands of the Messengers' Exchange.

Those are the questions on which the Colonial Secretary desired information. The information has been supplied, and the Colonial Secretary is satisfied. I have read the explanation, and I can say that I am satisfied. There is one other minute from the Colonial Secretary, to the Under Secretary, which I might read to the House—

> As this file is likely to be called for in Parliament, I shall be glad if you will go through it and see that it contains everything bearing on the case. If there are other files with anything in reference to the case, please have them placed on this file.

Having gone through all the files myself, I am satisfied that a Royal Commission would not elicit more than is on them. I do not know where or how a Royal Commission could possibly obtain further evidence.

Hon. P. Collier: Except in this respect, that if those who wrote the reports gave evidence they would have to submit to cross-examination; and being cross-examined is a different thing from writing a report.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Exactly; they would have to submit to cross-examination. I am not prepared to say that cross-examination is altogether effective, either. However, the Attorney General may be able to deal with that aspect of the subject. Broadly, a Royal Commission would not be able to obtain other information than already appears on the files. I ask the House to consider the contents of these files, and when hon. members have done so I think they will recognise that in this case further inquiry is not warranted.

On motion by Mr. Brown debate adjourned.

House adjourned 11.25 p.m.