

the existing districts for machinery purposes. In 1911 we were fortunate in being able to induce the Commonwealth to permit the local option vote to be taken with the Federal referendum, and the only cost the State was put to was the extra money involved. This came to £954. It is estimated that to take a local option vote separately would cost between £4,000 and £5,000—hence the desire to postpone the vote till 1921. It is felt that since all the districts, excepting Gascoyne, voted against increase of licenses, and since the other questions of reduction or prohibition cannot be submitted until 1921, it is not worth while spending £4,000 or £5,000 to submit to the electors a question in which they doubtless would take very little interest, and the submission of which would probably result in confirming the vote of 1911. The proposal, therefore, is that the Government be exempted from taking the poll in 1918, and that the result of the poll taken in 1911 stand until the full measure of local option comes into force in 1921. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 6th February, 1918.

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

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY — PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER [4.33]: Accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address-in-reply, I have waited upon His Excellency the Governor, and presented the Address agreed to by the House in reply to His Excellency's Speech on opening Parliament, and His Excellency has been pleased to reply in the following terms:—

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, in the name and on behalf of His Most Gracious Majesty the King, I thank you for your Address. (Signed) William Ellison-Macartney. Governor.

### URGENCY MOTION — AGRICULTURAL ROYAL COMMISSION

Mr. SPEAKER [4.42]: I have received the following communication from the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany)—

I desire to move the adjournment of the House in order to debate a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the large expenditure still being incurred by the State owing to the continued expense of the Royal Commission on the Agricultural Industries of Western Australia.

The subject matter of the letter is in order. If seven hon. members will stand in their places this will decide the question of the urgency of the matter.

Seven members having risen in their places,

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [4.43] said: In moving the adjournment of the House, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I have no desire to hamper the development of the Agricultural industry in this State. It will be admitted, at all events by members representing agricultural constituencies, that during the past six years or more goldfields members have been always anxious to assist in doing anything they possibly can to develop our agricultural industry, but I think, and believe I shall be able to show to this House, that the expenditure of State money which is now going on in keeping this Commission in existence is doing nothing, and cannot possibly do anything, to help to develop the agricultural industries of Western Australia. This Commission was appointed by a recent Government. It is a legacy from the previous set of administrators in this State. I have no desire here to touch upon the appointment or the conditions of the appointment of the members of that Commission in any way, neither have I any desire to reflect upon the gentlemen who compose this Commission. I do not wish to give hon. members of this House an impression that I believe that the members of this Commission are, if I may say so, farming the Commission, or that they are making anything out of it. I do not wish to set up that impression at all, for I believe that these gentlemen in carrying out their duties are neglecting their own business, and that in all probability they are nothing whatever in pocket from any fees which they may receive from the State in the conduct of their work in connection with this Royal Commission. This Commission was appointed in September, 1916, and it has now been in existence for a period of 16 months. As the result of their labours up to date, we have before us a bulky report which was presented to Parliament last week. I would like to ask whether anything which is likely to be of value to the State, as the result of the Commission's labours, is to come from this report. The Commission have taken evidence in various country districts of the State, as well as in the City, and they have also taken evidence in some of the Eastern States. I would venture to say that there can be no evidence of any value that is likely to be given in Western Australia which cannot be obtained from the Agricultural Department, or from the departmental officers. Such evidence being in exist-

ence, I would like to ask what have our agricultural experts been doing during the past eight or nine years? We have had a Wheat Commissioner in Mr. Sutton, a Commissioner for the South-West in Mr. Connor, a Commissioner for the Fruit Industry, Mr. Moody, and also Dr. Stoward, and Professor Paterson, of the University. Each of these gentlemen, I believe, is a capable man. If they had not been capable they should not have occupied the positions allotted to them. They have been paid very well for seven or eight years past to investigate the various phases of agricultural development in Western Australia, and if it is possible for the Agricultural Commission to get further evidence to assist in the development of the industry, what have these alleged experts been doing during the whole time they have been employed by the State?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Commission found out that there was a shortage of doctors in the country.

Mr. MULLANY: I have not yet had time to go through the whole of the report and on that account I trust hon. members will let me down lightly. I do, however, want to deal seriously with the question of the existence of not only the Agricultural, but the other Royal Commission. In a country such as Australia, where we have so many Parliaments and so many members of Parliament, it is undoubtedly a most serious reflection upon these Parliaments and the members to practically tell them that they cannot carry on the affairs of the State, that those affairs must be investigated by Royal Commissions. That is what the whole question really amounts to. I leave it to hon. members to peruse the report and to express an opinion as to whether the recommendations made by the Commission will, or will not, be of practical value. In reply to a question asked by the leader of the Opposition last week, the Premier informed the House that the cost to date of the Agricultural Commission was no less a sum than £5,094 8s. 2d. Again, I want to know whether the State is going to get any recompense for this expenditure. That recompense is certainly not to be found in the report of the Commission, and I do not think there is any possibility of the State ever being rewarded as a result of the work which the Commission has done. Another aspect is that whilst the gentlemen who constitute the Commission may be fully competent to move about this State, or the other States, to take evidence in every centre that they can, what I would ask is how is the Commission going to convey the value of their deductions to the men on the land in Western Australia? A mass of evidence has been taken in many centres and it has been reported word for word. This can go out to the agriculturalists in the State, and if they so desire they can put in their time wading through it. Then they may find something of value. But is that treating the State fairly? If the Government, or Parliament, cannot carry on the affairs of the State without practically handing them over to a

Royal Commission, it is time we all got out. This Royal Commission was appointed not by Parliament but by Ministers in office in September, 1916.

Mr. Troy: Who were they?

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member knows well who they were and the hon. member may have some knowledge as to what the conditions of the appointment were.

Mr. Troy: They were appointed by the party which you are supporting.

Mr. MULLANY: I am in this House to support, not Ministers or parties, but measures which I think will do something for the State, and that is why I am on my feet to-day.

Mr. Troy: You are merely posing, that is all.

Mr. MULLANY: There is no one who can pose better in this House than the hon. member for Mount Magnet. Notwithstanding his unseemly interruption, I intend to go on with the motion which I have moved. The bulky report which we have before us contains the result of the Commission's labours to date. On the first page of the report hon. members will see that the cost of printing it amounted to £671 and to that must be added the cost of the lithographic work, £11 5s., making a total of £682 5s. I am not aware whether this sum is included in the reply given by the Premier to the member for Boulder last week. For all I know, seeing that the report has been issued since then, that total of £682 may be in addition to the figures quoted by the Premier. I find on reference to the report that the last sitting of the Commission took place on the 4th September, 1916. I, like many other members of the House, thought, when the Commission ceased their sittings at that time, that they had completed their labours, and that all we had to look forward to was the presentation of the report. However, I find that I was mistaken. I find now that this is merely a progress report and that the Commission have since been taking evidence in the south-western portion of the State. The "West Australian" announced one day last week that the Commission were going to make a third tour of the South-West. This great part of State, we have heard for many years past, is capable of supplying all the dairy produce that Western Australia can use, and it has been pointed out year after year that over £1,000 per day goes out of Western Australia for the purchase of dairy produce. Again, I want to know, if that is the case, why the South-West does not to-day produce enough to meet our own requirements? Is it necessary for this Commission to make a third tour of the South-West in order to secure further evidence on this question, when we have had employed in the State for some years past a Commissioner in the person of Mr. Connor, whose duties should have kept him occupied in the direction of bringing about an increase in the production in the South-West? I am not complaining about money being spent to help in the development of any part of the State, but I do say that no mem-

ber of this Assembly, and no Government, can show that we are going to get value for money expended as the result of the labours of the Commission. I want to know from Ministers for how long this is to go on. As the Commission has been in existence for such a lengthy period, is it to remain in existence as long as ever the members of it please? Has anyone power to say what they shall do and for how much longer they shall continue their labours? I want to know who has the power to say exactly what shall and shall not be printed in the evidence which this Commission has taken. I want to leave it to the common sense of this House to say whether it was necessary to go in for all this expensive printing in connection with the preparation of the report. Of what value can this report be to the members of the Assembly? Could not the evidence have been condensed? Again, I would ask whether the chairman of this Commission is supreme and whether anything that gentleman says must be done will have to be done, and paid for, by the Government. We do not seem to have any means of finding out how long the Commission is going to continue its labours, and whether, in another 18 months from now, we are to be presented with another bulky report at similar, or perhaps increased expense. I have not submitted the motion to the House with the idea of embarrassing the present Government, neither am I posing, as the member for Mt. Magnet would have the House to believe; at the same time I wish to give members of both sides of the House, and especially to those members who I know are dissatisfied with the long continued existence of this Commission, an opportunity to express an opinion here, and I also wish to give Ministers who are responsible for the continuance of this Commission, the opportunity to make an announcement, if they can do so, as to how much longer the Commission is going to remain in existence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [4.58]: I second the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.59]: I will be pleased to inform hon. members of the position with regard to the Agricultural Commission, but I fully expected, first, to hear some of my friends on my right express an opinion with regard to the investigations which have been carried on by the Commission. Hon. members representing the farming community should be willing to express their opinions. It must be remembered that this Commission was appointed in September of 1916 for a definite purpose. That purpose was to inquire into and report upon the position generally of the farming industry in Western Australia, the improvement of the conditions under which such industry is carried on, and the methods necessary to ensure such improvements; the extension of the industry with the view to increase in production to the fullest possible extent, with recommendations as to further settlement of the lands in the South-Western division of the State, such inquiry to include marketing facilities, manufactories, including bacon-curing, butter-making, jams and preserves for

home consumption and export; and special attention being directed to the area necessary for successful operations by wheat farmers and the possibility of carrying stock, cattle, sheep and pigs, and to intense culture in the wetter parts of the State, including dairying, stock-raising, and other branches of the industry; inquiry being also made on general lines into schemes for the assistance of farmers under the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act and the Industries Assistance Act. There was very wide scope in the directions given to the Royal Commission and, as hon. members know, once a Royal Commission is appointed it is very difficult for the Government to interfere with that Commission. I remember that some 20 years ago a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the mining industry. That Commission sat for quite a year and a half, and the resultant report was just as bulky as this interim report which has been handed in by the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the agricultural industry. The hon. member asks whether the Government have adopted any of the suggestions here made. We have only just had this report presented to us, and there has not yet been time to go into it and see if it contains any suggestions that might be useful in the development of the farming industry. I agree with the hon. member that it is unwise to spend money in this direction unless a corresponding benefit can accrue to the country, but I would like to inform the hon. member that the Government have been very anxious that this Royal Commission should bring their labours to a close. One of the first acts of the present Government was to impress upon the commissioners the desirability of concluding their labours as early as possible. Hon. members will realise that a Royal Commission having started on a great work like this, which I hope will be useful to the country, it would be unwise to stop their work completely until they had investigated thoroughly all the matters entrusted to them in the terms of their commission. As a matter of fact, the commissioners did stop work in September last, the reason being that they had to examine and report on the country in the South-West, as prescribed in their commission, and up to that time they had been unable to do so owing to the condition of the weather. They could not properly go into the South-West until the wet season was over.

Hon. P. Collier: Was that their reason?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought it was because they had become somewhat fatigued as the result of their labours.

The PREMIER: No. It was impossible for them to carry on their investigations in the South-West during the wet season. As soon as the summer came, they at once started on their investigations in the South-West. That work is now almost complete, and I have informed the Commission that it is the desire of the Government that their work should be completed as early as pos-

sible, and that the final report should be in the hands of the Government by the end of this month. Further than that the Government have not gone.

Hon. P. Collier: They are still taking evidence, are they not?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: Then it will be impossible for them to finalise their report by the end of this month.

The PREMIER: They have almost completed their investigations, and they expect to be able to hand in their report by the end of this month. I can assure hon. members that the Government desire that the work of the Commission should be brought to a close as early as possible. I think that work should be of service to Western Australia. I certainly hope it will be. Many of us will not gain anything fresh from the Commission. Those who have been engaged in farming and agricultural and pastoral pursuits all their lives may not gain any benefit from the work of the Commission, but there is a large number of farmers in Western Australia who have not had a similarly wide experience, and they, if they care to study the work of the Commission, should be able to obtain much useful information which will assist them in their avocation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can they secure copies of the report?

The PREMIER: Any man requiring a copy of the report will have to pay 11s. 6d. for it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose the Industries Assistance Board will pay that?

The PREMIER: It is not a very large amount for a valuable document such as this. I realise that the hon. member who moved the motion did not do so with any view to embarrassing the Government. Probably he feels, as many others do, that the work of the Commission has extended over a very long time and that the expenses in connection therewith have been very considerable, and consequently it is only right and proper that the work of the Commission should be completed as soon as possible. Royal Commissions are nothing novel. They have been appointed at all times in the history of the State. I have frequently heard expressed in the House the opinion that Royal Commissions do no good, that no benefit has been derived by the State from such bodies. It is difficult to say exactly where the benefit can be derived from the investigations and reports of Royal Commissions; at the same time I am sure that any common-sense man will realise that where a number of practical men devote their whole attention to an important matter their investigations should be of benefit to the country, and to those engaged in the industry in regard to which the commissioners are carrying on investigations. I am convinced that every effort will be made to place the final report of this Commission in the hands of His Excellency by the end of the present month. It would have been a great pity to curtail the work of the Commission, seeing that so much expense has been already incurred. I hope the Government may find many useful suggestions and

recommendations in the report of the Commission. I am certain that the gentlemen who have been engaged in this work will be very glad to see its completion, because it has not been greatly to their advantage to have to give up their own work in order to carry on their investigations as commissioners. As I have already stated, I am hopeful that the work of the Commission will be completed by the end of the present month.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.12]: The member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) is to be commended for having brought this question before the House. It appears to me that the commissioners have dealt with a considerable number of subjects quite apart from the agricultural industry altogether, while leaving alone other subjects which they ought to have tackled. There is the question of the State Implement Works. I think an endeavour should be made to get a clear expression of opinion from the House as to whether these implement works should continue operations or be closed down. If it is the desire of the Ministry to close them down, it ought to be made known. The shilly-shallying of the present Ministry, who are apparently afraid to take the House into their confidence, is altogether disquieting.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why is it particularly worrying you?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not worrying me at all, but in regard to big trading concerns of the description of the State Implement Works the House has a right to know from the Government whether it is intended to carry on the works. If these works are to be carried on they should be placed on a business-like basis, in order that they might be of enhanced benefit to the farmers. There is another matter I wish to speak on, a matter which was investigated by the Royal Commission; and that is the superphosphate industry of this State. It appears the Royal Commission took some evidence in camera in this connection. We had a suggestion the other day from the Treasurer that this State should come to the rescue of the superphosphate manufacturers of Western Australia and practically charter vessels to carry tri-calcic phosphate from Christmas Island to Western Australia.

Mr. Harrison: What would you suggest?

Mr. LAMBERT: If we are to come to the rescue of the superphosphate manufacturers of this State by obtaining for them tri-calcic phosphate, I suggest that the Government themselves should carry on the industry with great advantage to the farmers of this country. The Royal Commission, with expert knowledge at their disposal, would have done well to map out for the farmers of this State when and where they should use mineral manure and the nature of the mineral manure they should use. Had that been done, it would not have mattered if the Royal Commission had cost £20,000; the money would have been well spent. Moreover, if the Royal Commission can show the farmers of this State how to obtain superphosphate at 5s. per ton cheaper than the present price, the expenditure of £20,000 on the Royal Commission would also have been money well spent. Mineral manure is just as essential to the land of Western Australia as

is the rainfall. Yet we find that because certain people in this State are interested in the manufacture of superphosphate, the Royal Commission take evidence in camera, and the outside public are not allowed an opportunity of knowing what profit the manufacturers are making, nor can they obtain any information on the subject of the manufacture. If the Premier has any regard whatever for the farming industry of this State, he will definitely instruct the Royal Commission to institute a thorough inquiry into the ramifications of the superphosphate industry of Western Australia. That is particularly desirable at the present time, when the superphosphate manufacturers are putting forward demands to the State Government that the State should charter boats to bring tricalcic phosphate here. If William Crosbie & Sons, Ltd., of Sydney, will not permit the State of Western Australia to buy tricalcic phosphate, then our Government should put their expert departmental officers on to investigate the Abrolhos Islands guano and see whether we cannot utilise that guano to a much greater extent and to much better purpose than is the case at present. The Abrolhos Islands guano deposits are not now being worked in the same scientific manner as are other deposits elsewhere in the world. At the Abrolhos Islands the deposits are leased, and the guano is picked out in a promiscuous fashion and afterwards used in a promiscuous manner. The Royal Commission might well investigate this subject, and obtain scientific advice for the benefit of our farmers, so that these would know exactly when and where to use the varying grades and different forms of mineral manures and superphosphates. In that event, the Royal Commission would be of some benefit to this State. Another matter with which the Royal Commission have not dealt is the refuse—blood and bone—and other manures coming from the abattoirs of Western Australia, which at present are controlled by private individuals. Certainly the Premier will be lacking in his duty to our farmers if he fails to instruct the Royal Commission definitely that Parliament desires some information upon this all-important matter.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: You want the Royal Commission to go on.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not care if they go on, and I do not care if they cost another £5,000, so long as their labours result in some lasting benefit to Western Australia. To object to a small amount of money spent on investigation as though it were wasted, is to take a nonsensical and parochial view. I do contend, however, that the Royal Commission have embarked on some very nonsensical investigations, from which absolutely no benefit can result to our farmers. Some of their report is absolute rubbish.

Mr. Harrison: Which part do you consider rubbish?

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Avon should have a very fair idea of, and should be rather a good authority on, rubbish. I tell that hon. member that the Royal Commission should not have touched subjects such as electoral matters, taxation matters, and many

other things which are in nowise the concern of a Royal Commission on Agriculture.

Mr. Harrison: Have you referred to page 11 of the index as regards fertilisers?

Mr. LAMBERT: I know about the subject, because I have discussed it with those who have investigated it.

Mr. Hardwick: I do not think you have read the report.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that if I read the report I would find it as dull as is the hon. member who has just interjected. My desire is to bring forward certain matters. I undoubtedly hold that the House should have an idea whether the Government intend to close down the Implement Works, or whether, if the Government are going to continue them, they will be put on a basis which will make them of some benefit to the farmers. However, I respectfully suggest to the Premier that he ask the Royal Commission to thoroughly investigate the superphosphate industry of the State, and I particularly request those who represent farming interests in this Chamber, and are absolutely in the position now, as they have been in the past, to ask the Government for favours—I request them to see that the subject is thoroughly investigated in the interests of those whom they represent, or are supposed to represent, here.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [5.23]: I must confess that I have as yet only partially recovered from the hit on the point, as it were, administered to the Country party by the motion of the member for Menzies. Looking back to the date of the appointment of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, and taking into account the condition of the industry, it must be admitted that the appointment of the Commission was absolutely warranted. The land settlement policy of past Governments was, to put it as strongly as I may be allowed, absolutely rotten. People were induced to come out to this country and select land on absolutely gross misrepresentations. People who did not know the front part of a horse from the back part, and who knew absolutely nothing of the conditions of living out in the bush, were led to believe that they could make a living here by tickling the soil.

Mr. Munsie: Who was responsible for those misrepresentations?

Mr. MALEY: I do not know. Possibly some enthusiasts of the Immigration Office. Specious promises were held out to induce immigration, and above everything else, the people were told that they could make a living at wheat growing alone. That statement, in my opinion, represents one of the greatest crimes ever committed by any Government. The member for Menzies has complained that in the past the attention of the House has been given principally to the questions affecting the agricultural industry. I endeavoured to take down the member's actual words, and they were:—

The attention of the House has been almost wholly taken up with agricultural matters.

Mr. Munsie: He is not wrong so far as the last 4½ years are concerned.

Mr. MALEY: The member for Menzies should have welcomed the appointment of the Royal

Commission, and if he will take the trouble to read their interim report he will gain some information that will enable him to cast his vote in an intelligent manner. It has been asserted that nothing good can emanate from the Commission. Let me, however, draw the attention of hon. members to paragraph 77 of the Commission's interim report, which paragraph is headed "Rabbits and Dogs"—

On 11th November, 1916, a recommendation was sent to the Government emphasising the urgency of this question, and the desirability of the Government assisting to cope with this menace to the State's security, as follows:—The Commission has just returned from a tour, traversing the Merredin loop line and Mount Marshall spur line, and regrets to advise that rabbits are increasing very much over these dry areas, so much so that around the lake country, in the vicinity of Cowcowing in particular, serious damage is being done to the crops. Apparently these rabbits have migrated from further north, as the universal testimony is that, until the present season, they were a negligible quantity, and that they have suddenly increased. The members of the Commission are unanimous in considering that the matter should be specially laid before you as a case for immediate and urgent action. We think that a specially combined effort should be made to lay poison in an organised manner wherever rabbits are bad, and particularly around the lakes, which are their breeding grounds. We also suggest that, by arrangement with the roads boards and other public bodies, all dams should be netted in this summer, as nearly simultaneously as possible, in the affected areas, if netting is procurable. We would also suggest that poison should be supplied to settlers free of charge. We find that most of the settlers are already doing their best to cope with the trouble, but that the great drawback is that the rabbits are coming in from unoccupied Crown lands. We think the best results will probably be secured if the free supply of poison is granted at once.

What is the use of appointing a Royal Commission if their recommendations are not to be carried out? Had the recommendations which I have quoted been carried out twelve months ago, this country would have been saved hundreds, perhaps thousands of pounds; it would have been saved the effort which will now have to be made to cope with the pest, and also saved from the immense destruction the pest has wrought in the crops during the past season. I consider that undoubtedly the efforts of the Royal Commission would immediately benefit the agricultural industry if it were not for the temporary financial embarrassment of the State, and I as a member of the Country party am prepared to pronounce the appointment of the Royal Commission on Agriculture as thoroughly justified.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.28]: I was very much surprised by the question put by the member for Menzies as to why the South-West did not produce what it was alleged to be able to produce. If there is any justification needed for the appointment of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, surely the lan-

guage of that question justifies the appointment. The fact that the south-western portion of this State, about which so much has been said, has not proved productive to the point which was anticipated, in itself affords complete justification for sending a Royal Commission into that part of the State. The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) said that the operations of the Royal Commission had done good so far as his electorate was concerned. Let me point out that another paragraph of the interim report draws attention to the State farms. I feel sure that if the Government give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission in that respect, we shall have no more such drastic measures as the uprooting of State orchards, simply because they are there for the purpose for which they are intended—that is, to illustrate at State farms the operation of an industry suitable for the South-West. The member for Greenough further said that immigrants had been deluded into coming to this country from other parts of the world by the prospect of making a ready and easy living. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) interjected a reflection on that statement. I contend that the inducements which were held out to immigrants emanated from the Agent General's office and the Lands Department. Books advocating farming in the South-West can be found in the Lands Office to-day. I will give members an instance of the sort of statement to which I refer. It says, the State of Western Australia makes a present of a homestead farm to any selector of 160 acres. Well, a homestead farm to an agriculturist in the Old Country would mean a farm on which a man could make a home and a living, but when the unfortunate settler arrives here and goes to the Lands Department all he gets is four survey pegs in virgin country. If the Lands Department and the Agent General's Department circulated these misleading reports, it is time the Commission extended their investigations to find out to what extent these statements were made. The Premier said in his policy speech—

While the appearance of past neglect may be a matter for some regret, it is the intention of the National Government to devote its energies in the direction of bringing about closer settlement and intense culture

The South-West, although represented by a Premier, a Treasurer, and Minister for Work on several occasions, is one of the most neglected portions of the State to-day, and when the report of the Commission on the wheat portions of the State was found necessary, in the interests of the South-West the same consideration should be extended to that portion of Western Australia. There are several things which will require investigation in the south-western portion of the State, such as butter and bacon factories. These matters have been brought before the House and have been dealt with in the public Press, and from questions which have emanated from members it must be contended that an investigation of these factories should take place at the earliest possible date. So far as the South-Western portion of the

State is concerned, it is not necessary that we should have the full evidence such as is contained in the interim report before members. If we have a resumé of the evidence and the essential features, that is all that is necessary, and of course, we should get the recommendations and the findings as well. There are one or two other difficulties that confront the South-West which it has been said is one of the fairest provinces of Australia. One of the difficulties is clearing. This is a great difficulty to anyone who takes up land in any portion of the South-West south of Pinjarra. Then, there are the questions of drainage and irrigation. These are vital matters to success in the South-West and no body of men could give a more unbiassed report on these features than the Commission which has the matter in hand to-day. Then, there is the question of the development of the lime deposits brought before the House by the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) during the Address-in-reply. This is a matter of vital importance and I trust the Commission will take this matter into their consideration. Personally, from what I have read of the findings of the Commission I honestly believe they will be of the greatest assistance to the farming community of Western Australia. I cannot speak from the standpoint of wheat growing but it is evident from the mass of evidence accompanying this report that it must contain something that is good, and from the good that is in it the farming community can select that which is of value. The executive of the Farmers and Settlers' Association to which I belong have obtained a copy of the report and have found that it is of great assistance in such a matter as the construction of freezing works. Judging from the expressions of opinion of the members representing the wheat growing areas, it is of vital importance to them. Seeing that the report is of much importance to other parts of Western Australia, it would be a manifest injustice if the services of the Commission were brought to a hasty conclusion until investigation has been held into the farming proposition from a South-West point of view.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [5.35]: I, like other members, got somewhat a shock when I heard the motion brought forward by the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) this afternoon. From the hon. member's point of view he no doubt has done what is right; but from the point of view of many of those who represent important agricultural constituencies he has not taken the right course. Members should look back to the time when the Commission was appointed, at which date its appointment was undoubtedly warranted. At that time there was a great deal of gibing in regard to what the Commission was doing, but I say that no Commission appointed in this country has done better and more honest work than this one has done and is doing.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It costs so much.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Had the recommendation that was sent forward in November, 1916, been carried out—to tackle the rabbit pest—the cost of the Commission would have been saved over and over again. If members look through the recommendations contained in the interim report issued by the Commission they will find several important matters brought before Ministers' attention with the idea of trying to make the conditions of settlers somewhat of a more hopeful nature. I am not going through the whole of the matters brought forward by the Commission. The question of the South-West has already been treated by the members who represent that portion of Western Australia, but I have gone into a number of matters which have been dealt with and which are of importance to the agricultural industry, and I think it is only right that members should read through the headings to see the vast task which the Commission has had placed before them. The Government and the country would reap a great benefit if the suggestions of the Commission are only carried out. I am not here to analyse this report, but I wish to recommend members to read the suggestions of the Commission and I am sure they will find that many of them are of an interesting character. I have had many accounts brought under my notice showing me the water rates which the settlers have to pay. A special recommendation was sent forward by the Commission on the matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are paying no more than what the water cost.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whether they are paying more than what the water cost is beside the question. There are men who are really not using the water. They have had dams constructed and yet they have been forced to pay a big water tax. Men have come to me and shown me the water payments and other costs which they have to bear and these men are being eaten out to-day by the rabbits. One man showed me a list of what he had to pay and he is not using the water because he has scooped out a dam for himself. I have been instrumental in preventing many men from obtaining water from the water scheme because I have urged men to construct dams or wells of their own.

The Minister for Works: Do you think it is honest to get the Government to expend money to carry out a work and then to repudiate the expense?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, but many people went on to the scheme thinking that the price they would be charged would be a payable proposition. Many people went out not knowing the conditions, but they have been talked over. A man wants an extension of the pipe line and he will talk over those persons who are really not interested into accepting the responsibility. Then these people find that they are right up to their necks.

The Minister for Works: Are they justified in getting the Government to spend money on this work?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: One of the recommendations of the Royal Commission is a reduction in the price of the water. I have had a rather melancholy duty within the last few

days in following a gentleman to his grave who had been the victim of misleading reports. He came out here to put his sons on the land. I think I have spoken of this matter before, at any rate. I brought it before the notice of the Commission. This gentleman came out to this country with his two sons; he took up some land near what he was told was a railway line. When he got to Doodlakine he had to go 74 miles to his selection, and the last 12 miles he had to cut through the bush. He was told there was a good road, he was also told that there was a water supply. Well, this water supply is 14 miles from his place; it is on Mr. Hedge's farm, and he had to cart the water 22 miles.

MR. SPEAKER: Did the Commission inquire into this case?

MR. GRIFFITHS: Yes; they have inquired into this case. Such a case as I have just cited is one of those which the Commission should be out to stop.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not believe he was told anything of the kind.

MR. GRIFFITHS: This man went out from Doodlakine, south-east of Mr. Hedge's property. I have been on the place myself. His son died on Christmas Day and the father had to take the body to Bruce Rock. There is no doubt that the privations and hardships of the situation hastened the old gentleman's end.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He did not know anything about the land when he came here.

MR. GRIFFITHS: He was induced to come here. We are in much the same position as they are in Canada. People were induced to go out there, and the authorities then found that they had to establish a system of agricultural education in order to get the people to go on the land. In my opinion it would be a pity to cut short the Royal Commission before it has carried out the work which it set out to accomplish. It is a bigger thing than most people imagine. We should have in Western Australia, as other countries have, a permanent board of agriculture, in order to bring into operation a continuity of policy. This board should be free of political influence and have in mind a continuity of policy, and its establishment would undoubtedly be for the betterment of the country.

MR. PIESSE (Toodyay) [5.48]: Before hon. members cast their vote upon this question it is well that they should consider the value of the services rendered by this Royal Commission. Judging by the report of evidence before us it has undoubtedly furnished the country with some valuable information. This volume contains the testimony of practical men connected with the agricultural industry, and to my mind the value of the Commission lies not so much in its report but in the mass of evidence which has been collected. From this point of view alone the expenditure which has been incurred is fully justified. If it is possible for the State to afford it I hold that the Commission should be allowed to continue its good work.

MR. HARRISON (Avon) [5.49]: I was of opinion that some hon. member on the Opposition side of the House would have spoken before this.

Hon. P. Collier: Why? We are prepared to give every man a chance to ventilate a grievance.

MR. HARRISON: Ever since Responsible Government there has been a movement in this State to foster and encourage our native industries. After the mining industry began to expand there was a forward movement in respect to agriculture. Since the drought the agricultural industry has been a matter of vital importance to us. From the time of Sir John Forrest through each successive Cabinet it has played a prominent part in the expansion of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you mean away back?

MR. HARRISON: I mean ever since the output of gold from the Golden Mile began to decrease. When Mr. W. D. Johnson was Minister for Lands he made inquiries of the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department with a view to getting the best evidence he could with regard to agriculture. During the drought year there was a good deal of comment on both sides of the House on the score that we had placed farmers too far east for them to successfully carry on the growing of wheat. One of the most important points dealt with by the Royal Commission was that connected with their endeavour to ascertain how far out into the drier areas of the State wheat growing can be successfully carried on. We have in this report the evidence of successful farmers, of those who have not been successful, of those who have been under the Industries Assistance Board, of those who have been clients of the Agricultural Bank, and we have the evidence of officers of the Water Supply Department and other civil servants, and if all this evidence is taken note of and made use of we shall not have spent £5,000 in a better cause.

MR. DAVIES: Has the Commission cost that?

MR. HARRISON: The member for Menzies (Mr. Mullaney) said it had cost £5,049.

MR. MUNSIE: That must be for printing alone.

MR. HARRISON: We have had Royal Commissions on various matters, many of which have not been nearly as important as this matter of agriculture. We have had Royal Commissions on the State Implement Works, Immigration, non-British labour, the Boulder Deep Levels, and also on Collic fuel.

Hon. P. Collier: These were on charges made by individuals.

MR. HARRISON: I only mention these to show that we have had Royal Commissions upon matters of not nearly the importance of this particular matter. The four gentlemen who have been sitting for a number of months taking evidence have had but one object in view, that of establishing greater efficiency in this State. That is the real question at issue. If we are going to be efficient we must use the very best of our abilities, brains and energies to attain that end. If we study this evidence, which should be the text book for every Minister of Agriculture, we must get closer to that state of efficiency. As for the expenditure entailed, it is a mere bagatelle compared with the



expenditure in other directions. I am rather glad that the member for Menzies has brought the matter up, because it will focus the attention of the country upon the question more, perhaps, than anything else could do. If we are going to get the benefit we should get from this evidence, there is no better advertisement that could be given to the agricultural development of Western Australia than this. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) mentioned the question of fertilisers. On page 11 of the report we have an index to quite a volume of evidence given upon this particular subject.

Hon. P. Collier: What do the Commission recommend?

Mr. HARRISON: On page 11 is an index to the evidence which has been given. The index will also show the evidence given in connection with water supply, land settlement, and other matters. If this volume of evidence was scattered broadcast throughout the agricultural areas of the State, it would be advantageous. In this evidence we could find instances showing it has cost farmers anything over £1,000, whilst there are other farmers to whom it has cost less. These men have gone out into virgin country without knowing anything of the climatic conditions of the State and their experience has, in many cases, cost them thousands of pounds. It has cost them years of bitter experience and much energy, and all this is concentrated in the few paragraphs of what they have told the members of the Commission. What is better for a man who has control of a vessel than to know where the hidden rocks lie, so that he can steer a clear course and escape them? The evidence of these rocks from the agricultural point of view is here before us, and we should use it. I feel sure that the House will not curtail the work of this Royal Commission when it has not yet completed its labours. The dairying industry yet remains to be dealt with. I touched upon this when dealing with the Estimates of 1915. I was laughed at on that occasion, for members did not realise that dairying could be successfully carried on in my electorate, towards the Eastern Goldfields, and in the Avon Valley. I still maintain that in the Avon Valley, where there is a water supply, we can get the butter required for the State more quickly than in any other part. I say that my opinion is supported by the evidence which was given before the Royal Commission. The capital cost of land in the South-West is, of course, enormous, but as a result of his expenditure, a man can provide himself with a better home than he can in the wheat belt; but at the same time it takes years to develop his holding, a much longer period than it does in our particular district. We have all these obligations upon our shoulders and we desire to get our revenue in as quickly as possible, so that we have to study all these questions. Hon. members have this evidence before them for their use, so that they may cast their vote in the matter of agriculture faithfully and intelligently.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [5.58]: I feel sure that the majority of members of the House thoroughly appreciate the necessity for the greatest economy, but I am not satisfied that it would be economical, when we have a partly completed report such as this before us, to stultify ourselves at his stage and prevent the completion of the report. To carry the motion would convey an expression of opinion from this House that we do not value that report, especially if we do not show the electors, and the State generally, that we recognise the necessity for having this report fully completed. Probably no members of the House will be more anxious to have this report completed than the gentlemen occupying the Government benches. It is their policy to develop the South-West, but apparently that portion of the State, from the point of view of dairying at all events, has been entirely neglected by the Agricultural Commission. It is said to be necessary that we should create more wealth, and I think it would be well for us to direct the attention of the Royal Commission to the necessity for making recommendations as to the best methods of increasing the butter production of Western Australia, so that it would not be any longer necessary for us to import that necessary article. If their energies could be directed to that subject, as well as to cheese and bacon, I am sure that the money involved would be well spent. If the Commission has failed up to the present, the fault does not rest with the Commission. It is the fault of the Governments who have been in office and who have failed to carry out the Commission's recommendations. So far as the rabbit question is concerned, if the recommendations of the Commission had received prompt attention there would have been a considerable saving to the State and to the farming community. For the reasons I have stated I intend at this stage to support the continued existence of the Commission, and hope that they will be allowed to complete the labours upon which they have entered.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [6.2]: In my opinion the member for Menzies was quite justified in submitting the motion to the House. I do not see how any hon. member can come to any other conclusion than that arrived at by the hon. member. There is a good deal in the report of the Commission which is of very little use. In other words, there is very little contained in it which was not known before the Commission were appointed. For instance, we know of the existence of the rabbit pest; we know that the State was importing many necessities of life which could be produced within the State. A previous Government recognised the necessity for bringing about an improvement in that state of things, and appointed expert officers. Therefore, whom should we blame for the existing condition of things. Anyone who goes through the south-western part of the State must arrive at the conclusion that what has largely contributed against the progress of that part of the State is the fact that most of the land is held in very large areas and is not worked. The State should confiscate this land if the people are disinclined to make use of it. There is beautiful land in the

South-West which is quite equal to that in Victoria now being sold at £40 and £50 an acre, and all that land is idle.

The Minister for Works: Where is it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Right through the South-West. I paid a visit to that part of the State with Mr. Connor, and saw many holdings of thousands of acres which he informed me were owned by a single individual, and which should have carried hundreds of families. In many cases areas of 150 acres would have been ample for a family to get a living from.

The Minister for Works: There are no instances of that sort.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Commissioner for the South-West pointed out many holdings which could support hundreds of families.

Mr. Harrison: How long had that expert been in the State?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All the time he was in the service of the State he was agitating for something to be done in the direction of opening up the South-West, and on many occasions he tried, and successfully induced, people to take up land in that part of the State. The member for Avon asks me how long the expert had been in the State. Can I take that as an insinuation that the expert had been here for a considerable time and had not done anything? The Agricultural Commission recommend that the Government should purchase bulls so that they might be leased to the farmers. I just quote that because of the hon. member's interjection. Mr. Connor, the Commissioner for the South-West, bought a number of bulls for Denmark, and he was condemned by one of the honorary Ministers the other day for having done so. Yet the Royal Commission recommends that stud stock should be purchased and leased to farmers. This brings me back to 25 years ago, when it was then quite amusing to take up a newspaper and read about the Guildford town bull day after day. This bull was in a paddock at Guildford for the use of the local farmers. And this is the kind of thing that the Royal Commission is advocating now.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that we are not discussing the Royal Commission's report. I have allowed the debate to drift somewhat, but I would ask hon. members now to confine themselves to the argument in favour of the Commission carrying on its operations or otherwise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I did not intend to quote from the report, but I merely referred to one or two items to show that the State was in full possession of the information to which the Commission now refers. With regard to the water supply for farmers, the position in 1911 and again in 1914 will be remembered. Farmers were without water, and they petitioned the Government to assist them to get supplies. In some cases they even blackguarded the Government because they could not get their supplies rapidly enough. Then when they did get water supplies, just as they did in connection with many other things, they did not want to pay.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Are farmers peculiar in that respect?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They are. The Royal Commission declares that farmers

should get water almost free. But the gold-fields people have to pay for that scheme, and the farmers so far have merely been charged only that which will pay interest on the cost of laying the pipes. We also find that the Royal Commission declared that the price of first class land should be reduced to 15s. an acre. Did not the Premier, as Minister for Lands, introduce a Bill into this House to provide for that? The measure was approved by Parliament. The Commission also point out that the land which is not already alienated is of no value, and that it should be given away.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Where do they say that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On page 13 of the report. The Commission report that immediately after the termination of the war we should take steps to increase the population. But if all the land is of no value, what is the use of bringing in people to work it?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): They do not say all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nearly all. And they also recommend that the State would be well advised to give away the land. At first they say the land is of no value and that it should be given away, and then they recommend that a charge of 10s. an acre should be made for it. The Commission also report that there is a scarcity of nurses and medical men. Have we not known that for years past? We have always experienced a difficulty in getting doctors to go into the country, and the Government have had to give subsidies to encourage them to go out into the backblocks. The Commission recommend what is practically the nationalisation of the medical and nursing systems. Would not every doctor in the State go on strike if we attempted to do that? The recommendations on the subject which have been made at other times have never had proper consideration, because it has been a matter of impossibility to carry them into effect. I remember that it is not so long ago since the Children's Hospital wanted to appoint a man to take charge of that institution.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that the Children's Hospital is not being inquired into.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was merely using an illustration to show how difficult it has been to secure the services of medical men. The Children's Hospital Committee proposed a certain course, but the doctors of Perth would not allow it to be adopted, and regulations which had been framed by the Government had to be cancelled. Yet we find the Royal Commission suggesting what amounts to a scheme of nationalisation in this direction. Is not the hon. member for Menzies therefore justified in bringing forward his motion? We are also told by the Royal Commission as something new that an alteration should be made with regard to the Agricultural Bank, that it should be removed from political control. The desire of the Commission right through, so far as I can see, is to remove everything from political control, from the control of Parliament. The Commission think that all that Parliament should do is to raise the money.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is still discussing the report. The hon. member must

argue either in favour of the continuance of the Royal Commission or otherwise. The report of the Royal Commission is not under review. I desire to give the hon. member every opportunity to illustrate his remarks, but when he does nothing but quote from the report he is out of order.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before tea I was giving extracts from the report showing how unnecessary it was to continue further expenditure in regard to this Commission. I want to show that a good deal of the information given in the report was known to the country years before the Commission was appointed. I was dealing with the Agricultural Bank which the Commission also dealt with and I was endeavouring to show that it was not necessary to retain the Commission, which is costing the country so much money at the present time, to tell us what others have told us. The Commission do not agree in advancing money on holdings. It was the policy of the Moore and Wilson Administrations that before land was thrown open for settlement for the Agricultural Bank trustees to send their officers out to say what money would be advanced on the land, so that settlers would know before taking up the land what money they could expect to receive from the Agricultural Bank. But the Commission has told the country that that was a bad principle, because the bank had no say in who the settler was to be. Everyone knows that the manager of the Agricultural Bank is a member of the Land Board. I think he is chairman and therefore must be aware who the settler is. Again I notice right through the report—and I think members should peruse it carefully—I have read the report and the recommendations, but not the evidence—the one object was to try to belittle Parliament to show that members of Parliament cannot be trusted and should have no control over anything that affects the agricultural industry. They say that the whole control should be removed from Parliament. When the Commission lays itself out to do that we should ask ourselves and the country, is the Commission not likely to cause dissension throughout the State and to arouse ill-feeling towards members of Parliament. Just fancy the Commission recommending that the Government should increase the capital of the Agricultural Bank. It runs into some millions already. Parliament should have no control but the Government of the day should appoint trustees to manage the bank. Members of the Ministry are not infallible. They make mistakes like other people. Once a person is appointed a trustee he is to remain a trustee of the bank for life. We all make mistakes. During the Daglish administration we made mistakes. The Moore and Wilson administration appointed officers. They made mistakes. They appointed experts; this Government came along and sacked them. We appointed the manager of the Implement Works upon good recommendation but he did

not turn out a successful officer. Are we to appoint a Commission to bring down a report recommending that trustees should be appointed for life? This Commission went along to the Yandanooka estate and they told us exactly what we knew before and what every schoolboy in Western Australia knows. I have heard it during the whole time I have been in Western Australia, that the Yandanooka estate contains a very fine lot of agricultural country.

Member: You have it on oath now.

Mr. Pickering: Did you want the Commission to deny it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We knew it. They say what is a matter of common knowledge that the land is remaining on the Government's hands. Yet the Commission tell us what they say is a matter of common knowledge. This Commission which has cost something like £6,000, probably more by now, tell us something that is common knowledge. I ask members is it necessary to continue such expenditure realising what we have got before us in the shape of this report. The Commission went into the closer settlement scheme. That has been discussed for many years in this Chamber. The Labour administration are not going to take any credit for closer settlement, but the matter has been discussed here for years. The Wilson administration resumed a lot of country for closer settlement and the Commission again tell us what we knew before that closer settlement had been defeated by the impossibility of securing sufficient settlers. Attempts have been made in the direction of securing more settlers to take up the land, but it is thrown out to-night by the member for Greenough and the member for York that misleading statements have been made in England. They told us again what the Premier has told us repeatedly. They said that sparse settlement was responsible for almost all the non success. There is no necessity to have a Commission to tell us of this. We do not want to pay a Commission to deal with matters of that description. There are several matters which they have dealt with and which were known to all of us here.

Mr. Pickering: There is nothing new under the sun.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, some things. The Commission recommend that we should have perpetual leases. A Bill was introduced in this Chamber years ago to provide for perpetual leases. There is nothing new in that. Parliament discussed the proposal and the people of the country, through their representatives, objected to the measure. Then again, the Commission recommend that all rents should be deferred for five years. Legislation has already been passed in that direction, yet we are paying a Commission to give us recommendations of this kind. I can only say that the person who reads this report carefully can only come to the same conclusion that the member for Menzies has come to, that this wasteful expenditure should cease at once. The Government have already recognised that, for the Premier told the Commis-

sion some time ago that they must bring their labours to an end. Why do not the Commission have the good sense to take the hint and immediately close down their work? The Commission deals with cultivating methods. I stated at the commencement that I was not a farmer, but I have heard farmers' representatives years ago recommend that fallowing should take place before crops are put in. Seeing that we have had members of Parliament here who understood the business and know exactly what is required, there is no necessity to pay a Commission to repeat the information. I want to say in reference to the statement of the member for Greenough, who pointed out that false statements were made in England for the purpose of encouraging immigrants to come here, that statements were made that people had merely to scratch the ground and that crops will grow. But we have had instances of that already. Some of the best crops in the Yorkrakin area have been grown on land which was merely scratched over in the first instance. Now this is borne out by the Commission, who state that other methods have given good results in the early stages. So, if this was stated in England, it was not a false statement. Seeing that the Agent General's officers are not here to defend themselves, it is only right that I should say that in 1913 statements were made similar to those made here to-night by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths), namely, that false statements had been made in England to encourage people to come out here and settle on the land. Inquiries were made in regard to the matter and a letter was received from Mr. Gilbert, the then immigration officer, in which he stated—

The Government advertise the State as a field for immigration in its agricultural capacity only, and whatever representations are made through this office are made to men who have had some experience of farming, or are country workers, such as can reasonably be assured of work in the country and not in the town.

Thus, it is clear that men who have come out here were advised on leaving England to get work on a farm here before starting for themselves. Mr. Gilbert went on to say—

I make it clear to your readers that the emigration of unskilled or even skilled town labourers to Western Australia is not encouraged, and that the only class the State will assist is for country or farm.

That communication by Mr. Gilbert serves to disprove the statement that false assertions have been made to induce people to come to Western Australia. I know that from time to time some immigration agents, not responsible Government officers, have been careless in their statements; indeed we prosecuted one man and secured a conviction, with six months' imprisonment, for making statements contrary to the desires of the Government.

Mr. Griffiths: Did not Mr. Ranford make some wild statements?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No one who knew Mr. Ranford could say that he would wilfully make a false statement. No man in the Katanning district was more respected than Mr. Ranford. So strong was his faith

in the quality of the soil of Western Australia that possibly he might have been led astray occasionally through his optimism, but he would not do it wilfully to deceive. Despite the advice given them in England, some of the immigrants who came here went on the land immediately, without first understanding either the climatic conditions or the approved methods of working the land. That is the whole position.

Mr. Smith: A West Australian senator once said in the Senate that there was no good land in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The commissioners say that the bulk of the first class land in the vicinity of main lines in good climatic conditions has been already alienated, that much of the inferior land has little or no intrinsic value, and that the State would be well advised to give it away under strict improvement conditions. This proves that, in the opinion of the commissioners, the land still available is almost useless. And then the commissioners come along and say that they did not intend that it should be given away.

Mr. Pickering: That is the good land?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, according to them the good land has all gone. I am not saying that I believe what the commissioners say; they have merely brought out the evidence adduced before them. Personally, I believe there is plenty of good land still in the State, good land along railways, and good land not yet served by a railway. We have too many settlers wanting railways for remote areas. Then the commissioners go outside the scope of their commission and recommend that we should again renew the pound for pound subsidies to the road boards, adding "when financially possible." We do not want recommendations of that kind, because the Government would never have reduced the subsidies had the state of the finances not rendered it essential. The member for York pointed out one good thing the commissioners had done and which he said the Country party had first brought forward. He referred to the recommendation in regard to freezing works.

Mr. Harrison: Is not that recommendation alone worth £5,000?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it is not worth sixpence, because for years this question has been discussed in the House. It was discussed here before the Farmers' and Settlers' Association was formed. There is one good point in the report, the recommendation for freezing works at Fremantle. The commissioners tell us that the lack of telephonic communication is a bar to progress. But hon. members know that a man living remote from centres of population cannot expect to get telephonic communication.

Mr. Pickering: Yet it is provided in Canada.

Mr. Munsie: Telephonic communication in Canada is no better than it is in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Then the report of the commissioners gives us other advice which I do not think worth the cost of print-

ing. We are told that the Parliament of Western Australia is not fit to deal with agriculture, and it is recommended that a board of agriculture should be appointed with full control. We might put the biggest possible duflers on that board and they would remain members of the board for life.

Mr. Harrison: Could not you make a recommendation?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: One whom I might consider a good man might be regarded by other hon. members as a particularly weak man. Perhaps the executive of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association could make a good recommendation. Clearly, the commissioners wish to remove agriculture from the control of the people's representatives. Another matter, which the chairman of the Commission admits does not come within the scope of their commission, is the qualifications of electors. I have come to the conclusion that all the members of the Commission must be young men. They recommend that parents should have a vote for every child. Clearly this would give the younger men a chance of increasing their voting powers, while we old men would be left in the cold. It is for this sort of recommendation that we are paying £6,000. After perusing the report, I can only say that the results which were anticipated when this Commission was appointed have not been realised. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) asked what was the good of the report if the Government would not carry it into effect. I venture to say that, if the Government have been attending to the business of the country, not any Minister has had time to read this report since the 17th November, the date when it was presented. Yet hon. members say that the fault lies, not with the report but with the Government, because the Government will not carry the recommendations into effect. Many of the recommendations were considered and turned down by Parliament years ago. There can be no doubt that when the late Government made a contract for the support of the representatives of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, and included in the conditions the appointment of this Royal Commission, at a cost of some £6,000, they were wasting public money.

The Minister for Works: There was no bargain of any sort.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We all remember the Press reports of the proceedings, and we still have our own impressions of those proceedings. I will vote for the motion, realising that, so far, the value of the recommendations of the Royal Commission is not by any means commensurate with the cost of that Commission. I was pleased to hear the Premier declare that he had told the Commission to bring their labours to a conclusion.

Hon. P. Collier: He suggested it to them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course he could not say straight out, "Get out of this," because he had not the power to do so. He gave the broad hint, but he did not go far enough. He said that the country was practising economy. We have a report on the metropolitan water supply and sewerage, a very interesting document, and this would not cost a quarter of what it cost to print the report of this

Commission. And it also contains more information of value to the country than this does.

Mr. Harrison: That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The water supply and sewerage report will tell us what it cost the country in regard to water supplies.

Mr. Thomson: This is an industry which is worth millions to Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: The industry is, but not the report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member said that this is an industry worth millions to the country, and I agree with him. I told hon. members the other day that, in the drought year of 1914, the £200,000 or £300,000 which we advanced immediately to the farmers of this State to keep them on the land was worth every penny, whether we lost it all or not.

Mr. Harrison: It has returned a million and a quarter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The position is that we were not then paying thousands of pounds for reports and recommendations upon matters on which this country has already expressed an opinion. Furthermore, we were paying money which could be saved and put to very much better advantage in the way of appointing experts throughout this country to teach our farmers how to till the soil properly, what kind of crops to put in, what is the most suitable wheat for the soil. We would not be wasting money like this in drawing up a report which not one man in a hundred will read.

Hon. P. Collier: Not one man in a thousand. A farmer would not get his crop in that year if he sat down to read it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would point out that the Farmers and Settlers' Association have only one copy of this report. If it is of the value that hon. members try to make out it will pay the Farmers and Settlers' Association to get a report for every member of the association. Apparently, however, they do not think it is of that value, for they have only one copy, which in all probability was presented to them by an hon. member of this House free of cost. The member for Menzies (Mr. Mulkany) is justified in bringing forward this motion. There is one matter which I wish to deal with, before sitting down. The Commission recommend State aid to co-operation to a limited number of co-operative societies. How careful the members of the Commission are in this matter! They know full well how they stand with the Farmers and Settlers' Association, and that the association wanted this, I was going to say to bluff the actual farmer from knowing that nothing has been done so far as the report is concerned.

Mr. Pickering: That is rather unjust.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In conclusion, I would repeat that this report is not worth the £6,000 it has cost, and I hope the motion will be carried.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8.7]: I understand the motion is for the adjournment of the House in order to direct attention to the waste of money which is occurring by reason of the continued existence of the Royal Commission which is inquiring into the Western Australian agricultural industry. If that is so,

the protest is rather belated. The Commission have been in evidence since September, 1916, a matter of some 18 months, and now the first protest comes along that the Commission has had no practical result, that the expense of the Commission has been a waste of money, and that the time has arrived when the Commission should be abolished. I think hon. members will recollect how the Commission came to be appointed. The appointment of this Commission was just a specimen of that discreditable political bargaining which was responsible for the Wilson Government securing the support of the Country party—there is no question about that—and which in a similar manner was responsible for the formation of the present Government and their existence on that side of the House. If hon. members will read the "Primary Producer" they will find that one of the reasons for the Country party transferring its support to the then Liberal Government was that they would have a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole of the system of agriculture in Western Australia. In my opinion there was no necessity for the Commission at all. Practical farmers on that side of the House now could have told us and the country the difficulties in the way of successful farming development. Everyone knows the position of the farmers in this country, that the difficulties under which they labour are due to bad seasons and to the fact that they confine their industry to producing wheat, whereas wheat alone will not pay any farmer to grow. Everyone knew that. What the Government should have done was to enable the farmer who produced wheat alone to grow stock also, and then he would have been able to overcome his difficulties. That, after all, is all the Commission can tell us now. Every Commission which has ever been appointed by this House has been the result of political bargaining and intrigue on the part of some party or individual members of the House.

Mr. Harrison: And the Collie Coal Commission, too?

Mr. TROY: Yes. The only thing I can see which will be of any profit to the farmers of this country as a result of the appointment of this Commission is that, if the Government will distribute amongst the farmers copies of this report, the farmers might secure some education and knowledge from the experience of other farmers who have given their evidence before the Commission. That is the only good I can see in it. As has been pointed out, all the conclusions arrived at by the Commission have already been arrived at by members of this House and various Governments from time to time. This Commission was only appointed as a pretence on the part of the Government of their interest in the farming industry, and it was held out as a sop to the Country party that from the results of the labours of this Commission results would follow. The Government, so far, have not had the courage to abolish the Commission, although the Premier has said that he gave a hint that it was to cease its labours. What good results can be secured by it? The member for Menzies asks for the adjournment of the House to discuss a certain matter, but does he propose to move

any further in it? Had he desired that this House should express a definite opinion he would have given notice of a definite motion, and have asked the Premier, whom he supports, to give the House an opportunity of discussing his motion; and in that motion he could have called upon the House to express an opinion that this Commission should be abolished and should cease its labours. I very much doubt whether the Government have power to bring the labours of this Commission to a close.

Mr. Thomson: Except to save money.

Mr. TROY: If the hon. member desires to do so let him move that no further payments be made to this body, and then the opinion expressed by this House may have some weight with the gentlemen who comprise this Commission. The matter contained in the motion of the member for Menzies was not one of urgency. The Commission has already been going on for 18 months. It has not been recently appointed, and is not to be appointed to-morrow. The expense has been incurred, and those responsible for the expenditure, members sitting on the other side of the House, must take the blame.

Mr. Griffiths: You think we are going to do something for the industry.

Mr. TROY: The Commission is only a sop, and a pretence to the people, whom the hon. member represents, to indicate that the Government are interested in the industry, and that some result will accrue to it; whereas all the conclusions arrived at are conclusions already arrived at by various Governments and the experts in the country.

Mr. Griffiths: You are imputing bad motives to me.

Mr. TROY: If the member for Menzies will push this motion to a division, I will vote with him.

Mr. Davies: He is waiting for you to finish, in order to withdraw the motion.

Mr. TROY: I am glad to hear that, because it shows the depth of sincerity in the whole business. I am glad the hon. member interjecting is able to speak on behalf of the member for Menzies.

Mr. Mullaney: I am quite able to speak on my own behalf.

Mr. TROY: I hope so; but I have not expressed the opinion that the hon. member is unable to do so. It was his colleague who expressed that opinion. That colleague absolutely knows the depth of sincerity in the hon. member's motion. If the hon. member desires me to discuss his sincerity in this matter, I am prepared to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would be hardly in order.

Mr. TROY: I am as well aware of that, Sir, as you are. So far I have kept very well to the point in this debate; but I know just how far I can go, and how far I will go. In conclusion, I say that if the member for Menzies desires to get an expression of the opinion of the House, he should not withdraw the motion but push it to a division, when I will vote with him.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.17]: I have no desire to cover the ground which has already been traversed by hon. members, or

to prolong the debate to any great extent, because I realise that there can be very little practical result from it, except that the House will have had an opportunity of directly discussing the work and activities of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, and also of expressing an opinion as to whether the Commissioners should continue their arduous labours or should be required to bring them to a conclusion at an early date. The Commission, as the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has indicated, have a very pronounced hostility to political influence. That vein of thought can be found running right throughout the whole of their recommendations. I wonder are the members of the Commission aware of the fact that, had it not been for political influence, they would never have been brought into existence as Royal Commissioners? For it is a matter of simple truth to say that the Commission were conceived in iniquity and born in an atmosphere of barter and intrigue, and that place hunters performed the necessary duties at the birth. There is no manner of doubt whatsoever about that. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) disputed the suggestion of the member for Magnet (Mr. Troy) that the appointment of the Commission was part of the bargain or the arrangement, or whatever it may be called, between the members of the Country party and the then Liberal Government when the latter took office in 1916. But that fact was openly proclaimed in the columns of the newspapers—not only in the official organ of the Country party, but also in the general Press. The appointment of the Commission was stated there as one of a number of conditions on which the members of the Country party agreed to place Mr. Frank Wilson in power as head of a Liberal Government. The Commission have now gone on for a period of 18 months, involving the State in an expenditure of more than £5,000, which amount, I believe, does not include £600 odd for the printing of this interim report. And what is the position now? To judge from the utterances of the Premier this afternoon, the labours of the Commission have evidently not inspired any enthusiasm in that hon. gentleman's breast. Neither their works nor their recommendations, if we may judge from his comments on the motion, have roused any enthusiasm in him. He said he had no time to go into the report—on which point I agree with him—and see if there was any suggestion in it that might be of value to the country. He said further that it was to be hoped the report would be of service to Western Australia. He also said he hoped the Government might find many useful suggestions in the report. There is no enthusiasm about utterances of that description. The Premier himself did not attempt to justify the work of the Commission up to date; and, further, our friends on the cross benches, the representatives of the farmers, or at all events those of them who spoke to the motion, put up a very feeble defence. Indeed, I have never listened to a defence of any position so lacking in enthusiasm. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) waved the interim report in the air and recounted the work and the ser-

vices of the Commission, just as if he wanted hon. members to judge of the value of the Commission's recommendations by the mere bulk of the interim report. Has any member who has spoken on the motion—and I take it that if there was a defence of the Commission's work that defence would be forthcoming from the cross benches—quoted one recommendation of the Commission which is of value and which has not been known for years and even for generations past in this State—one suggestion that is original, that is new, and is of any value whatever to the farming industry of Western Australia?

Mr. Harrison: One suggestion is that the dairying industry could be carried further east.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Commission talk about that when there is scarcely a dairy herd planted in the south-western portion of the State, which is supposed to be particularly suitable for dairying. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) had an opportunity of speaking, and he did not quote one recommendation of any value which has not been well known for years to the officials of the Agricultural Department and to members of this House as well. If I might have recourse to the classics of the Honorary Minister (Mr. Underwood), I should describe the report in the simple word "tripe." I believe that word just about sums up the whole report.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Why charge it up to me?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I merely ask permission to quote the classics of the Honorary Minister, because he once designated a notable utterance of mine by the term "tripe." The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) apparently considers that he has justified the labours of the Commission by quoting their recommendation of September or October, 1916, with regard to rabbits and wild dogs. What does that recommendation prove? The Commission simply advised the Government at the time that the rabbits were making headway into our farming areas.

Mr. Maley: And were a menace.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Just so. What profound wisdom! Did it require a costly Royal Commission perigrinating about the country with motor cars and an army of shorthand writers to discover that the rabbits were in great numbers in the Eastern wheat areas? Will the hon. member maintain that it required that Commission to make that discovery?

Mr. Harrison: The recommendation had no effect. That is what we are complaining about.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the justification of the work of the Commission offered by one hon. member; and, as further showing that the whole thing is a farce absolutely and a waste of money, we have the proof that that important recommendation—and it was an important recommendation, but could have been made by the Chief Inspector of Rabbits, or by any farmer, independently of a Royal Commission—that that important recommendation on a matter which menaced the whole of our wheat areas was entirely ignored and passed over by the Government of the day. What has been done? For a period of 18 months that warning given by the Royal Commission was

laid on one side and utterly ignored, until today the Government can no longer continue to ignore a matter of such urgency, and find themselves compelled to take action. Now, if the Government ignore one simple report brought under their notice in the direct manner in which this one was, what are they going to do with all that is contained in the interim report?

The Premier: It was not brought to the Government. The Government knew all about the rabbits.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is just what I am saying about the Commission. What applies to the Commission's recommendation regarding rabbits applies right along the line to every subject on which they have reported—that is, the Government know all about it, and have had the information at their disposal for years past. The information is on the files of the Agricultural Department and of other departments.

Mr. Griffiths: Buried in the pigeon holes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, as this report will be buried when the Public Works Department enlarge the offices of the Agricultural Department, which will mean still further expenditure. This wholly ridiculous Commission, what do they say? They say that they have examined 684 witnesses, including 537 farmers. Now we understand why the work of the Commission was suspended about October last. That would be just about the period when the farmers would be commencing to prepare for their harvest. Having regard to the fact that all the witnesses are paid fees, I can see in this Commission another form of assistance to our friends upon the land. The Commission examined 537 farmers in the slack period of the year.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Where did you get the information about the fees?

Hon. P. COLLIER: All witnesses receive fees.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): They do not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All the witnesses examined by these Royal Commissions receive fees.

Ministerial members: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If they do not, I am glad to know that the farmers are so patriotic. I will say this, that if they have not received fees it is just about the first time in the history of Royal Commissions that witnesses have been known to attend without receiving fees. But I should like to be assured on more definite and reliable authority, on something more conclusive, than an interjection across the floor that our farmer friends have not received any witness fees.

Mr. Brown: There are members sitting here who gave evidence and who say that they received no fees.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will undertake to say that the old hard-headed farmers have drawn fees all right.

Mr. Brown: You are wrong.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The position is quite clear. When the harvest started about October, the farmers could no longer attend as

witnesses. If this Royal Commission on Agriculture is going to be a Tennyson's brook kind of Commission, continuing from year to year, then, during the time between when the ploughing is done and when the harvest commences, the farmers from all over Western Australia will be able to pick up a few pounds of pocket money by giving evidence before the Commission. There were 23 farmers' wives examined. That is another injustice to the ladies, when we bear in mind that 537 of their good husbands gave evidence. But the astonishing part of the report is that the Commission examined 500 officials of the Government departments.

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is so. If the hon. gentleman will look up the interim report of the Commission, he will find the statement there. Evidently the Minister for Works has not read the report, either. The charge of not having read the report applies to others besides the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert).

Member: How many civil servants would count as one witness?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is just the point which puzzles me. I am not responsible, but apparently the Commission was able to find amongst the 684 witnesses, 587 farmers.

Mr. Brown: You will find that the 500 civil servants is a misprint; it should be 50.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The report says 500 officials of Government departments. It must surely be a misprint. Then they examined 18 bank officials, 47 merchants, and business men, seven members of Parliament, including the member for York who, by the way, could have prepared all this information himself without the assistance of the Commission. Then there was one lone shepherd of the backblocks, a clergyman, and one professor of the University. If the Commission are permitted to go on in this way they will continue in the years that are to come. The Commission say, in a spirit of resignation as it were, that they visited the Eastern States, but they only investigated matters in South Australia and Victoria. Then, as referred to by the member for North-East Fremantle, this extraordinary excursions Commission made some wonderful inquiries into matters which have not anything at all to do with the duties with which they were entrusted. They placed an extraordinary interpretation upon the scope of their duties. They dealt with taxation, not only in Western Australia but taxation for the whole of Australia. There is this interesting paragraph: they recommend "that the taxable exemption to be allowed for each child should be increased to £50, and that no other exemption should be allowed in Australian taxation." I would advise the Government to pass that on to our friends in the Federal Parliament. Then they get out into the realms of franchise and suggest that a farmer should have a plural vote. That is the kind of work the Commission has been spending its time on. It has been said that the Government have not the power to terminate the labours of the Commission. I submit that they have



got the power. The power which created this Commission has also the power to cut off their existence, even to take more drastic steps than a mere hint if the Commission be not amenable to any hint that may be given to them by the Premier. The labours of the Esperance Royal Commission were brought to an abrupt termination when a member of the then Government was seeking election for a constituency on the goldfields. That Commission was told to submit its report and recommendations prior to election day, and it did so.

The Premier: Oh no.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not believe the Premier knew anything about that, but the fact remains that the Commission's labours were terminated abruptly.

Mr. Thomson: That is a sneaking innuendo.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a fact, and it can be proved.

The Premier: No directions of that sort were given them, and they could only come from me.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not permit any further remarks on that matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The majority of the members of this House will agree that the labours of the Agricultural Commission should be brought to an end at an early date, and it is for the Government to take this step. I do not desire to reflect on the members of the Commission. I understand the gentlemen who compose it are conscientious and hardworking, and are thoroughly imbued with the importance of the duties with which they are entrusted. Any body of men would have had to work hard to produce in the space of 12 months a volume such as that we have before us.

Mr. MULLANY rose to reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not the right to reply. He can withdraw the motion if he desires.

Mr. MULLANY: I will allow the motion to be determined by the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: A motion of this character is submitted with the object of permitting a discussion to take place on a matter of importance. I have never known the question to be put. The hon. member who moved it generally withdraws the motion after the subject-matter has been debated.

Question put and negatived.

Resolved that motions be continued.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. HARDWICK, leave of absence granted to the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) on the ground of urgent private business.

#### BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS' ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Mullany and read a first time.

#### PAPERS—I.W.W. PROSECUTIONS.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.56]: I move—

"That all papers relating to the recent prosecutions of a number of persons, alleged to be members of the I.W.W., be laid upon the Table of the House."

It will be within the knowledge of hon. members that quite recently a number of citizens were prosecuted on various charges, persons who were alleged to be members of what is known as the I.W.W. The whole of the men were found not guilty by the jury in the high court with the exception of one man who was found guilty of the charge and sentenced to six months imprisonment. Personally, I believe that person would be more fitted to be sent to an institution where they are treated for mental ailments rather than to a prison. My object in moving for the papers is to ascertain, as far as possible, who was responsible for the prosecution. I understand that various prosecutions took place in 1916 on somewhat similar charges and those prosecutions were taken at the instigation of the Federal authorities. I am not aware, and I believe the public do not know, whether the Crown Law Department of this State were solely responsible for these prosecutions, or whether they have only been acting at the request of the Federal Government. It was given in evidence at the trial that the indictment was signed by the Attorney General, but, not being familiar with the processes of the court in matters of this kind, I do not know if that implies that he or his department is solely responsible for the prosecutions. I desire the papers in order to get this information, if possible, because I consider a very grave injustice has been done to a number of men who have been found innocent of the charge by a jury of their fellow countrymen. We had in this case some nine or ten persons, the majority of whom were married men with families, who were dragged down from their homes—a number were brought down from the goldfields to Perth for trial—who, for two or three weeks before the trial came on in the lower court were refused bail, reputable honourable citizens, dragged from their families and forced to herd with criminals, convicted and otherwise, in verminous cells and surroundings that no person cares to be in if it can possibly be avoided. After the hearing in the lower court one of the accused from the goldfields was discharged, the magistrate finding that there was no evidence at all to warrant sending him on to the higher court; and at the conclusion of the trial in the Criminal Court, after these men had been through both trials, covering a period of about three months, at least one of the accused was also discharged; the accused was not allowed to go to the jury, the judge directing that there was no evidence against this person which would justify his case going to the jury for decision. I think I am not going too far in saying that this prosecution, like a former one in 1916, arose from purely political and party motives. It is an extraordinary coincidence that when

in 1916 it was announced that a referendum was to be taken on the question of service in the Australian forces, a batch of men alleged to be members of the I.W.W. was arrested in this State, simultaneously with similar arrests in the other States. The trial went on during the time the conscription campaign was in progress, and I venture to say that, apart altogether from the merits of the case, apart from the question of whether those men were guilty or innocent, during the time which they had to submit to trial the surroundings, the general atmosphere, and the feeling of the public rendered it impossible for those men to have that fair and impartial trial which we have always prided ourselves on believing can be obtained in any part of the British Empire. Following on that, no action was taken in Western Australia in regard to those men, or in regard to men holding similar views, until it was again announced in 1917 that it was the intention of the Federal Government to take another referendum on the question of conscription. And just as that announcement was made, so we had the experience of the previous year repeated, in that the members of the police force became busy and arrested some ten or twelve alleged members of the I.W.W. So, having regard to the circumstances and the whole of the surroundings of the two trials, one can come to no other conclusion than that those prosecutions were instigated for purely political or party purposes. I think the public are entitled to know who was responsible for this last prosecution, who originated it. Was it on the advice of the Crown Law officers of the State, after a perusal of the evidence, I presume, as collected by the police officers to be submitted at the trial? I want to know whether the prosecution was launched on the advice of the responsible law officers of the State, or whether any of the Crown Law officers or legal advisers of the Commonwealth Government were in any way responsible for the prosecution? That is a point we are entitled to have cleared up. I regard this latest prosecution as one of the worst forms of persecution I have known since becoming a resident of Western Australia. A number of the men who were charged had never been members of the I.W.W. The members of the police force who gave evidence against them were perfectly well aware of that. As a matter of fact the whole of the evidence, as it appeared in the newspapers, was of the most farcical description. I little wonder that the presiding judge passed some of the comments he did at the conclusion of the case. It seemed to me that we had arrived at a stage in this State, as well as in other parts of the Commonwealth, when an attempt was being made to deprive citizens of the liberty of free speech. Men were dragged from their homes for no reason at all and without a scintilla of evidence except that they had been working-class agitators, men who had formed the front line of attack in the labour movement for years past. Immediately the split occurred in the ranks of the Labour party there seemed to spread to those in authority a desire to suppress that section

of the party which did not go with them, regardless altogether of any principles of British fair play and justice as we understand it. I think I shall be justified in taking up a little of the time of the House in quoting some of the evidence given. It has been fairly selected, as any member will find if he cares to turn up the files.

The Attorney General: Will that support your motion before the House?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think it will. If I can show that the evidence was of the most flimsy character which did not warrant the prosecution of these men, then it will be a justification for having the papers placed on the Table, so that we might know why and how a prosecution was launched upon such evidence as I propose to refer to. I think that in that respect it will support my motion. I doubt if hon. members have read the evidence, because the trial took place right in the midst of the Christmas holidays, and no doubt the major portion of the community was otherwise engaged than in following such evidence. If any legal authority in the State authorised the arrest and prosecution of these men while having a knowledge of the class of evidence with which it was proposed to substantiate the charge, if any legal authority honestly and conscientiously decided in favour of a prosecution on that evidence, I say he is no longer fit to occupy any position in the public service of the State. A foreman engineer on the Perseverance mine at Boulder was brought to Perth to give evidence of this character: that one of the accused had been slowing down at his work on the Perseverance mine. In proof of that the witness instanced the fact that the men on the presses had been doing nine presses a day, five in the morning and four in the afternoon; that there had been a breakdown in the machinery, and that in consequence the men failed to get out the usual five presses in the morning and got out only four. This engineer requested the men to make up the one press they had lost in the morning by doing an extra one in the afternoon. All the men objected to this, and their spokesman was one of the accused. Because he with others refused to make good in the afternoon the work lost in the morning owing to a stoppage of machinery for which he and his fellow workmen were not responsible, it was seriously put forward in evidence that he was in favour of slowing down on the job. And slowing down on the job to-day is apparently regarded in some quarters as being evidence that a man embraces the I.W.W. doctrines and is in favour of direct action. Could anything be more farcical than to say that because any workman is proved to be inefficient or has in any way slackened off in his employment, that in itself is evidence that the man has embraced the I.W.W. doctrines? I have no doubt whatever that ever since men started to toil in this old world of ours there have been some inclined to slow down on their work whenever they got an opportunity.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Ministers sometimes do it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was going to say that this slowing down disease or germ is not confined, as some of our friends in high places

seem to imagine, to the poor beggar engaged with pick and shovel or carrying wheat, or any other laborious work in this country.

Mr. Troy: A man might be physically weakened.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I would like to know the man who, with the temperature at 108 degrees in the shade, and at the end of seven or eight hours of hard work, would not become physically weakened. Why is this doctrine of arresting and prosecuting or persecuting men because they will not turn out as much work as the boss thinks they ought to, confined to men who are working-class agitators, men who are merely striving to improve the lot of their fellowmen? If the prosecutors were to turn their attention to offenders of other classes, they would find many of them in highly placed positions, men drawing more than 10s. or 12s. a day throughout the industrial, commercial, and political life of the country. This is the class of evidence on which it was sought to convict these men. Another witness said that the accused, Callanan, speaking at a union meeting had stated that the Arbitration Court had been a failure. It will be within the knowledge of members who have read that evidence that this is the strong point—

Mr. O'Loughlen: He was pretty right too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: For the prosecution against one member of the accused. Just imagine the whole of the powers and influence of the police force of this country, backed up by the Crown Law Department at great trouble and expense, bringing witnesses hundreds of miles to give evidence of this nature, to the effect that a man had expressed the innocent and harmless opinion that the Arbitration Court had been a failure.

Mr. Green: So it is.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. If that is an offence and a ground for prosecution, who is going to be exempt? Ever since we have had an Arbitration Court in this country the strongest opponents of the principle of arbitration have been the members of the Employers' Association. Employers from one end of the country to the other, the newspapers, daily, weekly, or otherwise, have contended right along the line that arbitration has been a failure. And yet the powers that be have only recently awakened to the fact that it is an offence under our Criminal Code, namely when the referendum was before the public and a few prominent members of organisations on the goldfields were concerned. This witness also said that Callanan had advocated shorter working hours. Just imagine a highly paid King's Counsel in the court, with all the surroundings and expense of court procedure, gravely and seriously eliciting the information from a witness that one of the accused had advocated shorter working hours! Since when has it become a crime in any part of the British Empire for any citizen to advocate shorter working hours?

Mr. Jones: Since the adjournment on Wednesday last.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government would have been indicted on Wednesday last because they slowed down on their job on Thursday, and refused to work then.

The Attorney General: You did not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not believe in slowing down either on the part of members of the I.W.W. or on the part of Ministers. All organised labour throughout Australia, and long before there were any divisions in their ranks, have advocated shorter working hours, and that advocacy has been recognised and approved of by the highest industrial tribunals in the land. The Commonwealth Court of Arbitration reduced the working hours quite recently in our goldmining industry from 48 to 44. Notwithstanding this, it is considered evidence of sufficient importance to deprive a man of his liberty that he should have advocated shorter working hours. Then, too, there were two other witnesses, two political impostors.

Mr. Troy: Hear, hear!

Hon. P. COLLIER: They were adventurers, who, by the way, increased the Treasurer's revenue at the recent elections by the sum of £50 between them. These two individuals were roped in at considerable expense to come from the goldfields to Perth to give evidence against one of the accused.

Mr. Troy: Two rodents, two rats!

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is what one of these individuals said, that he had heard Callanan say that arbitration was out of date. I presume that the Police Department or the Crown Law Department had a knowledge of the evidence that this man was going to give before bringing him down as a witness, and yet they put this country to the expense of bringing him to Perth to tell the jury that he had heard Callanan say that arbitration was out of date. This opinion is held by a large section of the people, and held very strongly at the present time. The other witness, Jordan, gave similar evidence. In addition to that a senior detective was brought from New South Wales. One would imagine that, when the police force or the powers that be go to the expense of bringing an officer of police from New South Wales, he would have some important evidence which would have a direct bearing upon the charge. At any rate, Detective Vincent was called from New South Wales to prove that Miller, who was amongst those prosecuted in 1916, was a member of the I.W.W., that he had heard Miller only a few months before stating in an address given in the Domain in Sydney that he was a member of that organisation. It may be necessary for the prosecution to link up, if they can, any of the accused with any man who was a member of the I.W.W., and that this would be evidence against him. There was no need, however, to bring the detective from New South Wales to prove this, because it was well within the knowledge of the police force of this State, and the man himself had never denied, in fact had openly admitted it, that he was a member of the I.W.W. He admitted this when he was charged in 1916 with being a member of that society. I invite the Attorney

General to look up the evidence of Detective Vincent, and to find for himself that this is the only evidence that he gave at the recent trial. The detective also coupled Miller's daughter with a woman named Mrs. Westbrook, and the same thing applies in her case, the facts were already in the possession of the local police. The detective said in answer to the accused that he was here at the request of the Western Australian police force. If members of our police force, or whoever was responsible for bringing that officer from New South Wales to give that evidence, thought it was necessary to do this, then there is scope for the Government to economise and cut down expenditure by getting rid of the officers concerned.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Anyone would think they had money to burn.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then there was a plain clothes constable named Lenahan, who was brought from Broken Hill for a somewhat similar purpose, to prove that Sawtell, one of those who was prosecuted in 1916, was also a member of the I.W.W. The evidence of this constable consisted of this, that he had heard Sawtell speaking at Broken Hill at an I.W.W. meeting. Of course he had. Sawtell had never denied that he was a member of this organisation, and any policeman in Perth or Fremantle could have given sworn evidence to the effect that he had heard Sawtell express himself as being a supporter of I.W.W. doctrines. Then we come to our own police force, the members of which did not seem to have much to do. Detective Porter said he had seen some of the accused on the wharf at the time of the departure of Miller and his daughter. It is apparently a crime now when a boat is departing for the Eastern States to go to the wharf and see one's friends off.

Mr. Troy: No matter who they may be.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There were other men who were members of labour organisations taking their departure by that boat, but the keen scent of the detective enabled him to define the thoughts of these men, that they were on the wharf to see Miller off and no other person. He also said he had seen some of the accused apparently taking a great interest in the lumpers' strike. This was seriously put forth as evidence that a man is a supporter of the I.W.W. and a criminal, and in justification for the charge. The Premier himself took a great interest in the lumpers' strike. Is there anyone in the State, no matter who he may be, who did not take considerable interest in that strike?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They ought to prosecute the nationalists too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is the kind of evidence put forward, and it has not been specially selected. There is nothing more important running through the whole thing than this class of evidence, with the exception of the evidence on which one man was convicted, and for whom I offer no excuse or palliation. Then there was a detective brought down from the goldfields, who said he had shadowed one of the accused. He said it was part of his duty to shadow men who were suspected of belonging to the I.W.W. This was one of the men who was included amongst the prisoners tried in 1916, and who was bound over to keep the peace.

As he found that the police were following him and watching him, and that it was difficult, if not impossible for him to find employment, he went to the goldfields, and obtained work on the mines, and was working there like any other respectable citizen. The detective said he was shadowing this man from the time of his arrival on the goldfields, and apparently he made some marvellous discoveries in the process. One day the detective was following this man as he came home from work, after doing his eight hours in the mine on day shift. He was coming home in the afternoon, and stopped at the local State school of Boulder to speak to some children. The detective was shadowing him; and, after he had passed on, the detective went up to the children and asked them what the accused had said to them. The children, in reply, told him that the accused had said that they ought to ask the schoolmaster to put grass down in the school yard for them to play on.

Mr. Troy: That was criminal. Evidently a very dangerous man.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is what came out in cross-examination. The detective said to the accused, in reply to a question, "You told them that they should see the school teacher and get a lawn to play upon."

Mr. Troy: Oh, dear!

Hon. P. COLLIER: The accused said, "Do you see anything wrong in that?" The detective makes answer as follows: "It was in keeping with the I.W.W. ideas of causing discontent; it was according to sabotage." That is how the public funds are being expended, and how citizens are being persecuted—a great big hefty individual of a detective slinks along behind the man who is just coming home from work, and the detective questions a few school children as to what the man has said to them, and, when informed that he said to them they ought to ask the teacher to put down a lawn, the detective says, "I'll have him." Billy Hughes at once came up in the detective's mind, and he said, "I'll have him." And no doubt he made a careful note of what the man had said so as to be prepared to give it in evidence. The accused asked the detective in Court, "Do you call that sabotage?" The reply was, "Yes; it is causing dissension, it is causing discontent, in my mind." The accused replies, "Your mind is very small." I think the accused was very moderate, in the circumstances. He said to the detective, "You thought my remarks were in keeping with I.W.W. ideas?" The detective answers "Yes." The accused then says, "That is the only thing you can bring up against me?" The answer is, "Yes." That is the position. That is what we have to-day in Western Australia—a detective coming to Perth from the goldfields to give evidence of that character in such a case. I wonder what sort of a troglodyte is this individual; I wonder what state of progress would the world be in if throughout the centuries everybody had regarded the question of lawns for children to play upon in the same light as did this genius of a detective. In point of fact, the accused man was to be commended for such a suggestion. He ought to have been praised for making it. If he

bad only put a button on his coat and taken a flag in his hand and made that suggestion from a lorry on the street corner, some of our patriotic win-the-war friends would have taken it up and thanked him for making it. What is wrong with the idea of putting down grass in the school yard? The detective says that it is in keeping with I.W.W. ideas. It was that class of evidence, nothing more, against the accused, with the one exception which I have mentioned, upon which I do not know who—this Government or somebody else—endeavoured to deprive them of their liberty. It is the grossest abuse of the process of law that I have ever known. These prosecutions were a prostitution of all that we know and understand by the term "British justice." We have arrived at that stage today in this country, apparently, and in other parts of Australia as well, when it is a crime for a man to do otherwise than echo the sentiments that those in authority wish him to express; when it is a crime for him to exercise the right of every freeborn Britisher, the right of free speech. There is talk about going to the other end of the world to fight for freedom. I say deliberately that no Hun of whom I have read has plumbed greater depths of degradation than the degenerate little impostor who has degraded the high office of the Prime Ministership of the Commonwealth during the past 12 months.

Mr. Davies: Do you suggest that the police are in collusion with Mr. Hughes?

Mr. Jones: How innocent the hon. member interjecting must be!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Do I suggest that these prosecutions were undertaken at the instance of Mr. Hughes and his Ministers? I do suggest that that was so. Do I suggest that I myself would be wrong in stating I have received comparatively recently summonses in respect of statements made by me so far back as the 15th July last year, and that those summonses were not issued until a few days after the arrival in this country of Senator Pearce, the Minister for Defence? Should I be wrong in assuming that Senator Pearce was responsible for the issue of those summonses? I contend that I am justified in making such an assertion, and in declaring that British justice has been prostituted in these matters. My own case is sub judice still, and I am not going to discuss its merits. But I am justified in discussing some of the incidents connected with it. I was supposed to have made statements in contravention of one or other of the million and a half regulations of Mr. Hughes—supposed to have made such statements away back in July of last year. Detectives were put upon my track, and I was shadowed in the same way as was the harmless individual who suggested a lawn for school children. All the evidence that could be gathered against me was collected, and it was at that time submitted to the authorities; and the authorities decided to take no action. The matter remained thus for five months; but Senator Pearce, on arriving in the State, was met by some of his friends, and this case of mine was suggested to him. The Minister for Defence, a layman, without reference to any law officers in this State, or

in the Commonwealth, himself decided that my words were actionable, and himself gave instructions that summonses should be issued against me. That is what occurred. I venture to say that something of a similar character happened in connection with these I.W.W. prosecutions. That is to say, the prosecutions were undertaken at the instance of Senator Pearce, or of Mr. Hughes, or of some of the other Federal Ministers. They decided to initiate these prosecutions just at the opportune moment, when a referendum was before the people of this country.

Mr. Munsie: The object was to inflame the public mind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is where I say our courts have been abused in this connection, though "abused" is not the word for what was done. Now let hon. members mark this contrast. If an individual without the necessary means of defence is placed on trial on a charge involving his life, a charge conviction for which might be followed by the death penalty, he is provided with the newest cub of a solicitor to be found in the State for an advocate. The maximum fee for such an advocate is £15. That is the amount paid for defending a man whose life is at stake. But the only kind of lawyer who will take on cases of that kind for such a fee is, as a rule, the briefless barrister, the lawyer who has no practice. However, when it comes to a case of trying to gaoil honest working men for the expression of honest opinions, then the most expensive of King's Counsel are engaged in order to accomplish the purpose.

Mr. Troy: Grand Inquisitors are employed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is what occurred in connection with these I.W.W. prosecutions. An enthusiast is employed, a man who, in his desire for a conviction, would bring to bear all the malice and bitterness that he has displayed outside the precincts of the court towards the class from which these defendants come.

Mr. Troy: An unscrupulous party man.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The public are entitled to know why, when men of this kind are arraigned, the most expensive barristers are engaged. For matters of far greater importance men of less standing in the profession are entrusted with the conduct of the Crown case. But not so here. Taking the whole of the circumstances into consideration, I have no hesitation in saying that any impartial consideration of the facts can lead to no other conclusion than that this prosecution of the men who were recently found to be innocent is one of the worst of its kind that Western Australia has ever experienced. The jury did not take long to decide the case. The judge said with regard to one man, Campbell, who had had to run the gauntlet of a hearing by the lower court, and who had lain for weeks in gaol, without bail, while the charge was hanging over him, that there was no evidence against him. The Judge directed the jury to acquit that man on the ground that there was no evidence whatever against him. Could not the legal advisers of the Crown, in going over the evidence which they had at their disposal, have arrived

at the conclusion that that evidence did not warrant the arrest and prosecution of the man? The same thing applies to Callahan, as to whom the Judge said that the Crown had failed to show that he had ever been a member of the I.W.W. or had ever been associated with it. Further evidence given by the police was that some of these men had been members of the I.W.W. so far back as 1915 and 1916. The men admitted the fact, but no evidence whatever was produced to show that they had had any connection of any kind with the organisation since the date when it was declared an illegal association—none whatever. At the time they were members of it, it was a perfectly legal organisation, carrying on its propaganda openly and in the light of day in all the capital cities in Australia. And yet the fact of their former association with it was brought forward in order to convict these men of conspiracy at the present time. I say it is a remarkable coincidence and a remarkable fact that we had heard nothing of the I.W.W. or their actions or views for a period of a whole 12 months, from the 1916 referendum until the 1917 referendum, and that the I.W.W. cropped up again at this opportune time. I say it was all merely an attempt, as the evidence shows, to deprive men of the right of free speech, to prevent men from saying that they were dissatisfied with the Arbitration Court, to prevent them from standing up in public meeting and saying that they were in favour of reduction of working hours, and so forth. Men, it seems, are not to be permitted to express sentiments that are displeasing to the powers that be in Australia. I did not think that we had turned back the clock of time in this respect. There were times in the history of Great Britain—fortunately long passed by—when men were not permitted the right of free speech. In those days men were persecuted and prosecuted and gaolod for their defence of the liberty of thought and expression.

Mr. Troy: And for their defiance of the powers that were.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; and many of them subsequently rose to high places. We know that 30 years ago John Burns himself, for speaking in Trafalgar Square, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. He served that term; and the country responsible for sending him to gaol because he had insisted upon the right of free speech on that occasion, later on called him to its councils in the government of the country. And what has been the history of John Burns has been the history of many other men as well, even right down into our own Australian States. But here is an attempt, when the public mind is inflamed, to set back the hands of time to the conditions I have indicated. Mr. Hughes, and those responsible, ought to have learned a lesson from their efforts and their tactics during the past 12 months. If they have failed to learn the lesson that they should have learnt from the events of the past year, it will be all the worse for them and the peace and and harmony and good government of the Commonwealth. There has been a deliberate

attempt to goad men into insurrection, to goad men into riot, for the mean, despicable and wretched party purposes of the Government. The Government wanted to take such action as would induce men to commit a breach of the peace in order that that action might suit their purpose for the time being, but the people of Australia have shown that they are not of the temper that will endorse that kind of thing. I am pleased to say that there is in the hearts of the Australian people, regardless of their politics or religion, a deep rooted love of freedom, and a resentment of anything approaching tyranny and injustice. This manifested itself during recent months and will continue to manifest itself if the powers that be are so short sighted and so imbued with a spirit of persecution that they will attempt to deprive honest and hard working men of liberty in the manner in which it was sought to do in connection with the recent prosecutions. I want to know also what the Government propose to do in the way of paying these men compensation.

The Attorney General: That is not part of the motion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But it has a bearing on the motion. These men have applied for compensation and I take it that the matter is being dealt with in the department, and there should be some papers on the file dealing with the application.

The Attorney General: If there is an application of that sort it would be on quite a different file; it would go to a different department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If an application was made for compensation it would probably go to another department, but that department would not act without sending the application to the Attorney General for a recommendation.

The Attorney General: True.

Hon. P. COLLIER: At any rate we need not split straws about that matter. I am not anxious to pursue the question, because it can be dealt with another time.

The Attorney General: I will give you any information I can on the subject.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The point will be raised by the Attorney General that it is quite without precedent to place papers of this kind on the Table of the House.

The Attorney General: I thank you for the suggestion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I can quite understand what the Attorney General's reply will be. He will tell the House that the file consists of confidential papers and documents, and that it is not advisable to make them available to the public. But, in view of the exceptional circumstances, I think the Attorney General should depart from any practice that may have obtained hitherto in this respect. The matter is of sufficient importance to justify my request being granted. In a matter involving the liberty of an individual, be he the most humble man in the land, that matter is not too important to receive consideration in this high institution of Parliament. It might even be of greater

importance than many matters involving large sums of money. It is well for us, in considering a question of this kind, to place ourselves in the position of the men to whom I have referred, and Parliament is the highest court of appeal, and the only tribunal before which I have the opportunity of ventilating what I believe to be a gross injustice. Therefore, I hope the Attorney General will make the papers available. I want to know who is responsible for the collection of the evidence, to whom it was presented, who advised upon it, and who ultimately decided that the prosecution should be launched. I want to know whether that responsibility rests with the Attorney General or the officers of the Crown Law Department in this State, or with the Federal authorities. Without taking up any further time I submit the motion which I have read.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [9.53]: Of course the long Ministerial experience of the leader of the Opposition has taught him that it is impossible, in a case of this description, to lay papers of a confidential nature on the Table of the House. The hon. member anticipated my answer. Neither in this Parliament, nor in any other Parliament in the British Dominions, has ever a file of papers in connection with a criminal prosecution, giving all the privileged reports of officer to officer in the department, and so on, been exhibited to the gaze of the general public. If that were done it would be what is called contrary to public policy, contrary to the interests of the State, and there is no doubt whatever that the long experience of the hon. gentleman led him in the right direction when he anticipated the very legitimate answer I would give. The whole thing resolves itself into this: the leader of the Opposition is most anxious to know from the papers, or from other sources, whether the Commonwealth authorities were responsible for this prosecution.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And the cost.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member will get that. I am quite prepared to answer any legitimate or reasonable question I may be asked in connection with this or any other case, and no one knows better than the leader of the Opposition how to frame a question to get the answer he desires. For instance, he has asked me a question regarding the cost of the prosecution. An answer to that will be furnished to-morrow, if I can get the figures in time. But to constitute this House a court of appeal from a criminal or any other trial in a court of justice, would be an unheard of proceeding. The leader of the Opposition has gone out of his way in support of this motion to quote scraps from the evidence taken at the trial.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It was nothing else but scraps.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the House wishes to get any information from the member for Forrest on the doings of the Supreme Court I shall be glad to sit down.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Unless you are going to give us more information perhaps it would be as well.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not propose to argue with the leader of the Opposition or any other member of the House. When the evidence taken before the criminal or any other court is concluded, it is ludicrous for any layman, even with the known ability—and I say it quite seriously—of the leader of the Opposition to come here and pick scraps of it and ask the House to believe his tale in connection with it.

Hon. P. Collier: May I say in reply to that—

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I listened to the hon. member for a whole hour and I did not say a single word. He might now allow me to proceed without interruption. I repeat, it would be foolish on the part of the House to attempt, even at the instance of the leader of the Opposition, to consider the question of the evidence. I refuse to go into it because, first of all, I do not know anything about it and I would not dream of judging on the scrappy conversation of some hon. members regarding what they had been told by interested parties. The only way to judge evidence is to know it as a whole, to know it as the judge knew it and as the jury knew it. To show that there was plenty of evidence on which to send the case to a jury, let me say that, first of all, the proceedings were heard before the Perth police magistrate, a very capable gentleman who knows what he is doing. After having listened to the evidence for many days the magistrate decided to commit a certain number of these men to take their trial in the Supreme Court, and I think he released one or two. Will hon. members tell me that the police magistrate of Perth sends people to take their trial on flimsy evidence?

Hon. P. Collier: He evidently sent one man.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We have a saying amongst lawyers, and it is well known amongst sensible people, that when a man has a bad case and no evidence to call he occupies himself by abusing the other side. My friends opposite are availing themselves of that rule. In order that my remarks should be complete, let me say it has been alleged by the leader of the Opposition that the evidence was flimsy. It went before the Police Magistrate of Perth, and I would never regard, and I may say the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) would never regard, any evidence as flimsy on which the Police Magistrate ordered a committal. That is the first stage. Next that evidence had to go before the Crown Prosecutor, Dr. Stow, who is also a very capable man. If Dr. Stow is of opinion in a case that there is not sufficient evidence to warrant an indictment being filed against the prisoner, he passes a memorandum of advice to the Attorney General that a nolle prosequi should be entered. The Attorney General then looks at the evidence, and if he agrees with the Crown Prosecutor he files a nolle prosequi, and there is an end of the case. Dr. Stow did not tender any such advice, and the indictment was presented to the Attorney General who, by the way, signs every indictment, good or bad, as a matter of form, every indictment, whether of Western Australia or of the Common-

wealth; because the Attorney General holds letters patent from the Commonwealth to sign for the Federal Attorney General in respect of such cases if it be a Commonwealth prosecution, as well as letters patent from the Governor of the State. The first set of I.W.W. prosecutions emanated from the Commonwealth. Because I, as Attorney General of Western Australia, sign indictments, it must not be taken that it is for the Commonwealth or for the State. First then, the case had to pass the Police Magistrate, and secondly it had to pass the Crown Solicitor. The Attorney General never dreams of going into a case that is in the Crown Law Department unless he is requested to do so. The papers in this case never came before me, and I had no connection with them. But, owing to Dr. Stow, the Crown Prosecutor, being engaged in drafting some Bills now before the House, and also in view of the fact that he was due for his long leave, it was suggested that Sir Walter James, one of our leading barristers, should take the case. The case therefore had to go to Sir Walter James, and I am perfectly sure that a barrister of his standing, if he thought the evidence was flimsy, would not hesitate to advise the Attorney General that it was not a proper case to proceed with. Sir Walter James conducted the case in the lower court, as well as in the higher court. A King's Counsel can attend in the lower court without loss of dignity, provided he is accompanied by a junior. In this case in the lower court I think the Crown Prosecutor accompanied Sir Walter James, and it was only when Dr. Stow went on holidays that other counsel was associated with Sir Walter James.

Hon. P. Collier: Who was that other counsel?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr. Jackson. Let me repeat: we had the case in the lower court, next before the Crown Solicitor, then before Sir Walter James, and, later, before a judge of the Supreme Court. If the judge thinks the evidence flimsy or insufficient for a jury to consider he has a right to, as he did in one instance in this case, say, "Gentlemen, there is no evidence for you to consider; you must acquit so-and-so." So it is quite obvious that the judge agreed that there was a prima facie case against all the prisoners but one. Then we come to the jury themselves, who, after listening to the case for seven, eight, or nine days, acquitted the accused except one, who was found guilty. That is the history of it. Now to answer the question asked by the leader of the Opposition—because I have no desire to hide anything from him—the Commonwealth authorities had nothing whatever to do with this prosecution. If they had I can assure the House that I should be very glad to send them the bill for the costs of the prosecution.

Mr. O'Loghlin: In view of the state of the finances it is a crying shame that there should be such a bill to meet.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Bill for the previous prosecution was paid by the Commonwealth authorities. It was a kind of interstate prosecution, and was conducted entirely under the Commonwealth authorities. We in

the State department had nothing to do with it, for they instructed their own counsel. The second case arose in the ordinary way in the Police Department, and had nothing whatever to do with the Commonwealth authorities, nor had it anything to do with the referendum. Long before the referendum campaign was announced the Police Department's investigations were proceeding. The fact that arrests took place before the campaign started—

Hon. P. Collier: But not before the announcement was made.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I had no more to do with the referendum than had a dozen and one other arrests that must have taken place in the ordinary course about that time. It had nothing to do with the Commonwealth authorities; it had nothing to do with the referendum. It was purely a question of, had those people conspired together to break the law? They were tried fairly, in the ordinary way, every facility for defence was offered to them, and the result is conclusive. I think I have covered the ground, and also have answered questions which have been addressed to me by the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The evidence is collected by the police; who advises the prosecution?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think these criminal cases ever come before the Solicitor General.

Mr. O'Loghlin: Do the police decide?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Most criminal prosecutions, in fact all that I know of, start in the ordinary way in the Police Department. Very rarely do they consult the Crown Law Department until they are ready for trial in the superior court, for there is a number of skilled officers in the Police Department quite capable of conducting cases in the lower court. But in this case, as professional assistance was required in the lower court, the Crown Law authorities were consulted, and I asked the Crown Prosecutor, Dr. Stow, to attend to and advise on the case. Whilst that was proceeding it was decided to take other counsel, as I have explained, and so the Crown Solicitor and Sir Walter James were connected with the case.

Hon. P. Collier: Was that before the arrests were made?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am speaking from memory; it was certainly before the trial came on in the lower court. I should have to look up the papers to see whether those gentlemen were engaged before the arrests or after. Probably the arrests were made before ever the Crown Solicitor or Sir Walter James was consulted. I have given the House all the information at my command. I shall be glad to answer any other questions which the leader of the Opposition may care to put to me. I must resist the motion to place on the Table what I regard as confidential and State papers. I hope that after hearing what I have had to say, the leader of the Opposition will give me credit for having, to the best of my ability, answered his questions and adopted the attitude which I think any Attorney General would adopt. I ask the leader of the Opposition, who knows the constitutional practice, to be good enough to withdraw the motion put forward,



seeing that he has now all the information I can give him.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [10.12]: I have no desire to do anything to retard the suggestion put forward by the Minister that the leader of the Opposition should withdraw the motion. I realise that there may be very grave objections to placing the whole of the papers on the Table. The leader of the Opposition has secured some of the information he was after.

The Attorney General: I have answered all his questions.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is the one in regard to the costs, but that is to come. I think the public will be astounded when they realise the costs of this particular case. It is almost impossible for us to get anything accurate, but if one can form an estimate from the costly nature of the witnesses brought from all over Australia to give evidence, the cost of the necessary working up of the case—the Attorney General has hinted that counsel were engaged even before the case came into the lower court—and counsel's fees, for we know that K.C.s are not engaged for small figures, it will be difficult for the Minister to advance legitimate reasons why this immense cost should have been incurred. The leader of the Opposition was quite right in saying that the evidence was flimsy. The Attorney General says that the leader of the Opposition took scraps of the evidence. If the Attorney General knows anything more tangible in that evidence, which would warrant the department in spending public money in an attempt to obtain a conviction, why did he not advance it?

The Minister for Works: We do not require to try the case all over again.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: This House is a tribunal where even the humblest person may have his case heard. I have a vivid recollection of the whole of a night being taken up in the House some years ago discussing whether a condemned woman could be saved from her doom next day.

Mr. Troy: This House is a court of appeal.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: This House, in glaring cases of injustice, has constituted itself a court of review, and if there is nothing to justify the proceedings taken has the right to express an opinion regarding the Government which launched such a prosecution. I hold the opinion that this case was a frame up from its inception. The Attorney General knows that so far as this side of the House is concerned we have absolutely no sympathy with the doctrines of the I.W.W. We realise that this organisation is a destructive force, and that a destructive force can never make for progress. If we read up the history of the origin of this movement we have to go back to the year 1903, when we find that this organisation had its birth in Colorado at that time, owing to the conflict and industrial stress then existing on Rockefeller's mines and to the fact that women and children were burned in their tents. Members of the organisation then came to Australia, and it has now been declared to be an unlawful association in the Commonwealth. No one who has any sympathy with its doctrines finds any place in the

labour movement, and any one who is in sympathy with its ideals is absolutely opposed to the fundamental policy of this side of the House, namely political action.

The Minister for Works: Have you no members of it in your ranks?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: None that I know of. Whilst these men were in cells, endeavouring to get out on bail in order to prepare their case, and whilst the case for the other side was being prepared by a King's Counsel, certain members on this side of the House went bail for some of these men, and would do it again to-morrow. I am not in sympathy with the doctrines of the I.W.W., but hold the opinion that human sympathy alone would prompt any man to help his fellow in this way. Every man is innocent until he is found to be guilty. These men were awaiting trial under unfortunate circumstances and under distressing conditions, and yet we have the Attorney General practically justifying the prosecution.

The Attorney General: Most certainly.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It remains to be seen whether this House, or the country, thinks that the prosecution was justifiable in view of the evidence. The magistrate certainly sent these men along for trial, but one man was dismissed before the case went to the jury, which is evidence that the magistrate is not infallible. The men were helpless and were too poor to engage counsel, though they should have done so, and all the evidence was on the one side. For the prosecution there was one of the ablest King's Counsel in the State conducting the case against these men, backed up by the support of the whole of the police force and the Crown Law Department. The jury, which had only been empanelled after considerable challenging, came to the conclusion that there was no case against the accused, with one exception. I hold the opinion that the Criminal Investigation Department have not too much work upon their hands, and that economy could well be practised in that department, more especially if the result of their efforts is found in such a case as this, which lasted a considerable time and cost the State a lot of money which it could ill afford, as well as impoverishing and penalising many of those men who never in their lives belonged to the I.W.W. and had no intention of joining that organisation. There is no evidence to connect the accused with it, and the observations that were made by them from time to time could well have been made by any one. Such observations must have been made by men on the other side of the House, if they played their proper part in working for the progress of this country. No country can afford to stand still, and these particular men were practically nothing more than social reformers, whose object was to benefit the people of this country as a whole. This was their only crime. If this poverty-stricken State can afford to waste thousands of pounds in keeping members of the Criminal Investigation Department employed in cases of this sort, and in bringing witnesses from every part of Australia, it is the most pronounced indictment against Ministers that I have known up to the present. The Attorney General will admit, and if he does not the pub-

lie will amrm, that it is against public policy to launch prosecutions upon such flimsy evidence as has been adduced in this case, and to spend good money in an endeavour to secure convictions against honest citizens, who for the most part have nothing of a detrimental nature that can be brought against them. I realise that there is nothing to be gained by supporting this motion to a division, and the difficulty there is in getting confidential information, though this would be an eye opener to us if we could get it. I understand that in criminal cases the prosecution is often only launched on the most confidential of information, and that in the interests of justice it will sometimes be necessary to rely upon that information. At the same time, the Attorney General will in this case be wise to give us at the earliest possible date the detailed costs of the whole of these proceedings, that is the cost of the Criminal Investigation Department in working up the case against these particular persons. There is nothing new in the methods employed by the prosecution in these cases, and they have been practised by detectives for decades past, but the methods employed here are indicative of the keen desire which the C.I.D. have to get work. Around this House last year men were parading night after night in pairs. Were they shadowing members of Parliament, alleged to be members of the I.W.W., or were they endeavouring to stop some of the supporters of this movement from blowing up Parliament House? The whole of the ramifications of the public departments were subjected to this expense, lights were kept burning in public buildings, special watchers were put on, and a sort of hysteria seemed to take hold of our public men. On top of all this we find the police in a new role, at a terrible cost to the State inflicting hardship upon these men and their families, and on the flimsiest possible evidence endeavouring to get a conviction at a cost to the country which the country could ill afford.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet) [10.25]: I do not agree with the attitude taken up by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen), and desire to press for the production of these papers. The facts are that a number of men have been torn away from their homes and from their employment. They have been thrown into prison and have suffered loss of employment, and their families reduced to penurious circumstances because of the prosecution of the Government, a prosecution which, however, failed. The Government now refuse to produce the papers on the ground that they contain confidential information, and this House is asked to accept that as a reason why the papers should not be produced. If ever papers should be produced in connection with any matter, they should be produced in connection with this matter. It is admitted that these men were arraigned on the flimsiest of evidence.

The Attorney General: It is not admitted.

Mr. TROY: The Judge admitted it.

The Attorney General: He did not.

Mr. TROY: It is generally admitted that these men were arraigned on the flimsiest of evidence.

The Attorney General: That is only said by people like yourself.

Mr. TROY: My own opinion is equally as good as that of the Attorney General, and more sincere. It is just as intelligent, too, but may not be so plausible. I heard the Minister discussing the Sirdar case, and lost all respect for his fairness after he had given his plausible views upon the matter.

The Attorney General: After you found you could not twist the Minister for Mines round your little finger.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope hon. members will discuss the motion.

Mr. TROY: I heard him discuss that motion in the House, and saw his references in the paper, and I must say I do like honest, straightforward dealing.

The Attorney General: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is referring to another case which has already been discussed in this House and decided against him, and he makes references to an hon. member of this House, and imputes motives unfairly. This is wrong and he should withdraw.

Mr. TROY: I want to know what the point of order is, and would like the Attorney General to explain what I should withdraw. I shall obey the Standing Orders, and am not going to allow the Attorney General to demand that I should withdraw something which is not in conflict with them. I have made the statement that I have heard the hon. member—

The Attorney General: You imputed improper motives.

Mr. TROY: I said I liked honest, straightforward dealing, and I consider that the hon. member's explanation was an evasion of the position. I am perfectly justified in making that statement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Interjections are the cause of much time being wasted in the House, and I wish that hon. members would refrain from interjecting, because this only has the tendency to raise a discussion which is not in the best interests of the House.

Mr. TROY: I have no sympathy whatever with the I.W.W. or its purposes. There are, however, members of that organisation with whom I am personally acquainted, and during their difficulties I have assisted them. I could easily have been drawn into a prosecution in this matter, and have had evidence trumped up against me such as has been mentioned by the leader of the Opposition. Take the case of Sawtell. The member for Carnarvon (Mr. Angelo) knows him well, knows that he was a man of excellent character, for he worked for the hon. member for years. I found Sawtell to be an honest man, but a crank. I have even lent him money, and he has always repaid me as soon as he could. Frequently I found him in circumstances to which I was obliged to object. I found him once stirring up the public, and had to state my views on the question. He was not a bad man at all.

Mr. Green: We would not kill a rooster.

Mr. TROY: There are men who are supposed to be respectable walking St. George's terrace to-night, whom I would not place in the same category as Sawtell because I hold

him in greater respect. I hold the opinion that this prosecution was initiated in the first instance owing to the malice of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

Member: That has been denied.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. TROY: The Attorney General does not deny that, and has said that the Commonwealth in the first instance started this prosecution. The whole question was raised purely for political purposes, because the influence of the I.W.W. in this country was absolutely nil. Of course there has been a period of momentary madness in Western Australia. Very often men of reasonable fairness and judgment have in the stress of these times given themselves over to the persecution of their fellow men. No doubt they have acted, as they believe, in the right way, and I do not condemn them. There are hon. members of this House and people outside who have acted as they thought in the best interests of the country. In a spirit of temporary madness they have indulged in a species of absolute persecution towards their fellow men.

Mr. Green: That happened in other ages, too.

Mr. TROY: But it has never happened except in those particular circumstances. When that condition of temporary madness passes, the other side will cease to exist as a Government in this country. Let hon. members opposite take that prophecy to heart. It will come to pass. I can be a prophet so far as that is concerned. Nothing is surer. As regards the police magistrates, I would be the last to say that a police magistrate would be guilty of any unfairness. But magistrates are not infallible. Magistrates have erred before, and will err again.

The Minister for Works: So do politicians err.

Mr. TROY: Quite so; and the hon. gentleman interjecting ought to be the best judge of that. The magistrate may be unconsciously influenced by the prevailing spirit of the times. Although in ordinary times he would say, "There is nothing in this," yet in times of excitement, influenced by the prevailing sentiment, he might say, "I will allow this case to go to a higher court." That would be quite natural. He would not take it upon himself to be the final judge, whereas in ordinary times, when there was no excitement, when there was not this temporary madness, he would say, "I will take it upon myself to dismiss this case." Has there not been a demand in influential circles that magistrates should be removed from the bench? And is it not possible that in those conditions even a magistrate will be diffident about doing his duty in a strong, virile manner? Is it not possible? I submit it is possible. You, Mr. Speaker, could give instances in which magistrates have not proved altogether infallible, I do not want to bring you, Sir, into the discussion, but I think you yourself could give instances where magistrates have not proved altogether infallible or fair. And yet I have no doubt that those magistrates were just as conscientious in the discharge of their duties

as you are to-night, or as any man in this Assembly is. Therefore I say to the Attorney General that there is no desire on this side of the House to persecute the police, who acted as they did because they acted under instructions. The detective who went to the golffields to trump up a case against the man referred to by the leader of the Opposition, acted under instructions. He probably does not possess much knowledge or much intelligence, but we have to take him as he is, and we have to allow that as a further excuse for him. This side want fairness and justice, and while disagreeing with the I.W.W. this party stand for any individual in the country who does not get a fair deal—it matters not who the individual may be; it matters not what class of politics he professes, or to what religion he belongs. This party stands to see that every man in this country gets a fair deal and justice. Unfortunately of late a spirit of persecution has been abroad in Australia, and it is the place of this party to fight that spirit and to secure justice for the people who have been persecuted. I agree with the motion of the leader of the Opposition, and I hope it will be pressed to a division. If the Government do not give satisfaction in this matter, well, a time is coming when justice will be done to those people.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder—in reply) [10.35]: I wish to offer a few words in reply. One point made by the Attorney General was that the quotations or excerpts which I gave from the evidence were of a scrappy character.

The Attorney General: I did not mean anything offensive. All I meant was that the case lasted seven or eight days, and that you could not possibly give a resumé of the evidence in a speech of two hours.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I did not take the Attorney General's remark as offensive. I took it to mean that the Attorney General considered my quotations were of a scrappy nature because they could not be otherwise. In reply to that, I want to point out that in every instance where I quoted pieces of evidence I quoted the whole of the evidence given by the witness. The evidence about the grass for the school children was the only evidence given by the detective; absolutely no other evidence whatever was given by him against that man. So that, brief and scrappy as the evidence appeared when I related it, nevertheless it was the only evidence which that officer had to give. The same thing applies to the evidence given by the two men who, as I said, were candidates for Parliament at the general election. The only evidence they had to offer was that they had heard some of the accused say that arbitration had been a failure. No other evidence of any description connecting the defendants with a criminal act of any nature whatsoever was given by those witnesses. The same thing applies to all the other witnesses whom I have quoted. It may seem somewhat out of place to review in this House the evidence in a case of this kind; but it is the only course open to me in order to make out a case that the prosecution was not justified. It would be useless for me to come

here and make general assertions that the evidence upon which the charges were based did not warrant the prosecution. In substantiation of that assertion, I produced the evidence. I produced the only evidence which was given so far as those witnesses were concerned. I want to say again that I do not accuse the Attorney General in this matter, because I quite appreciate the fact that with the hundred and one prosecutions going on from day to day the Attorney General does no more than merely give the authority; that he does not go into each case and decide what prosecutions ought to go on and which ought not. But I do contend that the whole of the evidence, the whole of the facts of that trial, prove conclusively that the prosecution was not warranted on the evidence at the disposal of the police and of the authorities. Whilst I acquit the Attorney General, I absolutely refuse to believe that this prosecution was not of a political character. I refuse to believe that it was a mere coincidence that the police had been collecting evidence against these men for months and that the time was just ripe for action soon after the announcement that another referendum was to be taken. I am not going to accept that. I may be unduly sceptical, but I refuse to believe it was a mere coincidence that those arrests happened to be made at that time. I am firmly convinced that the prosecutions were for no other than political purposes. A point made by the Attorney General, in support of his contention that the prosecutions were justified, was that they had to run the gauntlet of obtaining the approval of the Crown Solicitor or of some legal officer, and that, in addition, the police magistrate, who he said was a fair and impartial man, had to find that a *prima facie* case had been made out. Let me just refer to that aspect of the matter. What were the charges? These men were charged with conspiring to raise discontent or disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects, and to arouse feelings of ill will and enmity between different classes of His Majesty's subjects. I want to ask the Attorney General if there is any member of this House, or any member of the community, who took an active part in the referendum campaign, and against whom a *prima facie* case would not lie for causing disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects. We were all on the platform during the referendum period. What were the speeches of the Attorney General and myself during that campaign? What did they consist of except matter that would be likely to cause discontent or disaffection amongst those who did not agree with what we were saying? As a matter of fact I was present at a meeting which the hon. member (Mr. Thomson) attended, and my statements created the utmost discontent amongst the audience. And so it was all over the country. Whenever opinions were expressed upon vital questions, with which the other side did not agree, we were creating discontent and disaffection. The Honorary Minister for the North-West, speaking in my constituency at Boulder in an unsuccessful effort to displace me in September last, made use of these words, "It is time that there was a revolution here; it is time that some shooting was done here

in Kalgoorlie, and I will make one to take hold of a gun and do some shooting."

Mr. Munsie: If any one of us had said that we would have got six years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Were not those words calculated to cause discontent and disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects? If any member belonging to the party on this side of the House had spoken such words on the public platform he would have been prosecuted on a charge of creating discontent and disaffection.

Mr. Teesdale: Repeat those words; the Honorary Minister is in the Chamber now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the hon. member think I quoted the words because the Honorary Minister was outside?

Mr. Teesdale: You might have made a mistake.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the hon. member knows me better, he will know that I am not afraid to say to a man's face what I would say when he is not present.

Mr. Teesdale: I thought you might have made a mistake.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the hon. member insinuate that I made a statement in the absence of an hon. member that I would not say in his presence?

Mr. Teesdale: I did not insinuate anything.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I only repeated words that the Honorary Minister was reported to have used at Boulder. He was reported to have said at Boulder that there ought to be something like a revolution, that there should be some shooting done, and that he would make one of the first to take hold of a gun to do it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are wrong.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know what the hon. member said; I am only quoting what he is reported to have said. He was at liberty to make that statement; I take no exception to it, and I do not think he ought to be prosecuted for expressing his opinions even in that determined manner. But I would ask what would have happened to myself, or to any member on this side of the House, who might have made such a statement.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Don Cameron signed himself "Your foe for the revolution."

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the hon. member believe that revolution means bloodshed; does he not know there are such things as peaceful revolutions?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Not in these times.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Some of the greatest reforms in history have been brought about by peaceful revolutions. Revolution does not mean fighting or bloodshed; as a matter of fact society from day to day is engaged in revolution.

Mr. Smith: Evolution.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Evolutionary revolution. This is where the distinction comes in here is the comparison. A man says that the arbitration court has been a failure, and another man says that he believes the workin

hours should be reduced. Those statements, in the opinion of the police authorities, or whoever was responsible for the prosecution, amounted to creating discontent and disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects, whereas a statement regarding guns and shooting did not. How blind are they in the direction which they do not wish to see, and what keen perception they have where they do want to take action. The point I am making is that there is not one member of this House against whom a police magistrate would not hold that a *prima facie* case had not been made out for statements uttered during the Referendum campaign. There is, therefore, no weight in the argument of the Attorney General that the prosecution in question was justified by reason of the fact that the police magistrate considered a *prima facie* case had been made out. It was impossible to make statements which would not create disaffection. Is there any man in Australia who has made statements that have created so much discontent and disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects as the present Prime Minister has done? Why, he has had Australia on the verge of civil war. He could not arrive at that stage without first creating discontent and disaffection; and so, in a lesser degree, right down through all his followers and satellites. I admit that I myself made innumerable statements likely to create discontent and disaffection; so did everybody who took an active part in the campaign. But why were these humble individuals singled out for prosecution, while everybody else was permitted to go free? Then, too, Sir Walter James is called in to advise the Government as to whether a case lies; and if he decides that the case ought to be taken, he is to be given charge of the prosecution.

The Attorney General: That was not so; he was not called in to advise as to whether a case laid. It was after the case was launched that he was called in. I am sure of that fact. All that I said was that I felt sure that a man in his position, if not satisfied that there was a *prima facie* case, would so advise the Crown.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The whole thing is so much padding in the case. I have the substantial fact that the one tribunal which finally dealt with the matter decided by their verdict that there was no case.

The Attorney General: Decided that the accused were not guilty.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, decided that there was not sufficient case to justify a conviction. Perhaps that is the correct version.

Mr. Smith: They might have given the prisoners the benefit of the doubt.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think there was much doubt about it. However, it is of no use my labouring the question. I am convinced that it was a political prosecution, undertaken for no other purpose. The evidence would not justify it on any other grounds whatever. And the great bulk of the people of Australia are convinced that not only this, but innumerable other prosecutions of a similar character, were undertaken for that purpose. In my opinion, when they got an opportunity, they will express that view in unmistakable fashion.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	25

Majority against .. 12

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Rocke
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Broun	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Draper	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Durack	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Maley	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Money	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mullany	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 7th February, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

### "HANSARD"—REPORT OF JOINT PRINTING COMMITTEE.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM brought up the report of the Joint Printing Committee in connection with the suggested abolition of "Hansard," which report was read by the Clerk.

### BILL—LOCAL OPTION CONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and passed.