

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 24th September, 1919.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: The suggestion will receive very serious consideration.

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

QUESTIONS (4)—PARLIAMENTARY TOURS OF INSPECTION. Northern Agricultural Areas.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: When does he propose to organise a tour of inspection of the Northern agricultural districts, so that public attention may be drawn to their potentialities?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: No date can be stated until the suggestion has received very serious consideration.

Esperance District.

Mr. MULLANY asked the Premier: Will he arrange a business trip through the Esperance district, in order to give members of Parliament, representatives of financial institutions, and journalists an opportunity of gaining knowledge of the possibilities of that district, in the same manner as has recently been afforded them in the Eastern agricultural districts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: The suggestion will receive very serious consideration.

Eastern Goldfields.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: Is he prepared to organise a tour of inspection, by members, of the Eastern Goldfields, including the new goldfield at Hampton Plains, with the view of making members acquainted with the possibilities and requirements of the mining industry?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: The suggestion will receive very serious consideration.

State Sawmills.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: Will he arrange that members of Parliament be given an opportunity to inspect the State sawmills and permits prior to asking members to sanction their sale?

QUESTION—LIQUOR INSPECTION.

Mr. DUFF asked the Colonial Secretary: Whether the Chief Inspector of Liquors has furnished a report covering the last annual period, and, if so, will the Minister have such report laid on the Table of the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Yes.

QUESTION—STATE SAWMILLS.

Mr. GARDINER asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the amount of the net book assets of the State sawmills when they were placed under offer to the French syndicate? 2, What amount has been written off for depreciation since their inception? 3, What amount has been paid in sinking fund? 4, What amount is there in any other fund that can be taken off capitalisation? 5, What amount stands to the credit of profit and loss? 6, What amount was due to sundry creditors at time of offer? 7, Does the syndicate pay the creditors? 8, What rate of interest was charged the concern for year ended June, 1919? 9, Was any payment made to sinking fund for year ended June, 1919? 10, What amount was written off for depreciation for year ended June, 1919? 11, What were the gross profits for year ended 30th June, 1919? 12, What were the net profits for the same term? 13, Has the department any estimate of the number of loads in the round of marketable timber in the concession?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The gross book costs of assets offered to the French syndicate are stated in the letter of 22nd August to them, together with details, £399,065 8s. 4d. 2, £60,874 14s. 1d. 3, £22,430 14s. 3d. 4, None. 5, £21,688 3s. 11d. 6, £40,601 3s. 9d. 7, No. 8, 4½ per cent. 9, Sinking fund payments in reduction of debit for depreciation are only made when spare funds are available. No payment was made for year ended 30th June, 1919, but debit for depreciation was duly recorded against profit and loss account. 10, £14,970 12s. 11, £33,535 2s. 12, £5,147 9s. 4d. 13, No. The balance-sheet already laid on the Table contains all financial details as required by the Trading Concerns Act.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. O'LOGHLEN, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to Mr. Holman (Murchison) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Roëke, and read a first time.

MOTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK AND INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

Political Control.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.38]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board should be removed from political control.

Before leaving the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board, which were in my care for some two years, I wrote the following minute to the then Premier, Mr. Colebatch, under date of the 17th April, 1919:—

Before relinquishing the Ministerial control of the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board, which I have held since June, 1917, I desire to express to you my opinion that both these institutions should by statute be freed from political control. I have not arrived at this conclusion hurriedly, but I have had it in my mind during the course of my Ministry, and have on many occasions discussed it with the trustees and the general manager. I have no doubt it would make not only for the good of the State, but would give the settler who is helped by the State greater confidence in the administration of his affairs. During my tenure of office I have from the first month thrown the whole responsibility of the working of these departments on the rightful shoulders, those of the general manager and the trustees. It has always been my endeavour to treat these gentlemen as colleagues, and whilst I have frequently discussed matters and principles affecting the bank with them, it has never been done in other than an argumentative fashion. I have never sought to control their actions, so that the moment is opportune to give them that freedom from control which I think is essential to the bank's well-being. Attached hereto is a recommendation on similar lines from the general manager. In conclusion, I desire to state, after close association with Mr. Paterson, the general manager, and Messrs. Richardson, Cooke, and Maitland Leake, the trustees, I have no hesitation in saying that it would be difficult to find in Western Australia gentlemen who would so loyally and fairly administer the responsibilities which have rested on their shoulders.

Immediately prior to that, as the outcome of discussions with the general manager and the trustees, the general manager addressed to me, as Minister for Industries, the following minute:—

Following on our recent conversation in regard to the appointment of trustees under the Agricultural Bank Act, I beg to place on record my very decided opinion that it is desirable that Clauses 7 and 8 under the Agricultural Bank Act, 1906, governing appointment of trustees, should be amended, and that these appointments

should be made subject to safeguards similar to those provided for the Auditor General. Clauses 7 and 8 if altered as suggested would read:—"7. The trustees shall hold their office during good behaviour, and shall not be removed therefrom unless an address praying for such removal shall be presented to the Governor by the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council respectively, in the same session of Parliament. 8. The Governor may at any time suspend the trustees from their office for incapacity, incompetence or misbehaviour; and when, and so often as the same shall happen, the Treasurer shall lay before both Houses of the Parliament a full statement of the grounds of such suspension, within 7 days after such suspension if the Parliament be then in session, and actually sitting, or, if the Parliament be not then in session or not actually sitting, within 7 days after the commencement of the next session or sitting. The trustees so suspended shall be restored to office unless each House of the Parliament within forty-two days after the day when such statement is laid before it, and in the same session, pass an address to the Governor praying for their removal." It appears to be necessary that the trustees should be placed in such a position that they would be entirely free from political influence, and their appointment as suggested would make for a continuity of policy on the part of the bank, and would be in the interests of the State and of production and development generally. May I hope that you will give this recommendation your earnest consideration. Regarding the Industries Assistance Board, I hold the same views as I have expressed in connection with the Agricultural Bank, for the Industries Assistance Board is really an off-shoot of the bank and should be placed similarly outside of political control. (Sgd.) W. Paterson, General Manager. 17/4/1919.

I do not entirely agree with the views of the general manager.

Hon. P. Collier: I should think not.

Mr. ROBINSON: I think the general manager goes a bit far. If hon. members will be patient with me, they will learn exactly how I suggest the matter should be dealt with.

Hon. P. Collier: It is as well for these Government servants to understand that the tendency of Parliament is in the opposite direction.

Mr. ROBINSON: First I would like to review very shortly the Agricultural Bank Act. That measure does not give political control, but in the Industries Assistance Act political control is provided in specific words. Section 4 of the Agricultural Bank Act provides for the establishment of the bank, and vests it, the bank, in trustees. Section 5 deals with the appointment of bank trustees by the Governor—one to be the managing trustee. Section 7 provides that the managing trustee holds office during the Governor's pleasure, while the other trustees hold office

for two years. Section 8 deals with the suspension of the trustees on misbehaviour or bankruptcy. Advances are dealt with in Section 28 of the amending Act. It is not necessary to have the Minister's consent to any advance made by the Agricultural Bank. The trustees under their statute seem to have adequate power to deal with applications as they think fit. The only objection I have to the Agricultural Bank Act is the shortness of the term of the trustees' appointment, and that the general manager's office may be vacated at the pleasure of the Government. I suggest that the term should be for seven years, as in the Commonwealth Bank, subject to the provisions dealing with retirement on account of age, similar to those existing in our Public Service. Regarding the Industries Assistance Board and their statutory powers, by Sections 3, 4, and 8, three members are appointed by the Governor, who may revoke such appointment at pleasure. I submit it is reasonable that the appointments should be made during good behaviour for a definite period of, say, seven years, subject to the right to retire under the Public Service regulations dealing with age. Originally the Industries Assistance Board was constituted in an advisory capacity only. The advances made under the Act were made by the Colonial Treasurer. But by the amending Act of 1917 the Act is administered by the board under the control of the Minister. The financial arrangements of the board are provided in Section 25, by Parliament voting from time to time funds that may be required for the board. The control, therefore, of advances to settlers is in the Minister for Lands, whilst advances made under Part III., that is, to other than settlers, are under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Treasurer. Two points, therefore, are apparent in connection with the Industries Assistance Board, first the appointment of the board, and secondly the control. I suggest that the board be given a definite appointment of, say, seven years, or until the board is dissolved under Section 4, with entire discretion and control of the advances, without any interference by a Minister of the Crown. Speaking generally of the two statutes, the Agricultural Bank Act does not give any political control, but there is no doubt that the Industries Assistance Act does give such control. I suggest that the matter can be dealt with very much in the same way as that of the Commonwealth Bank, which was established by Commonwealth Statute No. 18 of 1911. Of that statute, Sections 11 and 12 deal with the management of the bank, which is managed by a governor, who is not controlled by any Minister. The governor of the Commonwealth Bank holds office under Section 12 during good behaviour for a period of seven years, and he is eligible for reappointment. In the Commonwealth Bank the establishment of branches and of agencies is made by the governor, as is also the establishment of the Savings Bank and its agencies. In fact, the entire management after establishment is in the governor of the bank, who is equivalent

to a general manager. The question at issue is well illustrated by the causes leading up to my own resignation as Minister, where a new Minister, Mr. Mitchell, changed the policy of the administration regarding sustenance payments.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He was quite justified in doing so; he was the Premier.

Mr. ROBINSON: He did not make that change as Premier, but as Minister for Lands, in the first place without conferring with me, and I had administered the department for two years and was still his colleague. He did it contrary to the views of the general manager, he did it without consulting the board, he did it without consulting Cabinet.

Mr. Green: Yet he is very popular in the Eastern Districts.

Mr. ROBINSON: Perhaps that is accounted for by the fact that the genial member for Kalgoorlie was accompanying him on the trip. I think no Minister should have such power.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You think that because you are out of it and cannot get the control.

Mr. Robinson: No; I never sought the control.

Mr. Maley: Do you say it is the fixed policy of the board to reduce those allowances?

Mr. ROBINSON: I will come to that presently. I am prepared to admit that the subject matter of the sustenance allowance is essentially controversial. The general manager of such institutions as the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board should be, and in fact is, a thorough business man, specially appointed. He should not be affected by public opinion nor by political changes. The board as at present constituted is composed of experienced farmers, who have a lifetime of experience as farmers and in business to help them in the administration of the board's affairs. If we had control of the Industries Assistance Board by the general manager it would mean continuity of a business policy, which would be better as well for the farmer as for the State. On the question of sustenance allowances, whether it be 9s. or any other number of shillings, it seems to me to be generally forgotten that the amount paid is an advance to the farmer, on which he has to pay interest; and if so be his farm is in the balance as to whether it will or will not pay, it may result in a loss to the State, while equally it may be of great assistance to the farmer. Each case, therefore, requires separate consideration, and should be dealt with by a board of experts on its merits, and without political interference. In moving the motion, let me say distinctly, I do not make it in any sense a party question, nor do I desire to make it even a personal one. Nor is it an attack upon any Minister or Ministers. I am aiming at something for the good of the State and the good of the farmer; in fact, I am aiming to establish an ordinary, sound business principle. The papers in con-

nection with the sustenance allowances have been laid on the Table. They show that on the question of sustenance the matter was started on the 24th May, 1918, by Mr. Simpson, the manager of the industries branch, who wrote this minute to the board—

I submit for your information a circular sent to the inspectors on the 30th April, having regard to the excessive allowances drawn by single men and married men without families. The board's finances have gone back—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was that the start of it?

Mr. ROBINSON: That is the first note on the file. It is of no use going back any farther. This note shows that he had been inquiring, but I do not wish to go back any farther. The minute continues—

The board's finances have gone back by nearly £300,000 during the year, which is accounted for by heavy expenditure on machinery and a poor harvest return. Economy must be practised more than ever, and I recommend for your favourable consideration the cutting down of monthly advances to single men to 5s. per day and married men without families to 7s. per day. In many cases these rates are being accepted to-day, but on the other hand many settlers are demanding the full pound of flesh. Should you approve of the above there will of course be exceptions which will require to be considered on their merits. The attached reports throw considerable light on the subject.

The board dictated the following minute—

After discussing this matter with the manager, we are of the opinion that the alteration suggested affects Government policy and not administration, consequently we consider the matter is one for Ministerial decision, having in view the fact that Mr. Mitchell, the late Minister for Industries, who was responsible for the scheme, definitely intimated that the policy of 9s. per day was to be adhered to, as everyone was worthy of his hire, whether married or single, provided equivalent work was carried out by them to the satisfaction of the inspector.

Mr. Maley: Were the board unanimous in that?

Mr. ROBINSON: I will come to the question of unanimity if the hon. member will be patient. That minute was dated the 24th May. It was then submitted to me in the following minute:—

On page 1 I circularised the district inspectors in regard to payments that are being made to assisted settlers under the item of sustenance, and instructed them to furnish a return listing all settlers who were single and were drawing more than 5s. per day sustenance, and married men without families who were drawing more than 7s. per day sustenance. This return was submitted to the board at its last meeting, and they ruled in accordance with the minute at foot of previous page.

As manager I feel very concerned in regard to the heavy expenditure that is taking place, and also the poor return from last year's harvest. The expenditure for the last financial year totalled £803,000, while the first dividend from the 1917-18 wheat pool at 3s. was £340,000, and the point comes home as to whether, in view of the financial position, the expenditure under this heading should not be considerably curtailed. The returns of wheat from the last three seasons are as follows:—1915-16, 4,954,608 bushels; 1916-17, 4,005,909 bushels; 1917-18, 2,280,000 bushels (approximately). You will thus see that the financial position as mentioned above has resulted through the poor harvest return from last season. I might mention for your information that the expenditure for the last financial year showed a reduction of £133,000 as compared with the preceding year. Some of the above figures are included in a separate report that I am forwarding you, covering the financial position of the board's funds—

which by the way I laid on the Table of the House at that time—

which has been reiterated above with the object of showing clearly the need for economy in every possible direction. If you approve of my suggestion I estimate that a saving of from £20,000 to £25,000 can be made during the coming year. G. W. Simpson, Manager, Industries Branch, 28/5/18.

I made the following note—

Manager, Industries Branch. I approve of your suggestion. Please pass on for Cabinet ratification and ask the Hon. the Premier to read this page and the two pages immediately below to Cabinet. R. T. Robinson (on Trans-Australian train), 7/6/18.

Those are the minutes I have read. In forwarding this to the Premier Mr. Simpson wrote—

I would draw your attention to the point that the late Minister for Industries, Mr. Mitchell, particularly stressed, namely, that payment of 9s. per day was to be made irrespective of whether the farmer was single or married, provided equivalent work was carried out. The present submission alters this policy in its most vital place under the stress of economy.

Then comes Cabinet's decision—

Cabinet approves of single men being allowed a sum of not more than 5s., married men without children not more than 7s., and married men with children up to 9s. according to the number of children. H.B.L. 25/7/18.

On receipt of that, I asked the general manager to name a convenient time to bring this change into operation. The matter went before the board for further consideration, and the outcome was the following minute from the chairman of the board to the Minister for Industries on the 9th August, 1918—

Further to the conversation the board had with you this morning, I desire to

inform you that further consideration has been given to this matter, and the board are of the opinion that it would be unwise from a national point of view to reduce the sustenance allowance of assisted settlers, as contemplated in the proposal contained in this file. We are of opinion that practically the same monetary saving could be effected by actually paying farmers only for the work carried out. In the past it has been usual to pay the full sustenance allowance of 9s. per day where the settler has cropped from 250 to 300 or more acres, irrespective of whether he has sufficient cleared land to employ his time fully between completion of seeding and beginning of the harvesting period. With your concurrence, it is proposed only to advance for fallowing according to the work carried out. Considerable savings have been effected under the small area system, compared with the advances made in the previous year, but this will be forwarded to you as the subject of a special report. A. R. Richardson, Chairman, Industries Assistance Board.

I then sent a further minute to Cabinet reading—

On page 96 will be seen approval of Cabinet for reduction of sustenance allowances. In discussing this matter with Mr. Maitland Leake, he made me a very good suggestion that the same result could be obtained by making payments for work actually carried out. I submitted this to the board, and their report is immediately below this minute. I recommend that the approval of Cabinet, as set out on page 95, be amended by inserting in lieu thereof the recommendation of the I.A.B. R. T. Robinson. 19/8/19.

On the same page is another minute which I addressed to the general manager, which reads—

I have been thinking this subject over and over and have decided to withdraw my recommendation to Cabinet and ask you to reconsider with the board. Mr. Leake's main objection is that deserving and undeserving are fated alike on a reduced payment. On the contrary, I suggest this gives you the opportunity to make the rule inflexible for the undeserving, and as flexible as you may desire for those warranting your consideration. R. T. Robinson. 7/9/18.

Mr. Richardson, the chairman of the board, was going out of town at the end of the month and the matter was still held up. He addressed the following minute to the manager of the board in September—

As I am afraid I cannot be present at next Friday's meeting, I wished to say with reference to the question of reduction of sustenance allowance to settlers on the board—debated but not settled last meeting, to making a distinction between married men and single—that my personal view is that there should be a distinction made and that, while the maximum of 9s.

might be maintained for married men with wife and, say, two children, and 7s. for married men with no children, that 5s. is as much as the board can possibly afford to allow single men according to area in cultivation, etc. It must be kept in view that if the settler is in a good enough financial position, then he can spend what he considers he can afford in support of his family, practically without need of sanction by the board, whereas if his financial position is such that he is entirely dependent on the board's liberality, and such advances are in a way adding to his debts and so increasing his liability to the board, the advance may easily become a debt that will not be redeemed and therefore a future charge upon the revenue of the State and an increased tax on the general community. Then what on the surface may appear a policy of liberal generosity to the man on the land and on whose account we all would greatly desire to deal liberally with, yet when it means being generous with the funds of the general taxpayer and an increase to the present large deficit, we cannot be as liberal as we would like. A. R. Richardson, Chairman.

It must not be forgotten by members as it is sometimes forgotten by others that in addition to the sustenance allowance, whether 5s., 7s., or 9s., the farmer is not receiving that as a wage but as an advance to help him to live, and that he already has his house wherein he lives with his family free, he has his agistment and fodder for his stock, he has grist for himself, his family and dependants, and the natural produce as well as the proceeds from his livestock, namely, sheep, cows, pigs, and fowls.

The Minister for Works: His neighbour might have the fowls sometimes.

Mr. ROBINSON: I am not familiar with that practice.

The Minister for Works: I speak from bitter experience.

Mr. ROBINSON: Towards the end of September I received the following minute from Mr. Richardson—

After discussing this matter with you at the last meeting of the board, the subject was allowed to stand over for one week to enable the pros and cons to be fully considered. While we realise the enormous difficulty experienced in the financing of the board's requirements and that this factor is the one and only reason for Cabinet's decision, we nevertheless consider that the previous policy was by far the sounder of the two, and that the proposed reduction in sustenance will certainly result in an increased number of properties being abandoned. On the other hand, it must be remembered that a very large number of settlers are drawing a considerably reduced amount on that provided, and it may very logically be argued that if certain settlers can manage on the smaller amount, it is reasonable to apply

the reduction to others like situated. We would suggest, however, that you ask Cabinet to add to their decision a further clause, giving the board power to increase the allowance in special cases. A. R. Richardson. 27/9/18.

Now, for the first time we find that the board are not unanimous in their opinion, because the following footnote appears—

I cannot see eye to eye with the above.

The minute to the Minister on folio 101 represents my views on the matter. R. M. Leake.

I have already referred to Mr. Leake's views. We thought we would like to see payment made on the basis of work actually done. It was not agreed to because we could not see how to carry it out practically. In addition to the sustenance allowance given by the board, the Agricultural Bank has always advanced for work done in the way of clearing and, if we joined the two together, we would be paying for the same work twice over and the settler would be getting less. I then addressed the following minute to the Premier—

I submit a further minute from the board, as above, which has direct reference to Cabinet's decision as contained on page 97 of this file. Mr. Leake has placed on record his objection to the proposed alteration, while the other two members have signified their approval therewith, subject to more elastic power in dealing with special cases, and I would now recommend that you approve as follows—That single men be allowed a sum of not more than 5s., married men without children not more than 7s., and married men with children 9s. per day, according to the number of children. That the board be granted power in special cases to vary the amount paid to any individual settler at their discretion. R. T. Robinson, 1/10/18.

That came before Cabinet and the following note appears—

The Hon. the Minister for Industries—

I approve of the discretionary power suggested being given to the board. H. B. Lefroy, Premier, 21/10/18.

At this stage members will remember the whole question was debated in Parliament and I, as Minister for Industries, then discussed it with my friends of the Country party and arranged with the House that no deduction should be made in respect of the number of children, but 9s. per day should be paid if there were any children; otherwise 7s. a day. Consequently, Mr. Simpson wrote the following minute—

For consideration of the board: With reference to my minute on page 113, during the week, the Hon. the Minister has further discussed this matter with me in the presence of certain members of the Country party, and he has definitely intimated that he desires all married men with families to be treated on the basis of 9s. per day, unless mutual arrangements are made between the inspector and

settler to the contrary. Will you please intimate whether you agree to the further amendment of policy of sustenance payments in the manner stated. 6/12/18.

The board then wrote this minute which bears the initials of Mr. Richardson and Mr. Cooke.

I still think the Government, in view of financial conditions, were right to make distinction as between married men and single, and children or no children, reducing single men to 5s. per day, quite sufficient for sustenance, and would point out that the recommendation by Emu Hill farmers only affirms that 9s. per day was little enough for men with families and that a very slight reduction has been insisted on for men with families. A.R.R. F.C.

Mr. Leake added a note—

My views in regard to the sustenance allowance are expressed in the minute to the Minister dated 9th August, 1918, folio 101. R.M.L.

That rule was then put into force till the end of the year, and it worked quite satisfactorily. Mr. Mitchell, who was then not connected with the Government, wrote me on or two letters on the subject. In a letter wrote to him on the 12th March, 1919, showed what was in my mind—

Re sustenance allowance to board settler and your further comments as contained in yours of the 7th instant, I regret cannot see eye to eye with you on this matter, but nevertheless I appreciate your interest on behalf of such settlers and quite realise that your remarks have not been made with the object of criticising my administration, but rather the belief in your opinion. I am still desirous of winding up the board's affairs at the earliest possible date, but the advent of the soldier as a settler in the Wheat Belt will have a very important bearing on the position and considerably delay my intentions. I might interest you to know that forty-five clearances have already been granted as the result of the 1918-19 harvest, and this number will be considerably augmented. On the other hand, I regret the board has found it necessary to stop assistance in no fewer than sixty-two cases since last harvest, and here again I am informed that this number will still be increased. It is useless carrying a man on if he has no chance of success.

And so the payments went on in the ordinary course. Somewhere early in May we had a change in administration, and Mr. Colebatch became Premier. I handed over the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank to Mr. Mitchell, who was Minister for Lands, and took another portfolio myself. Apparently Mr. Mitchell at once took up the question with the general manager. As I said at the beginning, the general manager was opposed to any alteration in the policy that we had discussed for so many months and finally put into operation. I

will read the minute addressed to Mr. Mitchell, which shows that exactly. It is signed by the general manager and is dated 9th May last. It is as follows:—

I attach file dealing with the question of sustenance allowance and would draw your attention particularly to pages tabbed. The question of finance was the prime factor for the reduced allowance. Apart from this I consider the present ratio of 5s., 7s., and 9s. per day for single men, married men without family, and married men with families, is the most equitable one that can be adopted, as it must always be borne in mind that the payments made are merely advances that have to be repaid with interest. From experience it is generally accepted that the man with the help-mate does more work than the single man, as he is earlier and later at it owing to the household duties not falling upon his shoulders, while the general assistance rendered by the wife and children considerably reduce the advances necessary under the heading of wages. On the financial position the Under Treasurer is most consistent in urging reduction in the board's expenditure.

I should like to confirm that myself. From the time I took over the Industries Assistance Board to the time I left it the Under Treasurer and the Treasurer impressed upon me the necessity for the Industry's accounts being kept within bounds. Immediately following that, without consulting the board and in face of the protests, the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. Mitchell) restores the old rate—in fact on the same day—by the following minute addressed to the general manager—

I wish the old rate for work by Industries Board farmers reinstated. That is, the payment to be made at 9s. per day for actual work done. One day's pay should be given for each acre to cover cropping, harvesting, etc., where the area is under 250 acres. The farmer should be given a clearing contract to cover the period not engaged in cropping and harvesting, or if his farm is improved with the necessary cleared area he can work for another farmer. Dairying must be encouraged to this end—we should allow all butter proceeds to be retained as well as proceeds from pigs, unless the number kept is out of reason. If sufficient cows and pigs or sheep could be supplied and kept by the farmer to provide full living costs, we should reach the ideal position. Can this be done—even if only in a limited number of instances?

Hon. P. Collier: Was Mr. Mitchell Premier at the time?

Mr. ROBINSON: Not on the 9th May, I think. I believe Mr. Colebatch was Premier then. None of these matters came under my notice as Minister until within a couple of days of my resignation. I have only one more minute to refer to, and that is one to Mr. Simpson of the Industries Assistance

Board, who received these instructions from the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. Mitchell). I see this minute is signed, "J. M.," "Minister for Lands." Mr. Simpson's comments on it are dated 15th May, 1919. Amongst other things he says—

In the same way it is presumed that you do not intend this instruction of 9s. per day, or 9s. per acre, as the case may be, to apply rigidly in every case apart from those dealt with in the preceding paragraph. During the past few months I have submitted to the board, and in some cases arranged independently with the settler for a reduced sustenance allowance as the only alternative under which the board would continue assistance. To grant these men 9s. per day will mean that all such cases will require to be revised by the board, and I have no doubt would result in a very large number of stoppages which at present are being avoided by limited assistance as the only hope of recovery. Prior to reduction by your predecessor of sustenance allowance to single men and married men without families, a very continuous stream of complaints was being received from creditors owing to the unlimited cash at the disposal, particularly of single men, and failure to obtain a reduction of outstanding accounts with creditors of long standing. Since reduction of the allowance, these complaints have almost disappeared, and I have no doubt on announcement of your policy to reinstate 9s. per day that creditors will again be very much in evidence. Is it your intention to deal with these men in any special way? Another phase of this question also requires elucidation. In many cases clients of the board are farming on distinctly poor holdings as regards cleared land. To overcome the position only limited advances in many cases are being made, and the settler is compelled to work under the Agricultural Bank, clearing first-class country as the only hope of success. Is it your intention that 9s. per day should apply in such cases?

That was sent on to the general manager, who replied—

Yes. The inspector should be told not to force the 9s. into the hand of all farmers at once. Reverting to the old order must be brought about intelligently.

I think that minute is very significant. I wish to make no comments on the file, because it speaks for itself. I have no personal quarrel with the Premier (Hon. J. Mitchell) or the members of his Government. I do hold, however, that such circumstances as I have narrated should be incapable of coming about. The only way we can prevent them from coming about is to establish our Agricultural Bank and our Industries Assistance Board on the lines of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia which, as everyone knows, has been a magnificent success. It has been intelligently governed, has taken its place amongst the banks of the world,

and has been managed on sound business principles. I do not propose to labour this matter. I hope the Government will vote for the motion, as well as my hon. friends sitting on my right. I think I have given sufficient reason why the motion should be agreed to.

On motion by Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

PAPERS—AGENT GENERAL'S OFFICE, EMIGRATION OFFICER.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier ordered: That all papers relating to the proposed appointment of an officer in charge of emigration in London be laid on the Table.

MOTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from 27th August 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—1, The conditions of employment of the staff at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. 2, The methods under which patients are admitted into and detained in the hospital. 3, The fitness of Dr. Anderson to hold the position of Inspector General."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Brown—Beverley) [5.25]: I hardly think it necessary to debate at any great length the motion submitted by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones). Last year that hon. member brought before the House a motion similar to this. During the debate upon it, the then Honorary Minister (Mr. Underwood) fully explained the working of the Hospital for Insane at Claremont. It is, therefore, unnecessary to go into those particular details, and I will confine my remarks to those points which have now been brought forward by the member for Fremantle. To a large extent the points raised by him are founded on misrepresentation and exaggeration, and are untrue. I am sorry he is not present to-day to hear my remarks. He has taken an active part in much of the trouble which has occurred over the isolation of this institution. Very little was said about the hospital up to the time of its isolation. In January, when it seemed likely that the influenza epidemic would spread to this State, the staff were notified that should the epidemic break out here it would be necessary to isolate the hospital, and for the staff to remain in the hospital grounds. On the 9th June a notice, similar to that which was posted earlier, was posted stating that the hospital would be isolated, and that it was expected by the Inspector General that the whole staff would remain within the hospital. Shortly after that the staff became dissatisfied, and approached the Inspector General of the Insane. That officer was asked to remove the isolation restrictions

but this, of course, he refused to do. Meetings were held regarding the isolation, and members of the staff made it known that it was their intention to leave the institution. The Inspector General of the Insane brought this under my notice on practically the first day that I took over the portfolio of Colonial Secretary. I had not met him prior to that and was introduced to him then for the first time. He put the matter before me and it was discussed fully. The result was that I agreed to a notice being placed in the hospital to the effect that any of the staff who left the institution would be liable to instant dismissal.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was pretty rough on the chap who wanted to see his wife.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member might think so, but there are circumstances relating to that incident which will not stand repetition. If the hon. member knew them he would say that the Inspector General of the Insane was quite justified in taking the step he did. If we are not to have discipline in an institution of that kind, we will always have trouble. Whenever I have had men in my employment I have always expected them to carry out my instructions. I would immediately dismiss a man for disobedience; in fact I would get rid of him for that reason before any other. The members of the staff of the Claremont hospital were dissatisfied, and were leaving one by one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This particular man asked permission to go.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member is not correct in making that statement. The man in question went to the Inspector General and told him that he was going out of the institution, whether he was allowed to do so or not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would have done the same thing yourself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Two or three members of the staff went out under similar circumstances. If they had asked the Inspector General for permission to leave the institution, there is no doubt that that leave would have been given, because those men wanted to go out for a specific reason.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A kind of go on your knees and say, "Please, Sir, can I go out?"

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The climax was reached on the night of Sunday, the 20th inst., when the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) and Mr. Driver attended at the institution gates and addressed the staff from outside the fence. Those two gentlemen made inflammatory speeches.

Mr. Green: I don't think they could.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member knows better than that. They made inflammatory speeches and incited the members of the staff to leave the institution. I understand that shortly afterwards, the staff met and passed a resolution by a majority. I do not know how resolutions are taken at that institution. I believe that at

a meeting of that kind, where a few vote in favour and a few vote against, and a number do not vote at all, it is taken for granted that the motion is carried by a majority. The resolution asked that the isolation restrictions be removed. The member for Fremantle had previously mentioned that the Inspector General of Insane had acted in this matter without authority. I may inform hon. members that the Inspector General had a perfect right to do that. It is not much use closing the stable door after the horse has been stolen, and it was not necessary for me to call the board together to decide whether or not the hospital should be isolated. But in regard to the request made to me by the deputation that the isolation restrictions be removed, I consulted the Principal Medical Officer and the matter was also put before the board a few days later. The opinion was unanimously expressed that it was imperative that the restrictions should remain. Hon. members are aware that in the Eastern States, particularly in Tasmania, a great deal of trouble has occurred by reason of the failure to impose restrictions. In Tasmania, a number of the staff, irrespective of the patients, contracted the illness and the outcome was that the authorities in that State were compelled to get medical men and nurses from Melbourne to assist them in their trouble. After discussing the matter thoroughly with the Principal Medical Officer and the Board I decided that the restrictions should not be relaxed. The deputation were notified of that decision, and a request was made that some of those who had gone out should be reinstated.

Mr. Green: How many of the number who went out were dismissed?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot tell the hon. member exactly but I believe the number was 16 or 17.

The Minister for Mines: All who went out were dismissed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Naturally, those who went out of the hospital were not allowed to return. They absolutely disobeyed the instructions of the Inspector General and it was impossible to allow them to go back. With regard to the isolation restrictions, it is imperative that they should remain. The mental condition of the patients is such that it renders them more susceptible than the general public to a disease of this kind. If the disease once established itself in the institution, the mortality would be very heavy. So far as the restrictions themselves are concerned, everything possible is being done to make the position of those who are confined within the grounds of the institution as comfortable as possible. I admit it is hard to close in a number of people for an indefinite period, but we have done everything it was possible to do, and we are still doing all we can, to make life attractive there. Those of the staff who were living out are given their meals in the institution free of cost. The billiard rooms have been thrown open for the use of the

staff; picture shows are provided, and help is given in every direction to make the time pass as pleasantly as possible. Under the circumstances, the least the staff can do is to make some little self-denial, if not altogether for themselves, for the sake of the patients in the hospital. But it appears that there was a disturbing element amongst them and a number decided to go out. Those, of course, were not allowed to return. It was mentioned by the member for Fremantle that the steps of those who had left the institution had been dogged by the Inspector General, and that the Colonial Secretary's department were against them and that instructions had been given that they should not be employed in any of the institutions under the control of the department. I want to give that statement an emphatic denial. So far as I know nothing whatever in that direction has been done. I believe, however, some of the staff did apply for positions in the Health Department; they desired to get employment at the quarantine station at Blackboy, and I surmise that the reason why their services were not accepted was that, as they strongly objected to isolation at Claremont, they would also object to isolation at Blackboy, for the quarantine at Blackboy is as strict as it can be. I only surmise that that is so. Personally, I have taken no part, and neither has the Inspector General, in the direction of preventing these men getting positions outside. There are several other points in the speech of the member for Fremantle to which I desire to refer. He stated that the existing system, under which patients are admitted to the hospital, was also a matter that demanded investigation, and the hon. member also illustrated the Andinach case. It will be remembered, however, that a Royal Commission inquired into that, and exonerated the Inspector General from all blame. The hon. member stated that Andinach was grabbed by the police and taken away to the institution. That was an exaggerated statement; in fact the hon. member knows that is untrue. We have only to refer to last year's "Hansard" to prove that the hon. member's statement is not a correct one. It was clearly shown that it was absolutely essential to take away that unfortunate man because he was a danger. I will read the report which was written by Dr. Martel with regard to that case. The doctor wrote—

In reference to your request re the Andinach case, I have pleasure in submitting the following for your information. As nearly as I can remember on the morning of 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, who, 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—

and this is the point I wish to emphasise—when they had sent for me, I was told by a young lad (who I was given to understand was Andinach's 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 they had sent for the police to remove him. I was also informed that they 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.

That clearly shows the position in regard to that one case. The member for Fremantle knows well that before any person is taken to the Claremont hospital he has to be declared to be insane by two medical men, and the witness to the declaration must be a resident magistrate or two justices of the peace. Every precaution is taken in that direction. There is no wish, either on the part of the Government or the Inspector General of the Insane, to compel people to go into that institution. Hon. members will recollect that last year it was stated that the hospital was overcrowded and that further accommodation was required. Unfortunately the state of the finances has not allowed the Government to incur the large expenditure required for the additions. In moving this motion the member for Fremantle said that once patients were in the hospital there was little or no hope of their ever coming out. I want to give that assertion also a flat denial. No one has any inducement, and especially not the Inspector General of the Insane or his staff, to keep patients in the hospital if it is not necessary for them to be there.

Hon. P. Collier: On what facts do you base your denial of any obstacle being placed in the way of the inmates getting out?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have received requests from quite a number of inmates, who consider that they ought to be out of the institution, to inquire into their cases, and in every instance a perusal of the file has forced me to the conclusion that the Inspector General is quite justified in retaining the patient in the institution.

Hon. P. Collier: How can you tell that from a mere perusal of the files?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I acknowledge, of course, that the patient has a perfect right, and also a power under the Lunacy Act, if he cares to exercise it, to seek his release.

Mr. Smith: Can you say how many patients have been released during the last twelve months?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot give the hon. member those figures offhand.

Mr. Smith: Have any been released during the past twelve months?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: How often are the patients examined by medical men?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot at the moment tell the leader of the Opposition that.

Hon. P. Collier: It is the end of many of them when they get in there.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: A number have been released, though I cannot say how many. There is no inducement for anyone to keep them there if they are fit to be discharged. The place is overcrowded now, and even if that were not so, the staff are sufficiently humane to consider a case on its merits. If it is safe to discharge a patient, the Inspector General will certainly do so. The member for Fremantle also spoke of fractures that have occurred in the hospital. He asserted that the patients were badly treated and that there were broken arms and broken ribs and bruises and so forth. During the past year there have been only two fractures, both of which occurred in the case of old men. In one instance a patient was knocked down by another, with the result that his leg was fractured. The other fracture was the result of a fall. Hon. members are aware that the bones of the aged are much more brittle than those of younger people, and that in a person of advanced years a fall may easily break a limb. The member for Fremantle has exaggerated in that regard. He has referred to refractory cases. In that connection I am able to state that in 1915 a patient who struck Dr. Anderson was ordered into seclusion on bread and water for three days. This was done by the late Dr. Montgomery, and it was done more as a deterrent than as a punishment. That is the only case of the kind, and that case happened as far back as 1915. It is the only case of the kind known in the history of the hospital. Such cases are not, therefore, of frequent occurrence, as alleged by the member for Fremantle. The hon. member has also asserted that the Inspector General has at various times practically tortured patients in the hospital by administering to them deadly drugs. In speaking on this subject last year he mentioned "whitehouse," which after all turned out to be merely epsom salts. On this occasion he has spoken of a drug known as croton oil. All drugs are dangerous if they are used in greater strength than the official maximum; in that case they will certainly produce ill effects or may even prove fatal.

Mr. Green: Have you ever tried a maximum dose of croton oil?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have not, but I can inform the hon. member that croton oil may be bought from any chemist, no restriction being placed on its sale. I can also inform him that I myself have used croton oil for stock, that I have used it on cattle without ill effects.

Mr. Green: If it is good enough for horses, it is good enough for men?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The stomach of a horse is more sensitive to drugs than is the human stomach. Since the 1st January, 1909, during a period of over ten years, croton oil has been administered to only three patients in the Claremont hos-

pital—one in 1915, one in 1916, and one in 1917. All three were described as being extremely violent and impulsive. The last patient to whom croton oil was administered was a very dangerous man, who prior to his admission had murdered two persons. I have here some authorities which I wish to quote to hon. members in order to prove that croton oil is not such a deadly drug as the member for Fremantle has made out. The "Materia Medica, Pharmacy, Pharmacology, and Therapeutics" of Dr. W. Hale White, an eminent London physician, states—

Croton oil placed on the back of the tongue is, on account of its small bulk, a useful purgative for lunatics who refuse to take anything, and for unconscious patients, because in such cases it is swallowed reflexly and acts quickly, and therefore it is commonly given to those who are unconscious from apoplexy.

Another authority I have here is "Materia Medica and Therapeutics" by J. Mitchell Bruce, another London physician, who states in regard to croton oil—

The smallness of the dose, which can be put in food, renders it a convenient purgative for insane or unconscious patients.

I have yet another authority to submit to the House, Dr. A. S. Taylor's "Principles and Practice of Medical Jurisprudence," which is recognised as one of the highest authorities in the world. Evidently the member for Fremantle when speaking of the effects of croton oil was referring to the toxicological and not the therapeutic action of the oil. Dr. Taylor's work contains the following:—

In one case a druggist swallowed, by mistake for cod liver oil, half an ounce of croton oil. He felt a burning sensation in the throat and stomach, soon followed by vomiting and copious purging, with symptoms of collapse.

Let me point out that if one takes even mustard in large quantities the effects will be practically the same, and mustard is something that we always have on our tables and use every day. I continue my quotation—

He did not recover until after a fortnight. This man recovered after swallowing half an ounce of croton oil.

An aged woman died from the effects of an embrocation containing croton oil with other drugs. A teaspoonful was incautiously given to her; she immediately complained of a hot burning sensation in her throat. She died in convulsions in three days. A girl, aet. 19, took by mistake a teaspoonful of a liniment consisting of equal parts of croton and olive oils. In a day or two she recovered.

From the cases I have quoted hon. members will recognise that croton oil when used by skilled persons involves absolutely no danger. There is really nothing more for me to answer. I have justified the department on all the points raised in the speech of the member for Fremantle.

Mr. Lambert: Do you think there is any necessity for a layman to justify the use of croton oil?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have simply been quoting authorities to prove the incorrectness of the statements of the member for Fremantle with regard to croton oil. Undoubtedly the isolation which has been found necessary in connection with the hospital has caused a good deal of trouble. No doubt that isolation is the cause of this motion being submitted to the House. I hope hon. members will turn the motion down unanimously, or at least by a big majority. A Royal Commission is not required. It would cause a great deal of trouble and upset the staff and generally excite the patients. Moreover, it would involve unnecessary expense. If hon. members have specific cases in respect of which they can give the House good reason why investigation should be made, the better course will be to appoint a select committee for that purpose, and not a Royal Commission. I again express the hope that the House will vote this motion down.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [6.0]: I regret that the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones), who moved the motion, is not present, but I expect he will be here after the tea adjournment. I do not know enough about the methods under which patients are admitted and detained in the hospital to justify me in making any criticism in that direction, nor do I know anything against Dr. Anderson's treatment of patients in the hospital; but I feel there would have been no reason to ask for a Royal Commission if Dr. Anderson's treatment of the employees had not been hostile and ill-judged. The Colonial Secretary has explained at some length the isolation of the employees. There are, I believe, among the employees about 100 married men. The isolation was established, and none of those men were permitted to go outside. One of the married men desired to visit his wife, who was to undergo an operation. He asked the Inspector General in writing for permission to go.

The Colonial Secretary: No, he said he was going.

Mr. GREEN: It is not reasonable to suppose that any employee would approach the Inspector General and say "I am going out" without first asking whether he could go.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If he wanted to be dismissed he would not trouble to go to the Inspector General at all.

Mr. GREEN: Can we believe that an employee in a permanent job would say to the Inspector General, "I am going out"? I am not prepared to accept it. However, this man was not granted permission to go. His wife was to be operated upon. No official with reasonable sympathy for his staff would have refused that employee an opportunity to go and see his wife. The employee put up this proposition: He said, "I am prepared on return to go into isolation for seven days,

if necessary, without pay, in order that there may be no danger of infection to the other employees." The Inspector General himself has been leaving the place daily. Indeed he is here this evening. If the Inspector General can leave the institution without danger surely to goodness it is not dangerous for an employee to leave in the special circumstances I have mentioned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The officers should set an example to the men.

Hon. P. Collier: It is indicative of the high-handed, autocratic control of those institutions.

Mr. GREEN: The milkman is entering the institution daily and so, too, the coalman and the chauffeur.

The Colonial Secretary: The isolation must be effective, seeing that they have not had a single case of influenza there.

Mr. GREEN: If the Inspector General and his chauffeur and the milkman and the man with the coal can pass in and out, and if the chauffeur can get at the employees' table daily, without any cases of infection occurring there, it only proves that the conditions under which the employees have been confined in that institution are unfair and inhumane. I do not hold with men going to the gates of the institution and asking the employees to come out but it has to be remembered that the employees were so concerned over being isolated and cut off from their wives and families, that they held a meeting at which all were present and, notwithstanding that Dr. Atkinson himself was there, they unanimously agreed that they were prepared to leave the institution if they could not by other means get out. There was an understanding between man and man. They had agreed to stand together, and so when in consequence of the harsh superintendence over them 16 men went out, those who remained behind and had their jobs kept for them broke faith with the men they had agreed to accompany. In those circumstances, however much I may regret that a breach of authority was committed, I see in the men who went out a virtue which those who remained behind do not possess. If the men who remained behind had kept their undertaking to go out the authorities would have had to consider whether they could not take the lot back; but because only a few had the courage to stand for what they believed to be right, they were ignominiously sacked. In my opinion it would be only fair to reinstate them. I do not hold that one in authority over a number of men should be belittled, that he should be compelled to retire from a position he has taken up, but it must be remembered that the employees have rights, just as well as has the Inspector General. If the Inspector General had been reasonable in his handling of the situation the trouble would never have occurred, and there would be no danger of such a disturbance among the patients as the Colonial Secretary fears.

The Colonial Secretary: How could the staff be isolated if 10 or 15 of them were allowed out each week end?

Mr. GREEN: Does not the Colonial Secretary know that the Inspector General and his chauffeur, and the milkman, and the man with the coal—

The Colonial Secretary: Every precaution was taken. It was imperative that the Inspector General should leave the institution, for he had other institutions to attend to.

Mr. GREEN: That is all right, but if we have in the Inspector General an example of how a man may with safety leave the institution and dodge back again, is it not reasonable to expect that a little risk should be taken in regard to the employees?

The Colonial Secretary: And get the influenza in the institution.

Mr. GREEN: The chauffeur sits at the table where those 200 employees sit daily for their meals, yet nothing has happened. I am not trying to make a case against the isolation, but I say that employees who have given long and faithful service should be shown consideration.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is not too late now.

Mr. GREEN: It is not. I regret that the Inspector General did not look on the trouble from a reasonable point of view. Take the case of Bishop, one of the men dismissed. We are here to help returned soldiers, are we? That is what the National Government say they stand for. Bishop had 19 years of service during which he had never given any occasion for complaint. He went to the Front, where he put in three years' service with his two brothers, his two brothers who were shot down. He came back wounded; was reinstated in his old position; he walked out and was sacked! So much for the man who does service for his country. That is the treatment he shall receive from the National Government, supposed to stand for the men who have done so much! It remains for us to appeal for justice for such men. Bishop's case is a crying shame, and I am prepared to go to any part of the State and take up that case. The Minister for Works ought to bow his head in shame if he would stand for an act of that kind.

The Minister for Works: I would stand for discipline every time.

Mr. GREEN: I stand for discipline, too. Did not Bishop stand for discipline? He was three years at the Front, fighting the Minister's battle and mine. Surely if ever a man had to stand discipline it was Bishop! Is it not possible that that man, after his years at the Front, after the hell he suffered, had lost some of the calmness of his disposition; that he may have suffered something from the horrors of war and may not have been just as amenable to discipline after coming back as he was when he went to the Front?

The Minister for Works: You know that he resigned, that he was not sacked.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, but under certain circumstances which I need not go into. The fact that he was to retain his position shows that the resignation was forced on him.

Mr. Smith: Has he applied to be reinstated?

Mr. GREEN: Yes. He is anxious to be reinstated, and the Inspector General has been told of it. But he does not wish to reinstate him; he says he will not have him in any circumstances. The man was good enough to go to the Front, good enough to have his two brothers shot down, good enough to have 19 years of service, but not good enough to be given a chance to get back. So to-day he is a married man on the verge of starvation. If the Inspector General is not inherently humane, it is up to us to see that he acts in a humanitarian spirit towards his staff.

Mr. Davies: If the motion be carried, will it assist those employees?

Mr. GREEN: Yes. The first paragraph of the motion reads, "To inquire into the conditions of employment of the staff." What could be clearer? Bishop has been treated in a way in which no private employer would treat him.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GREEN: Before tea I was dealing with the case of attendant Bishop who was one of the 19 men dismissed for breaking quarantine. His case is one which should surely receive sympathetic attention from the Minister, because he had been 19 years an attendant, there was not a black mark against him, he had served his country, and had been reinstated on his return. If at times his actions were ill-advised, it must be remembered that such actions were taken as a result of a consultation of the whole of the employees of the asylum. Therefore, he kept faith with his fellow employees.

The Minister for Works: Why did he send in his resignation?

Mr. GREEN: Because he was compelled to. The Minister for Works: Why?

Mr. GREEN: He was advised to do so.

The Minister for Works: By one of his friends, I suppose?

Mr. GREEN: The Minister must recognise that we would not be interesting ourselves in defence of these men, were it not for the fact that they wish to get back to their jobs. Personally, I have gone to the extent of interviewing Dr. Anderson on two occasions and have seen the Colonial Secretary with a view to getting these men reinstated. I was prepared to even allow the proposed Royal Commission to be cast on one side if justice were only done. Nineteen men walked out of the Hospital for the Insane. Who were kept on? The rest of the men who had agreed to this action being taken. No fewer than 100 married men were incarcerated in the institution and I make bold to say, on the authority of men who know, that out of the 100 men, there were not 30 who did not break quarantine at one

time or another to go home and see their families. I do not use that as a charge against the men, but merely to show the impossible position in which they were placed. They broke quarantine because they recognised that the position was impossible. They met together and asked the doctor in charge to allow them to go out. The Old Men's Home was isolated similarly for a week or two, but the restriction was removed, and the attendants employed there have gone from and to the institution day in and day out, right up to the present, and there has not been a single case of influenza among the inmates of the home. Neither has there been a case of influenza in the Hospital for the Insane. I challenge the Colonial Secretary to say whether the department have not at present under consideration, a proposal to abolish the restriction at the Hospital for the Insane. The Government know in their hearts that the position is impossible, and the Inspector General is showing poor judgment and, indeed, a stiff-necked and intolerant attitude, by standing out against the reinstatement of these men. Bishop's is not the only case. I can quite understand one man being picked out as particularly bad even though he had long service behind him, but these men were sacked in a body and kept out of work—it amounts to that because men who have followed such duties for 20 years are unfitted to take up work which an average man might do. There is another case which illustrates the intolerant and unfair attitude of the Inspector General, the case of late attendant McGowan. The Colonial Secretary has the case well in mind because I, and numerous members, have interviewed him regarding it. McGowan did not break quarantine; he was not put off for any offence, and when this House knows the facts, I make bold to say members will not be prepared to stand behind the Inspector General or endorse his action. On the 7th December last, attendant McGowan took ill. He had never lost a day through sickness during his 13 years service at the institution. Dr. Bentley advised him to go home. After a few days he returned to work still pretty ill. Dr. Bentley examined him again, and took a tubercular test, the result of which was positive, which means that signs of tuberculosis were present. McGowan asked Dr. Bentley if he should consult another doctor. The outcome was that it was considered advisable for this old servant to go to the Sanatorium at Wooroloo. With a view to giving him a chance, he was granted three months absence on full pay and three months on half pay. I think this is the only case on record at the institution where an attendant, taken ill, has been reduced to half pay after the first three months. On the two occasions when McGowan's sputum was examined at the Sanatorium, it disclosed negative results, and his condition was so satisfactory that, on the recommendation of Dr. Montgomery, he went to the country for a few weeks—to Belka. Before the time for him to return to work had elapsed, he received a letter

from the secretary to the Inspector General of the Insane. Previous to that—on the 7th July of this year—a letter was sent by the acting Chief Resident Medical Officer at Woorloo Sanatorium to the Commissioner of Public Health as follows:—

Re James McGowan. In reply to your request in memo. of 2nd inst. for a report on the condition of Mr. J. McGowan at the time of his discharge from the Sanatorium, I submit the following notes on his condition on discharge:—His weight has increased and his sputum almost entirely disappeared; it was at all times during his sojourn here very scanty. It was twice tested about this time and on each occasion was negative. He could sleep very well and had a good appetite. His temperature was steady; he had no sweats; his general condition showed a decided improvement and he was strong enough to undertake regular work, provided it was not laborious. H. H. Montgomery, acting Chief Resident Medical Officer.

Members should bear in mind that that letter was dated the 7th July, 1919. On the 13th June of this year, 17 days before McGowan's leave expired, he received the following note from the Secretary to the Inspector General—

Attendant J. McGowan, care of Mr. R. Rule, Belka, via Merredin. It is with much regret that I have to inform you that as you are suffering from a complaint that, should you be allowed to resume your duties, would be likely to be communicated to patients in the institution, the Inspector General has decided to retire you from the service as from the 30th inst. Regretting the necessity for this step. I have, etc. W. Malcom, Secretary.

That discloses a lovely state of affairs. McGowan was given six months in which to recover and, 17 days before his leave expired, that letter was sent him. McGowan had been secretary of the Hospital Employees' Union for several years; perhaps that was the reason for his dismissal. His 13 years service at the institution were without blemish and unbroken by illness, but apparently it was thought not desirable to have him back. In face of the clean health certificate of the acting Chief Resident Medical Officer at Woorloo, this man was sacked before his time was up because he was suffering from a complaint—tuberculosis—likely to be communicated to the patients. Such a state of affairs is intolerable and unfair. Whatever there might be in the charges made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) regarding the treatment of patients in the institution, the attitude of the Inspector General towards the employees has been such as to stamp him entirely unfit to control the hospital and its employees. He has displayed neither sympathy, broadmindedness, nor any of the qualities essential for an Inspector General who has to deal with a body of employees, and has shown himself entirely unfit for the position.

The Minister for Mines: Nonsense!

Mr. GREEN: It is all very well for the Minister to say it is nonsense.

The Minister for Mines: I have not had any experience at the institution.

Mr. GREEN: The Minister ought to be there.

The Minister for Mines: We shall all be there in our turn.

Mr. GREEN: I shall not be there before the Minister. My mind does not change as his has done; it is steady. But I do not want to joke over a matter of this kind; it is too serious for party bickering. The Colonial Secretary was approached by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) regarding McGowan's case, and the Minister wrote as follows—

R. H. Underwood, Esq. As arranged with you over the telephone, I have had a personal interview with Mr. McGowan, ex-attendant at the Hospital for the Insane, and also I have discussed the case with the Inspector General. After having gone very carefully into the matter, I am of the opinion that it would be unwise to comply with Mr. McGowan's request for reinstatement in his old position. I may add that I have arrived at this decision in view of Mr. McGowan's state of health. F. T. Broun, Colonial Secretary, 22/7/19.

The Colonial Secretary arrived at this decision in view of McGowan's state of health, but he must have been misled because the man's health, on the authority of the most responsible officer in the State, was perfectly satisfactory and the man was able to do the work required of him. McGowan has told the Colonial Secretary he is prepared to go before an independent medical board and, if the board decide that the state of his health is such that he is not fit to be re-employed in his old position, he will abide by their decision. I submit that he has a sound case for reinstatement. I regret that through the stiff-necked and obstinate attitude of the Inspector General of the Insane, and through his inhumane attitude so far as the employees of the hospital are concerned, I have found it necessary to raise my voice in support of cases such as those I have mentioned.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.45]: I do not intend to go into the merits or demerits of this case. The Colonial Secretary has suggested that a select committee might be appointed, and states that he is opposed to the appointment of a Royal Commission. Seeing that this is the case, in all probability the Minister realises that some investigation is necessary.

The Colonial Secretary: I said that the hon. member should give proof of the necessity for a select committee.

Hon. P. Collier: What constitutes proof?

The Colonial Secretary: Concrete cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Whether or not the department is right with regard to the quarantining of the institution is a matter

very largely for the medical fraternity to say. I think I am safe in saying, however, that the quarantine regulations were carried out harshly. I interjected, when the Minister was speaking, that a man was refused permission to see his wife at a time when, in all probability, if he did not take that opportunity, he would never see her again alive. She was going through a serious operation but this man was definitely refused permission to see her.

The Minister for Mines: Who was that?

Mr. Green: Edwards.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I venture to say that any hon. member of this House would go to his wife in such circumstances, even if he had to walk over the dead bodies of the officials.

The Minister for Mines: Did he make a request to be allowed to go?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He did request to be allowed to go. The officials were not satisfied with that. People may make mistakes, and in my opinion the Inspector General did make a mistake in dealing with that case. The officials wanted to carry out the regulations to the utmost extreme. There was nothing against this man except that he went to see his wife, but when he was employed later on in another Government department steps were taken to force the hands of the officials of that department to the end that he might be dismissed from the service.

Hon. P. Collier: Who did that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot say.

Hon. P. Collier: He ought to be kicked out of the State, whoever he is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The request was made by those in charge of the Hospital for the Insane because this man had broken the quarantine regulations of that institution. Is that fair and just? It is not the proper way of dealing with a man, and shows that there is something wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: He will get £500 compensation for victimisation.

The Minister for Mines: If he proves it.

Hon. P. Collier: He will have a better chance of proving it than those wasters who are trying to prove it now.

The Minister for Mines: Don't you worry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If a select committee were appointed it would save the expense of a Royal Commission in the first place. Secondly, it would be able to make investigations which would, in all probability, satisfy those who are dissatisfied at present, as well as satisfy the public. If cases such as I have mentioned have really existed, it is most necessary that we should know the full facts. A select committee can investigate and report to the House whether the institution is being managed in a fair, just, and equitable manner, or not. I move an amendment—

That all the words after "that" be struck out and "a select committee be appointed to inquire into the conditions existing in and the management of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane" inserted in lieu.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [7.52]: I have no desire to go over all the ground that has been covered already by hon. members in speaking about the Hospital for the Insane. I am prepared to believe that, in all fairness to the Inspector General and staff of the institution, it is a most difficult one to control. There is no necessity for members to lash themselves into a fury concerning the necessity for an ordinary inquiry into the administration and conduct of this hospital. In my opinion the Inspector General is an efficient officer, and in the ordinary course of events he would receive the departmental support he is getting to-night. The Colonial Secretary, no doubt, feels justified in taking up the attitude that he must stop any inquiry concerning this public institution. There is, however, a restless feeling amongst the community which has existed for some time regarding the administration of the asylum. I would urge upon the Colonial Secretary the necessity for seriously considering the advisability of holding an inquiry along the lines suggested, not alone to settle the unrest in the minds of the public, but in justice to Dr. Anderson and his staff. No harm could be done by appointing a select committee to inquire into the allegations that have been made. The statements which have been made can only be effectively cleared up by such an inquiry. I do not think that Dr. Anderson need fear any investigation of this nature. Indeed, he ought to welcome it. There is no need for hon. members, as laymen, to inquire into the conduct of Dr. Anderson in his professional capacity. We may well believe that, when Dr. Anderson is called upon to prescribe for one of his patients, whether it be in the giving of croton oil, or any other form of medicine, he will prescribe just as any other professional man would do. It is not for laymen under the protection of this Chamber to allege anything against him by way of ex-parte statements, but statements have been made which are somewhat far-reaching. The policy adopted in the control and management of the institution has been brought into question and an investigation is needed. I hope that Dr. Anderson will not think he is without friends in this Chamber, or that hon. members do not appreciate to the fullest extent the difficult nature of the duties he is called upon to perform. I hope the Colonial Secretary will see the necessity for satisfying the House on the question and having an inquiry made into the many statements that have been put forward during the past 12 months regarding the hospital.

Mr. Green: You mean to say he has nothing to gain from a policy of hush.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not think the Colonial Secretary would favour a policy of hush. He is merely protecting the responsible officers. Possibly other members of the Chamber in a like position would do the same. The whole question is too serious to be treated lightly. I am not influenced by many of the statements which have been made, often of an extravagant nature, and

I am prepared to believe that many of them are without foundation in fact. I hope, for the sake of the reputation of the Inspector General, and the necessity which exists for his having control over the men under him, that the indiscretions which have been alleged against him have not been committed. When the Colonial Secretary said in a brief and light manner that an inquiry would unsettle the staff, he made a statement which was hardly worthy of him. I hope, in spite of a possible unsettling effect due to an inquiry, the Minister will see that it is a duty we owe to the people of the State that every allegation which has been made is probed to the bottom, and if proved, that an alteration is effected in the present management of the asylum. I urge upon him to adopt a tolerant attitude towards the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin). He should come out boldly and show that, in his Ministerial capacity, he has no desire to shield anyone connected with the institution, and that he is willing for the greatest publicity and most searching inquiry concerning the conduct of this very important Government institution.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle—on amendment) [8.0]: I have no objection to the amendment because I want hon. members to believe that I am quite sincere in my desire to get the affairs of the Claremont hospital set right. I believe that things are not as they should be there, and since the Colonial Secretary has accused me of having made exaggerated statements I can only reply that I fully believe that what I said was not an exaggeration but the truth, and that the only way in which I can prove to him and to hon. members that what I related were facts is by way of an inquiry of some kind. The only point on which I would be sorry to see a select committee substituted for a Royal Commission is that in regard to the taking of the evidence which, before a select committee, would not be on oath. I trust that an assurance will be given by the Minister that in the event of a select committee being appointed there will not be any victimisation of those men who will be courageous enough to come forward to give evidence. I would like to have that assurance before the House agrees to the amendment. In view of the amendment, which I do not intend to oppose, it may hardly be necessary for me to bring forward any further evidence as I intended to do when closing the debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is speaking to the amendment, and therefore is not closing the debate. He will have an opportunity of replying later on if he desires.

Mr. JONES: I do not wish to make statements which may be regarded as my own, but if an inquiry is to be held the facts which I have related, and others which I am aware of, can be substantiated. All I desire to do is to ease the mind of the public in connection with the affairs as they exist at the Claremont hospital. Allegations are being

freely made that things are not well there, and an inquiry can determine whether or not there should be an alteration in the management of that unfortunate institution. There is one thing I am satisfied about and it is that an inquiry will have the effect of endorsing the decision of the last Royal Commission held in connection with the Andinach case that there should be two attendants in charge of the mental ward at the Perth hospital. In spite of the ventilation which resulted from the Andinach inquiry, in spite of the fact that it was clearly proved that Andinach was severely handled on account of there being only one attendant at the mental ward of the Perth hospital, there is still one attendant there.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion does not touch on a suggested inquiry in connection with the Perth hospital.

Mr. JONES: The mental ward at that institution I think will be included in the methods under which patients are admitted.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a mental ward there and the hon. member must discriminate.

Mr. JONES: I am perfectly agreeable to the amendment; all I want is some inquiry. If everything is well with the Claremont hospital, as the Minister would have us believe, then the inquiry will do good; it will strengthen the position of the Inspector General.

The Colonial Secretary: Why have an inquiry?

Mr. JONES: I am only giving the Minister the benefit of the doubt, but if, as I confidently believe, things are not well at the Claremont hospital, then an inquiry is necessary, and in the interests of the community generally it is necessary that there should be some ventilation of the grievances which exist there. I shall not oppose the amendment.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [8.6]: I hope the House will not readily agree to the amendment.

Mr. Green: Then you want a Royal Commission?

The PREMIER: I do not think there is any need for either.

Mr. Green: You were not here during the debate.

Mr. Lutey: You have only just blown in.

The PREMIER: I was here when the member for Fremantle spoke before, and I have read a good deal about the Claremont hospital. Why should we appoint a Royal Commission at the request of any hon. member who happens to go to an institution and finds that he is not satisfied with what is going on there? Surely that is not sufficient justification for appointing a Royal Commission. The hon. member did wrong in going there to encourage members of the staff to leave the institution. Can an inquiry of this sort do any good? Moreover, what is there to inquire into? Will it assist the hon. member's case? I am certain it will not. It may be that Dr. Anderson has committed

some indiscretion, but surely it cannot be serious enough to justify the appointment of a Royal Commission or a select committee.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are other matters as well.

The PREMIER: What are they?

Mr. Green: What about Dr. Anderson's treatment of the employees?

The PREMIER: This is no ordinary institution. It is unfortunate that it should be necessary to have such an institution at all, but we have it and I believe it is well managed, and the restrictions which were imposed were necessary. Those restrictions should be obeyed by every member of the staff without question. If hon. members think that, then what is there to inquire into.

Mr. Green: What about the McGowan case?

The PREMIER: Must we not support the management when we know it is right?

Mr. Munsie: How do we know it is right?

The PREMIER: Because the hon. member has not proved that it is wrong. I ask hon. members to think very carefully before agreeing to this inquiry. If hon. members think they are going to have a select committee with evidence taken other than on oath they are very much mistaken. Even before a select committee evidence can be taken on oath; at least it would have to be done in this case, otherwise it would prove a very sad inquiry. I ask the House to consider well whether a case has been made out for inquiry. I do not think it has, and I hope hon. members will not agree to the appointment of a select committee.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8.10]: I will support either the motion or the amendment, I do not care which, because either will have the effect of causing an inquiry to be conducted into the management of an institution in which are a number of unfortunate people to whose interests the House should not be entirely dead. I have nothing to say with regard to Dr. Anderson as a medical man. I know nothing whatever regarding his capacity as an administrator; I admit both. But serious statements have been made in this House, and apart from those, we know that for a considerable time there has been an element of dissatisfaction at the Claremont asylum. Therefore we in this House should welcome any opportunity to clear up the matter. The Colonial Secretary, when speaking this afternoon, made no reply to the allegations respecting the case of McGowan.

The Colonial Secretary: It was not mentioned by the member for Fremantle.

Mr. TROY: The case of McGowan has been the subject of an interview and therefore should have been referred to by the Minister.

Mr. Green: And the case of Bishop was not replied to.

Mr. TROY: McGowan was an officer at the Claremont hospital for 13 years. There is nothing whatever against his character

or his ability. He was given leave of absence because of ill-health and after a time it was proved by the highest medical authority in the State that he was not the victim of a disease that it was thought he was showing symptoms of having contracted. Yet, before the expiration of his leave, McGowan received a letter from the department informing him that it was with regret that his services had to be dispensed with on account of his ill-health. This letter was signed "Your obedient servant," which, in my opinion, was adding insult to injury—the "servant" was giving an employee the sack. McGowan is perfectly willing to face a medical board so that they may fully investigate the state of his health. This is a case in which the Minister might exercise justice. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) referred to the case of a man named Edwards. This officer, I admit, left the institution in opposition to the wishes of the Inspector General. His object was to visit his wife who was about to undergo a serious operation, an operation which Dr. Atkinson said might result in her death.

The Colonial Secretary: He wrote and told the Inspector General he was leaving.

Mr. Green: Did he write?

The Colonial Secretary: I believe so.

Mr. TROY: The Colonial Secretary believes so! On the other hand, a copy of a letter exists wherein this man made application for leave. An injustice has been done him, and the Colonial Secretary, who should know of the facts, only "believes." That is what we want to get at. The Minister gets his statements from one source, and we get them from another. The Minister has not seen the correspondence. He only believes—believes on information from an interested source. I do not necessarily believe either side, and I want the fullest inquiry. The man Edwards did what any natural man would do. If it was the Minister's wife who was to undergo a serious operation, the Minister would go, and the gates of hell would not stop him.

The Colonial Secretary: But I would not write saying "I shall go whether you wish it or not."

Mr. TROY: The Minister admits that he has never seen the correspondence. On the other hand, I understand that correspondence exists showing that the man made application for leave. This House is entitled to do justice to one side or the other. During my experience of Parliamentary and public life I have found that there is a tendency in the minds of most men to believe the words of a person if he holds a high social or official position. On the other hand, no importance at all is attached to the word of a man who occupies a minor position. I have found, too, that there is a desire to take the word of a man occupying a high position, but that such a feeling does not exist in the case of a man occupying a lower position. It is as though the word of the latter were not as good as that of the former, whereas in fact

the word of the lower-placed man might be accepted more readily. The man of high position can get the ear of the Government or the Minister; he has social influences which he can use on his behalf. In my opinion it ought to be an accepted canon that the higher the position a man occupies, the more scrupulous he ought to be in meting out justice to those below him. I believe I have always stood for that principle, and I stand for it now. It is a Christian principle. From that standpoint alone, this House ought to say, "Anyhow, we are going to do justice by hearing both sides." As Minister I would not be prepared to sit there and be satisfied with having heard one side. Take, for illustration, the McLeod case, into which this House allowed an inquiry two years ago, after appeal upon appeal. This man McLeod consistently said he was innocent. The high officials said he was guilty—said it for three years. Ministers believed him to be guilty. This House, only because its patience was exhausted, allowed an appeal, and the man was found not guilty. The Royal Commissioner who heard the case condemned unsparingly those who had taken away that man's character and reputation. That is one case. Here we have an institution in which we know there is dissatisfaction. We know that one man, McGowan, has been sacked because of the allegation that his health is bad, while independent medical authorities say that it is not bad. McGowan asks for a medical board. There is also the case of the man who went to see his wife when she was believed to be at the point of death. He was sacked; and we had it on the word of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), who is not given to making wild statements, that an endeavour was made to have that man dismissed from another place after he left the asylum.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is correct, too.

Mr. TROY: In my opinion the man who pursues an under individual from his own sphere to another institution and tries to do him an injury there, is a most unworthy and contemptible scoundrel.

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear! That has been done by a number of men, according to the reports of proceedings before a Royal Commission now sitting.

Mr. TROY: I have done nothing of that sort.

Mr. Munsie: If it is done to a scab, it is good enough for him.

Mr. Green: The Minister for Mines believed in that formerly.

Mr. TROY: Why should I qualify my statements? I could qualify the Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: Quite so.

Mr. TROY: The Minister has become very reactionary—very reactionary indeed. I am surprised at the attitude he takes up. I must express my regret at the position I find him in.

The Minister for Mines: That does not worry me in the slightest.

Mr. TROY: I advise the Minister not to start worrying me. The Minister cannot bluff me. I know him too well. I know the Minister's strength; I know it is mostly bluff and skite.

The Minister for Mines: You are a marvel when speaking inside.

Mr. TROY: Or outside.

The Minister for Mines: I have been on the grass.

Mr. TROY: As for the Minister's challenging me out on the grass, he would not hurt me unless he fell on me. But I do say that in my opinion this House ought to do justice. I made no accusation against the Inspector General of the Insane. I know nothing about the man at all. But I do know that there is grave cause for inquiry. We hear that the inmates of the asylum have been treated badly. The Colonial Secretary this afternoon admitted that croton oil had been administered to them, and he quoted on the subject from certain medical authorities which I suppose were handed to him just as I have had an authority handed to me. His quotations were to the effect that croton oil was not injurious and that it was given in the case of lunatics.

Mr. Green: And horses.

Mr. TROY: The Minister made a startling observation that the stomach of an animal is more sensitive than the stomach of a human being.

The Colonial Secretary: To drugs.

Mr. TROY: I have had a little experience in this connection. I have given a horse 12 packets of salts, but I would not like to give that quantity to the Colonial Secretary. I have given a horse a bottle of linseed oil, but how would the Colonial Secretary get on after such an administration? I do not know whether "Black's Medical Dictionary" is an authority, but I think it is probably as competent as those quoted by the Colonial Secretary. According to "Black's Medical Dictionary"—

In apoplexy, delirium tremens, and head injuries, where it is wished to produce a copious motion rapidly, one drop of croton oil is given on a lump of sugar, or mixed with a few drops of olive oil, or of milk, and generally acts within an hour.

According to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," Eleventh Edition—

Applied to the skin, croton oil acts as a powerful irritant, inducing so much inflammation that definite pustules are formed.

The Colonial Secretary gave us to understand that it is a necessary medicine in the case of lunatics. But I gather that it is a necessary medicine only where the lunatic is ill and must have medicine but will not take it. And similarly in the case of apoplexy; a man is unconscious, and it is necessary to induce a rapid evacuation, and so he is given croton oil. But these unfortunate men in the asylum do not require this medicine. They attempted to strike the Inspector General, and for that reason they are laid out

with a few drops of croton oil. That is the result. They cannot do any further harm; they are laid out prostrate.

The Minister for Mines: That matter as regards striking the Inspector General has been exaggerated. I ask you to produce a single case where the Inspector General has had croton oil administered to a patient because that patient attempted to strike him.

Mr. Jones: We can prove it.

The Minister for Mines: It is all very well for you to talk about inquiries when you have nothing to lose.

Mr. TROY: The "Encyclopædia Britannica" further states—

Taken internally, even in the minute doses already detailed, croton oil very soon causes much colic and the occurrence of a fluid diarrhoea which usually recurs several times. It is characteristic of this purgative that it is a hydragogue even in minimal dose, the fluid secretions of the bowel being most markedly increased. The drug appears to act only upon the small intestine. In somewhat larger doses it produces severe gastro-enteritis. The flow of bile is somewhat increased.

The medical authorities state that croton oil is given to insane patients who refuse to take medicine, and to persons who are unconscious through apoplexy. But the statement made in this case is that croton oil is given at the Hospital for Insane not when medicine is necessary, but as a punishment. It causes severe colic and severe pain, and lays the patient out for the time being. If that is done, it is inhuman. I do not say it has been done.

Mr. Jones: The Colonial Secretary admitted that it had been done.

Mr. TROY: The Colonial Secretary said three drops were given. This authority says that one drop is sufficient. I believe five drops of croton oil will kill a person.

The Colonial Secretary: An ounce was given in one case, and the person survived.

Mr. TROY: That might be a case where the person required a large quantity of the drug in order to do him any good, or it may have been a case of an over-dose proving ineffective. Last year there was on the Eastern goldfields a remarkable case of a child that was almost drowned in a cyanide tank. The child was brought to life after an hour. It had taken into its stomach a large quantity of cyanide water. Yet that child recovered. We know that the smallest quantity of cyanide solution will poison a man very quickly. That was a case of over-dose, and it may have been the same in the case mentioned by the Colonial Secretary. The Minister said this afternoon that there were no cases since 1909 of patients being put on bread and water. I have been informed by men who are prepared to repeat their statements on oath, and who have witnesses prepared to support them under oath, that as late as last year three patients were put on bread and water for seven days, and only allowed canvas sheets to sleep on, because in

a state of delirium they had raised their hands to strike the Inspector General. Allowance must be made for a lunatic who raises his hand to strike anybody. To put an unfortunate patient on bread and water for seven days and force him to sleep on a canvas sheet is most inhuman. If that has occurred, this House ought not to stand in the way of an inquiry.

The Colonial Secretary: What proof can you give?

Mr. TROY: We can give no proof whatever unless the Minister agrees to either the motion or the amendment. I will accept no proof unless it is given on oath, unless the persons who can give information are afforded an opportunity of giving it on oath. But how can proof be given if the Minister and the Government stand in the way of this opportunity which is being asked for by both the motion and the amendment? Does the Minister want proof, or is he prepared to take an *ex parte* statement? I am just as willing to believe the Inspector General as to believe the other man. These statements have been made to-night and it is for the House to see that justice is done. I am surprised that the Government should oppose even the amendment.

Mr. Green: The Colonial Secretary indicated that he would accept it.

The Colonial Secretary: I did not. I said we wanted proof of justification for holding the inquiry.

Mr. TROY: Will the Minister deny that McGowan was sacked on the allegation that he was in ill-health? Will the Minister deny that McGowan was prepared to go before a medical board and accept their verdict? Then there is the case of the man Edwards, who was sacked because he went to see his wife. The member for North-East Fremantle has stated that this man was pursued when he received an appointment in another institution.

The Colonial Secretary: What proof have you?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will you deny it?

The Colonial Secretary: I know nothing of it.

Mr. Green: You know all about McGowan's case.

Mr. TROY: The Minister admits that he does not know. Yet he will not agree to an inquiry.

The Colonial Secretary: You do not ask for a select committee to inquire into the dogging of men from billet to billet.

Mr. TROY: We are asking that this question shall be inquired into and full justice done. I am not satisfied to take the word of a man in such a case, no matter how high his social status. I remember reading some time ago that Lord Beaconsfield in a letter to Mr. Gladstone said it was remarkable that in the hearts of men in high positions there was a greater desire to do injustice than to do justice. Power is the curse of many men. A man perfectly accessible in normal times

is quite inaccessible when he gets into power. In every era power in the hands of otherwise reasonable men has been the cause of much injustice and much bitter injury to others.

The Minister for Mines: A select committee will not alter that.

Mr. TROY: If a man tyrannical in his power finds that his autocratic sway is being buttressed and supported by Ministers, he will carry on. He will say, "I can do as I like. You have to bow to me." But if Parliament proposes to supervise his administration, fear, not necessarily that he will lose his position, but of what men may think of him, will assist in getting justice from him. In the case of most men, once they secure power they become autocratic and arrogant and in many cases they do scant justice to those under them. I do not lay this charge against the Inspector General of the Insane. I know nothing detrimental to his character, but the statements made here have been sufficiently strong to induce me, as a representative of the people, to insist upon justice being done to the meanest person in the community. Because of that I will support either the motion or the amendment.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [8.35]: It is my intention to support the amendment. I cannot see why it is opposed, because in the interests of the Inspector General and in the interests of the institution, the matter ought to be cleared up. If the inquiry shows that there has been nothing wrong, it will prove that the criticism is without foundation. I know nothing against the Inspector General. I have met him on one or two occasions, and he has treated me with the utmost courtesy. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is general dissatisfaction, and I think it right that we should have an inquiry.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [8.37]: I have listened with interest to the speeches made in regard to the proposed inquiry, and I say honestly I think a case has not been made out either for a Royal Commission or for a select committee. But in the two cases mentioned, the one by the member for Kalgoorlie and the other by the member for North-East Fremantle, we should have an assurance from the Minister that they shall be inquired into.

Hon. T. Walker: Then a case has been made out for an inquiry.

Mr. DAVIES: Oh, no. But if the Minister will give an assurance that those two cases shall be inquired into, it will influence my vote.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	17
Majority for	5

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Brown	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Davies	Mr. Smith
Mr. Green	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)
Mr. Lutey	

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Broun	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Duff	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Sir H. B. Lefroy	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Maley	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

Mr. Johnston: Will the member for Fremantle (Mr. Jones) or the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) be chairman of the select committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: It generally follows that the mover of the motion for a select committee becomes chairman.

Sir H. B. Lefroy: Will the member for Fremantle, and the member for North-East Fremantle, be ex officio members of the committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for North-East Fremantle will be ex officio a member of the committee, and there will be no need to ballot for him. If members desire that the member for Fremantle be on the committee, it will be necessary to vote for him.

Ballot taken and a select committee appointed consisting of Messrs. Angelo, Brown, Jones, Stubbs, and the mover (Hon. W. C. Angwin).

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.59]: I move—

That the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit on days on which the House stands adjourned, take evidence on oath, and report on Wednesday, 15th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9 p.m.