

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER 1901

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER, 1901.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING ACT—SUNDAY TRADING.

Mr. CAMERON (*Brisbane North*) presented a petition signed by 11,500 residents of the State of Queensland against the recommendations of the licensing commission in reference to Sunday trading.

Petition read and received.

SHOPS AND FACTORIES ACT.

Mr. STEPHENSON (*Ipswich*) presented a petition, signed by 427 residents of Ipswich and district, in favour of the amendment of the Shops and Factories Act of 1900, so far as it relates to Saturday afternoon closing.

Petition received.

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid upon the table of the House, were ordered to be printed:—

- (1) Report on geology of the Dawson and Mackenzie Rivers, with special reference to the occurrence of anthracitic coal.
- (2) Despatch, dated 24th July, 1901, respecting the Venice International Sanitary Conference and Convention relating to bubonic plague.
- (3) Report, for 1900, of the Comptroller-General of Prisons.
- (4) Report, for 1900, on the Government Printing Office.

The following paper was laid on the table of the House:—Report on proposal to construct a tramway from Cooran to Pinbarren Creek.

PORT NORMAN, NORMANTON, AND CLONCURRY RAILWAY.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*) laid upon the table copy of all correspondence relating to the construction and maintenance of a railway from Port Norman by way of Normanton and Cloncurry.

Mr. BROWNE: Do you move that it be printed?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; there is nothing in it, I can assure you.

QUESTIONS.

SHUNTING OF TRUCKS BY AFGHANS.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Is it true that Afghans are permitted to shunt trucks at the Lappa Station on the Chillagoe Railway?
2. Is it true that the Afghans using or shunting the trucks at that station allowed two trucks to get away and run about 7 miles down the line on the 18th September last?
3. Is it true that the two runaway trucks were only stopped just in time to prevent a collision with the up mail train on that date?
4. Will the Minister inquire into this matter, and take the necessary action to prevent such occurrences in future?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. It is not true that Afghans are permitted to shunt wagons at Lappa Station; but, on a recent occasion,

some Afghans moved two wagons without the consent of the stationmaster, and while the latter was away from the station at breakfast.

2. These two trucks got away and ran 6½ miles down the line on 18th September.

3. No; the train was stopped at Boonmoo, a station 20 miles from Lappa.

4. Action has been taken to prevent such occurrences in future.

CLOSING OF BOAT PASSAGE.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*) asked the Treasurer—

1. Has his attention been drawn to a letter appearing in yesterday's issue of the *Telegraph* in which it was stated that the Boat Passage was still being used by the dredger for the deposit of silt?

2. Is this a correct statement?

3. Do the Government intend closing the Boat Passage?

4. If so, when?

The TREASURER (Hon. T. B. Cribb, *Ipswich*) replied—

1. Yes.

2. No; silt is being dumped into a deep hole near the mouth of the Passage, but not in the channel.

3. No present intention of doing so.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN THE UPPER BARRON.

Mr. NEWELL (*Woothakata*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

1. Does the Government intend opening the agricultural lands in the Upper Barron for selection?

2. If so, when?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. B. H. O'Connell, *Musgrave*) replied—
The land is being inspected, and the question of opening it for selection will be considered later.

GUARANTEED RAILWAY LEDGER ACCOUNTS.

Mr. SMITH (*Bowen*), in the absence of Mr. Bell, asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. What is the number of guaranteed railway ledger accounts?

2. What is the total amount guaranteed?

3. What are the names of the insurance companies acting as guarantors?

4. What is the total amount of premiums paid per annum to the insurance companies acting as guarantors?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. 325.

2. £100,375.

3. The New Zealand Accident and Insurance Company.

4. £906 1s. 6d.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with amendments, in which the Council requested the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the message be taken into consideration to-morrow.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with amendments, in which the Council requested the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the message be taken into consideration to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.
HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT—SALARIES.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carmarvon*) moved that £3,990 be granted for salaries. There was only one small increase of £20 in this vote. There were two small items of £10 each, which were really not increases this year but last year, only through a clerical error they did not appear in last year's Estimates. These officers accordingly appeared as paid £10 each less than they were entitled to under the regulations. The error had been corrected as far as possible by allowing them to work overtime.

Mr. MAXWELL asked if the officers of the department were paid overtime, and, if so, what was the rate paid?

The HOME SECRETARY: He might mention that the clerks in the Home Secretary's Department were probably worked as long hours as any men in the public service. If their overtime work was the ordinary routine work of the department, they were not paid overtime; but if they were doing special work which could be differentiated from the ordinary work of the department, and was work really in addition to their ordinary duties, they were paid overtime. The rate depended upon the status of the officers, and was provided for by the regulations. Question put and passed.

PRINCIPAL ELECTORAL REGISTRAR.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that £1,125 be granted for the Principal Electoral Registrar. There was a decrease of £30 in salaries owing to changes in the *personnel* of the officers, and there was an increase of £35 in postage and incidentals, resulting in a decrease of £5 for the vote.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) said that there were some matters which required explanation upon this vote. In the past the work of electoral registration had been under the direct control of the Home Secretary, but some years ago an Act was passed by which the Principal Electoral Registrar was appointed, and made responsible for the work. There had been a great many complaints during the last twelve months about the way things were going on in the department, but he was not going to deal with them all. Twice during the present session he had asked questions regarding the matter. On 30th July, he asked the Home Secretary with regard to rolls not being supplied at the Gympie election in time for the election, with regard to rolls being supplied a week afterwards in connection with the Toowoomba election, and not being supplied at Rockhampton North the week following the election at Toowoomba. The hon. gentleman said that inquiry was being made as to the cause of the delay in the transmission of the list from Rockhampton North. That case was *sub judice*, so he would only say that if the electoral registrar, or whoever was responsible for it, had done his duty, and had had those rolls printed in time, neither the country nor the parties in the case that was now proceeding would have been put to a lot of trouble and expense. Then, again, on the 25th September he asked the Home Secretary some questions regarding the wholesale challenging that had gone on during the past month through the Principal Electoral Registrar's Department, in connection with the rolls. The hon. gentleman replied that it was in the hands of the electoral registrars, and that if any direct charge was brought against any electoral registrar, he would have an inquiry. Now it was very hard to bring a direct

charge against any electoral registrar, and he, for one, was not going to do it. At the same time everyone knew that large numbers of men had been challenged, and practically disqualified. It had occurred to an extent beyond anything that had happened in the colony before, and it was the same in every electorate. He had received complaints from all parts of the colony, and no one seemed to know who was the cause of its being done. That afternoon since he had come to the House he had received a letter from a gentleman living in the Maranoa electorate, which contained a copy of the notice he had received. The writer said—

I am a grazing farmer on Murilla Station, and have not been off my selection for the past twelve months, and have never been out of the electoral district of Maranoa since I came here some six or eight years ago.

Here was another that had been sent down to him—(holding up a long slip cut from a newspaper)—which would show the expense the country as well as private individuals were being put to. It was the list that was issued in Townsville this year, and he himself could recognise at least a score of names of men who were resident in Townsville, and he was sure that the two members for Townsville must know many more names of well-known people in Townsville. Anyone, without the least trouble, could know from just walking along the street that they were not absent from the place. Yet lots of them were marked as "left," while others were marked as "dead." It seemed to him that there must be somebody else behind the electoral registrars in the matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I was put off the roll for Brisbane North myself last year.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: So was I; and I only crossed the street.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who was behind that? Somebody on the other side, I suppose.

Mr. BROWNE: Because an injustice had been done to the Attorney-General, he, the leading Crown Law Officer of the colony, should not give that as a reason for saying that an injustice should be done to anybody else.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am dealing with the suggestion that there must be somebody behind it.

Mr. BROWNE: He had a circular, and it was perfectly permissible to show it there. It was sent round by the Queensland Electoral Registration Society, and dealt especially with the electoral laws, and stated what they were doing in that matter. It was signed by a Mr. Richard P. Adams, as secretary, and said that all communications should be addressed to R. P. Adams, and that all cheques should be crossed and made payable to the Queensland Electoral Registration Society only.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the date of it

Mr. BROWNE: It was issued during last month. The date was not on the

[4 p.m. paper, but it stated that the following was an "extract from the report laid before last board meeting":—

DEAR SIR.—The following is an extract from the report laid before last board meeting:—

"On 27th July we placed four men at work to obtain names of persons 'dead,' 'left,' and 'disqualified,' one for Brisbane South, one Enoggera, and one Toowong, and one man to visit business firms in Brisbane North, to collect names of employees and examine rolls to see if their names were on them. This man had also to render clerical assistance to the secretary in sending to 355 various centres of the State copies of the electoral roll, together with forms for placing persons on the roll, and examples of how to fill in claim form; instructions how to send notice to the electoral registrars to have the names of those 'dead,' 'left,' and 'disqualified' erased from the roll, with forms and examples for executing

this work. These have had good effect; communications thanking the board have been received for same from numerous persons and associations, embracing, amongst others, the districts of Bowen, Cambooya, Cairns, Cardwell, Cannamulla, Gympie, Gladstone, Hughenden, Ipswich, Mackay, Maryborough, Muttaborra, Richmond River, Rockhampton, Tharoomindah, etc., etc. The result will be felt all over the State. From this office alone the names of 850 persons have been sent to electoral registrars to be erased; in thirty warehouses and offices 465 names were collected; 249 are not on the roll, and many being wrongly described new forms are being prepared; 67 claims from these have been sent to the courts; 49 others have been made out and sent by post to the persons to be signed, attested, and returned, so that they may be inserted in the various rolls, and over 140 are now prepared awaiting signatures.

"In Brisbane South, Enoggera, and Toowong, 3,735 inquiries have been made. Of these notices to erase the names of 495 have been sent in, and 1,953 have to be placed on the roll; these are reported to be all, or nearly so, supporters of the law and order party. We have sent to the August courts the names of 200 persons to be placed on the roll, and to this date (30th August) have since sent 221 more, or a total of 421.

"In a few days the lists of those marked to be erased from the rolls will be published, and it will be necessary to check these and get our supporters reinstated, which is a large undertaking."

You will from the foregoing see we have done, and are now doing, good work, but our funds are exhausted. Is this work to stop for want of money, or will our friends provide cash that we may at that rate place on the rolls the 1,250 or so we know are not registered?

When this association sent round these circulars and had asked that certain names be marked off certain electoral rolls, they ought to know who was running the show—whether it was the electoral registrars or whether it was this association. He might say that with this circular came two very nice little books of rules, and he was very pleased to see how the members of this association had fallen in with some of the rules of the Labour party.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You set the example.

Mr. BROWNE: Not with regard to striking men off the rolls.

The HOME SECRETARY: "Imitation is the sincerest flattery."

Mr. BROWNE: That was so, but whatever the Labour party had done to put men on the roll, they had never tried to knock men off the rolls. They always believed in giving every man the easiest possible means of getting on rolls, and in leaving their names on until something happened which would cause them to be struck off.

The HOME SECRETARY: Whether qualified or not?

Mr. BROWNE: He saw that this society had a temporary organising committee, and he was pleased to see that, after all the abuse that had been hurled from the other side against organisers. This committee consisted of the Hon. A. J. Thynne, M.L.C., chairman; Alderman L. G. Corrie, Alderman John Currie, Mr. A. G. C. Hawthorne, Mr. E. A. Gaden, John Reid, and P. J. Leahy. The treasurer was Mr. Morse, and the secretary Mr. D. R. J. Watson. The other day the junior member for Fortitude Valley entertained the House by reciting the pledge of the Labour party—he did not know for what reason, for it was well known all over the country, and could be seen in every Labour or democratic organ. But he would point out to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that had this electoral registration society been in existence, and had it had any power at the last election in Fortitude Valley, that hon. member would have been branded as a blackleg. (Laughter.) There was one rule in this association which he would read, and which came very close to one of the rules of the Labour party. The rules provided for

nomination of candidates in the orthodox Labour fashion. Then a plebiscite was provided for, and clause 18 provided—

That the committee may reject the name of any person so nominated unless he undertakes to retire from the contest in case he is not selected as a candidate by the branch, and also to give his active support to the person or persons selected as candidates by the branch.

That was the very thing that the Labour party had been working on for years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When bad men combine, good men associate.

Mr. BROWNE: That was the reason why they had associated so closely on his side—when they saw the combination on the other side. All men had a perfect right to form themselves into an association, and to use every legitimate means to return their own candidates at elections.

The HOME SECRETARY: And purify the rolls.

Mr. BROWNE: He was not talking about purifying the rolls. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite might talk about purifying the rolls, but three years ago he had questioned the hon. gentleman about an unfortunate man, who had been unjustly dealt with. He referred to the late member for Cambooya.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: What did Judge Real say about his evidence?

Mr. BROWNE: Everyone knew that there were men in that constituency who had been challenged, and who had no more right to be on that roll than he had to be on himself.

The HOME SECRETARY: Should they not have been removed?

Mr. BROWNE: It was the duty of the Principal Electoral Registrar and the Home Secretary to do that instead of allowing any private association or any private individuals having such power. The association, previous to this Electoral Registration Association, was called the Electoral Registration League, of which the Premier was the president; and after the terrible failure that league had experienced, after the beating they got at the Federal elections, he said that this association must be prepared to be beaten also. He objected to any such association getting information from, and writing to electoral registrars, and it was well known that the old society had written to the electoral registrars, and had issued instructions to them. Were they going to be governed by these bits of cliques which were continually springing up? One of his colleagues had counted up 107 branches of this association which had already been formed, and if every one of them was going to take up the time of the electoral registrars in this way, where was the thing going to end? It was a scandalous shame that any elector, particularly those living a long way out, should be put to all this trouble and expense to prove that they had a right to be on the roll. It was an injustice. And look at the expense it was putting the country to! Of course the newspapers benefited a good bit by it, because these things had to be advertised, but the expense fell on the general taxpayer, and the Government had not a penny to spare for necessary things. He would like to know by what means the electoral registrar got the information which led to those people being put to all this trouble. He thought there must be over 10,000 electors in Queensland who had received notice to qualify themselves at the November court. If this sort of thing was going to be continued without any satisfactory explanation, he intended to move as a protest a reduction in the salary of the Principal Electoral Registrar. With regard to the local registrars, he thought a word ought to be said to them. He had met a good many of them, and so far as he knew they were men who

honestly tried to do their duty. Of course they had this duty to perform in addition to their other duties. He thought the officer in charge of this important branch should be responsible for the work done by the local electoral registrars.

The HOME SECRETARY : He did not intend to follow the hon. member through all the ramifications of his speech, which from his point of view was a very excellent electioneering speech. The hon. member had been posing as an innocent. He had just discovered that there were two organisations in this country, one dominated by the party that ruled the Labour party, and the other endeavouring to combat the nefarious designs of the one to which he had just referred. The hon. member had also discovered that it was a habit of both organisations to give information to the electoral registrars to assist them in their work. Surely the hon. member was sufficiently familiar with section 14 of the Act, which required electoral registrars to perform certain duties. Between the 1st and the 31st August they had to examine the rolls in force, also the bi-monthly lists for August, and after inquiry from the residents in the district and the inspection of the rate-books, lists of selectors, lists of pastoral tenants, and any other documents, they must place the word "dead" against the name of anyone they believed to be dead, the word "left" against the name of every person whose qualification was residence and who they had reason to believe had left ; and the word "disqualified" against the name of any person they had reason to believe was under a disqualification or had become disqualified under one qualification without having acquired another qualification. Then they were required to give notice to the individuals marked, and to advertise their names. That was the process. And it was the duty of the electoral registrar, amongst other things, to make due inquiry from the residents in the district. There was the secretary of an organisation which laid itself out particularly to obtain information regarding matters with which the electoral registrar himself was required to deal ; and what more natural than that when he received an intimation from that individual that certain persons had left, died, or become disqualified, or ceased to be qualified—what more natural than that he should make due inquiries ? And having made due inquiry, if he was satisfied that the information was not correct, it was his duty to take no further notice of it ; if, on the other hand, he had such evidence as led him to a *prima facie* view that the information was correct, it was then his duty to advertise. That was the plain, simple fact in regard to the matter. It was open to any organisation or any elector throughout the State to give information to any electoral registrar, and it was the duty of the registrar to make inquiries as to whether the information was correct or not.

Mr. BOWMAN : Before he knocks them off ?

The HOME SECRETARY : He did not knock them off. That was where the hon. member made a mistake. Of course the electoral registrar was not omniscient. He did not know everything or everybody ; but he made the best inquiries he could, and if he verified the information in any way, it was his duty to warn the man objected to that unless he proved his claim he would be omitted from the roll. If the argument of the leader of the Opposition was pushed to its logical conclusion it amounted to saying that there should be no revision of the rolls at all. The hon. member boasted, when he got very warm, that the organisation which did this work for the party of which he was leader did not object to men who were on the roll ; he boasted further that they confined their efforts

to putting names on the roll. That was called sometimes by a very hard name—it all depended whether they were entitled to go on the roll or not. If they were entitled it was a perfectly legitimate thing to do. But it was clearly necessary that those who were not entitled to vote should not remain on the roll, because every man who was not entitled to vote, but who remained on the roll, deprived somebody else of the effect of his vote. Hon. members would of course understand that if a man was improperly on one roll he might, without the knowledge of the electoral registrar of the district concerned, be on some other roll, and if the hon. member's argument was to be carried to its logical conclusion, he would hold that there was to be no revision at all. The man would then be on two rolls, and what then would become of the boasted advocacy of one man one vote ?

Mr. BOWMAN : What about the claim he fills up ? He has to say whether he is on another roll or not.

The HOME SECRETARY : Did the hon. member suppose that a man was always so green as to fill that up ?

Mr. BOWMAN : If he does not he makes a false declaration.

The HOME SECRETARY : They had heard of that before. That was nothing new. The hon. member paid a compliment to the electoral registrars throughout the State. He desired to endorse what the hon. member said, but those were the very men against whom the hon. member complained.

Mr. W. HAMILTON : He means that if they are left alone he has confidence in them.

The HOME SECRETARY : They were left alone, and severely left alone. The instructions given to them were purely of a general character, and the Principal Electoral Registrar had nothing whatever to do with the work about which the hon. member complained.

Mr. GIVENS : Why does he send telegraphic instructions to them ?

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member might know all about the telegraphic instructions, but he contended that they were of a general character relating to their duties. That was what the Principal Electoral Registrar was there for. A number of the district registrars were connected with other branches of the service, and their electoral duties were a sort of excrecence, of which such officers as police officers had a good many. They were men who necessarily were not well versed in the electoral laws, and were not able to decide questions of law which arose in connection with their duties. The duties were often performed by young clerks of petty sessions, police officers, or perhaps postmasters, who were very often at fault as to what their duties were. In that case they appealed to the Principal Electoral Registrar, who advised them as to what they ought to do under certain circumstances. It very frequently happened, he regretted to say, that those officers with all their zeal and desire to do their duty did not carry out their duties with the utmost possible care, and one could not expect it under the circumstances. He believed the men did their best, but he could assure the hon. member that the mistakes made by the district registrars caused the Principal Electoral Registrar an enormous amount of work. Now, as to the claims which were put in in any particular district, and the information supplied to any district officer, the Principal Electoral Registrar had nothing whatever to do with that. He did not handle those claims at all. It was not part of his duty, but if something came before him which was palpably

wrong, it was his duty to call attention to it. He was perfectly certain that Mr. Boyce had done his very best in the performance of his duties, but as to any instructions of the character suggested by the hon. member being issued by him, nothing of that sort had emanated from the Home Secretary's Department. It was the duty of the Principal Electoral Registrar to advise as to the best course to be adopted on an A B C case. That was what he was for. Beyond that the hon. member would find that there was no interference whatever in the registration of names, the supply of information, or in dealing with the information which might be supplied to district registrars.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman had not given the information asked for now. He got up and at first talked about the nefarious practices adopted by his (Mr. Browne's) side. He confessed he did not know what they were.

The HOME SECRETARY: I was only jocular.

Mr. BROWNE: If the hon. member knew about any nefarious practices which had been adopted, he should be glad to hear them. If the hon. member was jocular, of course that altered the matter.

Mr. BOWMAN: It doesn't read that way in *Hansard*.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, I am glad of the interjection.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman talked about two organisations doing similar work. Well, the organisation that he was connected with, the hon. gentleman would admit, did not take action towards getting men off the rolls, and whether they erred in that respect was a matter of opinion. If, on the other hand, justices wrongfully witnessed claims, the hon. gentleman's department could proceed against them. It would be better to prosecute a number of men who had made false claims than sacrifice a lot of men who had done nothing of the sort. The hon. gentleman spoke of the outside electoral registrars, and the amount of work they had to do. That was the very reason why he had brought the matter up, and the hon. gentleman would see why he objected so strongly to an unauthorised body like the registration society interfering. The hon. gentleman would know that most of the registrars were hard-working Government servants who had other departmental work to attend to. Take the instance he had quoted from the typewritten report of the society. They stated that they had sent in 850 names to the registrars to be erased. Did the hon. gentleman think that the registrars, who were being paid nothing extra for performing that work, were going to pay sufficient attention to find out the *bona fides* of those 850 objections?

The ordinary electoral registrar, [4.30 p.m.] receiving anything like 800 objections, had such a multitude of other duties to perform, that he had no time to go through all the names called in question.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where were the 850 objections sent in?

Mr. BROWNE: It was somewhere about Brisbane. He read it in the circular letter.

The HOME SECRETARY: If it was Brisbane, there are salaried officers whose special duty it is to attend to such matters.

Mr. BROWNE: He knew the electoral registrar for South Brisbane was the clerk of petty sessions there, and had other duties to perform as well as those of electoral registrar.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is part of his duties.

Mr. BROWNE: What he wished to point out was, that there were some of the officials who had so many other duties to perform that if they received 800 objections, or, as they did in some other places, 200 or 300, they had not the time to investigate every name marked dead,

left, or disqualified. The hon. gentleman might say that he thought that they had the time to verify every one of the objections before sending notices out, but he knew they had not. Yet this meant that a great many of those whose names were marked were practically disfranchised, because a great many of them never received the circulars.

Mr. TURNER: I know numbers who have never left their homes have had their names struck off.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Attorney-General was treated in that way last year.

Mr. BROWNE: Was that an excuse? He thought the fact of one man being treated with injustice should make him sympathise with others who were being treated with injustice. The hon. gentleman knew very well that it was no trouble for the Home Secretary or the Attorney-General to get a mistake like that rectified. All he had to do was to sit down and write a letter, and the matter was attended to at once. But it was quite different with an ordinary working man or an ordinary business man. They were practically disfranchised by this procedure. He also wished to refer to the printing and circulation of electoral rolls. Three by-elections had taken place within the last few months. The Gympie election took place on 8th June. The revision court was held on 4th June, and the claims made at the April courts were then confirmed. On the 8th June the election took place, and though some fifty men were practically voters on the roll, they were not allowed to vote, because the rolls were not there. Of course that to a certain extent was because there were only four days between the registration court and the polling day, and there was not time to get the rolls down to Brisbane and get them back again to Gympie. Of course there was something in that, but he asked the hon. gentleman who it was who appointed the polling day? (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman laughed.

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly; I cannot help it. Who issues the writ?

Mr. BROWNE: The Speaker, of course. Knowing the circumstances, he thought the electoral registrar, who was in charge of the department, should make every effort to see that every qualified voter was allowed to vote on the polling day.

Mr. TURLEY: It depends on which side they are going to vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is worthy of the man it comes from.

Mr. BROWNE: He maintained that every man should be allowed to use his vote, if he were entitled to vote. If the time was too short to allow of the form of sending the roll down to Brisbane to be printed, why should not the returning officer, who knew these men, and knew that they were entitled to vote, be at liberty to allow them to vote? The next election took place on the 15th June. This was at Toowoomba. The rolls arrived there only the day before the poll took place. On the 22nd June another election came on in North Rockhampton. In that case the returning officer had a list of certain men who were entitled to vote, and still something happened to prevent them voting.

The HOME SECRETARY: They did not get the rolls.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman would admit there was some injustice there.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will admit that the law is not satisfactory.

Mr. TURLEY: The administration is not satisfactory.

The HOME SECRETARY: The administration is all right.

Mr. BROWNE: He was asking these questions because he wanted to know who was to blame. He was one of those who voted for the Act under which the Principal Electoral Registrar was appointed, and, with other hon. members, he believed at the time that things would then work more satisfactorily, but there seemed to be more trouble now than there was when the whole thing was simply in the hands of the Home Secretary.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*): At the risk of being charged with electioneering, he would like to say a few words upon this matter. Just before the last Gympie election he went to Mr. Bytheway, the returning officer, and asked him if the men whose names had been confirmed a few days before would be allowed to vote. Mr. Bytheway said that he was not quite sure, but he would send a wire to the Principal Electoral Registrar, Mr. Boyce. He received a reply "Yes, they will be allowed to vote," or "will be eligible to vote." It was a most extraordinary thing that a day or two afterwards when the election took place these men were not allowed to vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: Have you the wire?

Mr. MULCAHY: No, he had not. It was in better hands than his; in the hands of Mr. Bytheway, the returning officer. He felt very much interested in these names, because he believed the majority of the votes would have gone in his favour. It was only reasonable to suppose that official information of that kind would be correct. He would like to know why the information was given? Was it given to mislead them? They sent round to the men whose names were on that roll that they would be allowed to vote. In fact, they went so far as to put a paragraph in the paper, and quoted the wire.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the hon. member had been courteous enough to let him know that he intended bringing the matter up, he would have had the papers here. The Principal Electoral Registrar informed him that, so far as his memory went, he sent no such telegram. If he had known that the hon. member was going to raise the question, he would have had his papers there, and would have been able to speak positively. He did not think it was at all likely that the Principal Electoral Registrar had sent any such telegram, because he probably would not know at that time whether the roll would be in the hands of the returning officer in time. Practically, with their bi-monthly registration courts, the additional rolls came so closely upon one another that there were only about three weeks, or less than three weeks, in every two months during which elections could be held without the chance of questions like that arising. It really caused a great deal of inconvenience and confusion. Notwithstanding that the very best efforts of the electoral registrars, the printing office, and the Principal Electoral Registrar, so far as he had anything to do with it, were put forth, at some of the bi-elections it would happen that it would be impossible to get the rolls in time.

Mr. JENKINSON: Could not you get the rolls printed locally?

The HOME SECRETARY: No. That would not be practicable, or feasible.

Mr. JENKINSON: Only the supplementary rolls.

Mr. RYLAND: Some of them are printed locally now.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not the supplementary rolls either, he thought. He thought the work ought to be done in the Government Printing Office, because there was a special staff for the work there, and they must remember that the misspelling of a name might deprive a man of his vote.

Mr. JENKINSON: They are checked by the Principal Electoral Registrar, are they not?

The HOME SECRETARY: Well, the Principal Electoral Registrar was in Brisbane, and the rolls might just as well be printed at the Government Printing Office, where the work would be done very much quicker than returning them to the local town after they were checked and then have them printed there.

Mr. JENKINSON: But the type is already set up in the local papers, because the names have appeared in the local papers.

The HOME SECRETARY: He would make inquiry in a moment as to whether that could possibly be done, but he was under the impression that there was some objection to it, although he might not have given the correct reason. The hon. member for South Brisbane interjected that it was the administration that was at fault. He absolutely denied that there had been any default in the administration, or any laxity in the administration of the Principal Electoral Registrar, or on the part of the Home Secretary's Office, which really had nothing to do with the matter now.

Mr. REID: Then who was the cause of the delay at Gympie and Rockhampton North?

The HOME SECRETARY: There was no delay at all at Gympie, so far as he knew. Every possible effort was made to expedite it, both by the Principal Electoral Registrar and by the Government Printing Office. At North Rockhampton there was delay, and the delay was caused by the electoral registrar. Speaking from memory, eleven days were allowed to elapse before he sent down the list.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Does he still keep that office?

The HOME SECRETARY: He did.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Then he should not.

The HOME SECRETARY: He had to perform other duties. Did the hon. member think he ought to be dismissed?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Yes, or any other officer who was guilty of that sort of thing.

The HOME SECRETARY: He wondered whether the hon. member would like to be dismissed from that House for every mistake he made in answering a letter or something of that sort. The hon. member must see that autocratic conduct of that sort would not be tolerated by the public. Every man was liable to make a mistake, and civil servants were liable to do the same. He probably was censured, but to say that a man was to lose his means of livelihood, after faithful service to the State for probably twenty years—he did not know how long he had been in the service—but to say that, because he made one little lapse—which it was quite possible he made some explanation of—he was certainly called upon to offer one. It was possible that he explained that he was quite unable to do that in time owing to pressure of other duties—but still the hon. member for Gregory would dismiss him at once because he had made one mistake—even if it was a mistake.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Look at the litigation that has ensued over it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He could not foresee the litigation.

Mr. REID: He could always foresee making a blunder like that.

The HOME SECRETARY was sorry that hon. members had not given him intimation that the papers would be required. He would have been very glad to have them, because he must do the officer in question the justice to say that both the Under Secretary and the Principal Electoral Registrar, who were in the gallery, informed him

that, although they were unable to say exactly what his explanation was, it was to a certain extent satisfactory.

Mr. W. HAMILTON : More Labour votes.

The HOME SECRETARY : He was quite sure that neither the Under Secretary nor the Principal Electoral Registrar knew anything about that. He knew nothing about it. He never saw the roll, or heard of it, until he heard that it arrived in Rockhampton on the very evening of the day on which the poll was taken, notwithstanding the delay.

Mr. REID : There was plenty of time, even with the eleven days thrown in.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member seemed to know a great deal more about it than the officers. Had he the run of the whole of the offices?

Mr. FORSYTH : He runs the show—the Trades Hall.

The HOME SECRETARY : Was that it?

Mr. TURLEY : The "Political Ass" is the only association that runs the offices. We know all about that.

The HOME SECRETARY : He was assured that every effort was made. His instructions were that every possible effort should be made to get those rolls out. He was very sorry when he found the dates fixed for those elections were such that there was likely to be that difficulty of getting the rolls there in time, and he spoke to the Speaker afterwards and mentioned the fact to him that it was always desirable before appointing a date for an election to see that nothing of that sort could possibly arise, and to see that the last roll which had been revised having reached the returning officer. Unfortunately that was not so in this case; but he did not suppose that anyone would impute to the Speaker that he was influenced in any way. He knew nothing about the rolls, and it was news to him that the dates fixed were inconvenient.

Mr. MULCAHY : He would like to have a clear understanding about the matter. Was it the intention of the Home Secretary to make full inquiry why the electoral registrar, Mr. Boyce, should have sent a wire to Mr. Bytheway, the returning officer at Gympie, informing him that these men would be allowed to vote?

The HOME SECRETARY : I have already told you that I made inquiries, and the Principal Registrar says he never sent anything of the sort.

Mr. MULCAHY said the returning officer at Gympie had given him a copy of the wire.

The HOME SECRETARY : Then let us have it; read it. I challenge you to read it.

Mr. MULCAHY said he wanted to have something better than a copy. He wanted to see the original wire. It was no use in his reading out a copy, which he could write out anywhere. The proper course was for the Home Secretary to make the fullest inquiries in an official way, and if the Home Secretary promised to do that, he would be quite satisfied.

The HOME SECRETARY explained that Mr. Boyce was only speaking from memory, and he said that as far as he knew he had not sent any such wire.

Mr. MULCAHY : A very defective memory.

The HOME SECRETARY : That might be, but his memory might be just as good as the hon. member's memory. Assuming that Mr. Boyce's memory was at fault, and that some such wire had been sent by him, it was quite possible, seeing what he might term the close shave there was going to be at the Gympie election, that he might have thought he could have got the rolls there in time.

Mr. MULCAHY : The department made it closer by depriving men of votes.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was a question whether the rolls could be got there in time. Mr. Boyce might have thought that, and he might have sent a telegram saying that they would arrive in time. He would undertake to say that as far as the Principal Electoral Registrar and the Government Printer were concerned, every possible expedition was made to get every one of the rolls there at the earliest possible moment, in the usual way. He (Mr. Foxton) had been asked whether certain communications ought to be sent by wire which were usually sent by letter. He asked whether that was the usual thing, and on being told that it was not according to the Act, then he said, "Stick to the Act." He was perfectly satisfied that every possible expedition had been used.

Mr. MULCAHY : Does the electoral registrar keep copies of wires?

The HOME SECRETARY : Certainly.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*) would like to say a word or two in favour of Mr. Boyce and other electoral registrars whom it has been contended should be dismissed from the service for a dereliction of duty. He and many other hon. members had known Mr. Boyce for a number of years, and he did not think there was a more conscientious Government official to be found than that gentleman. A great many people imagined that, as soon as a court was over, the names should be printed by the registrar, and should then be ready for the election. As far as the Gympie election was concerned, he thought any reasonable man would come to the conclusion that it was almost impossible for the rolls to have got there in time. If the court sat on a Tuesday, the claims would have to be revised, they would have to be written out by the registrar, then they would have to be sent down to the Government Printer in Brisbane, who had generally a lot of work to do, and perhaps he could not attend to them at once, and it might be Friday or Saturday before they were printed. Four days was not a great length of time in which to send them down to Brisbane and have them returned. With regard to the Drayton and Toowoomba election, the rolls were a week longer in arriving there—on the evening before the election took place. Something had been said about names being taken off the rolls by organisations, but he knew an instance where the Labour party had gone to a lot of trouble over getting 300 or 400 names off a roll. Of those names half were the names of men who had shifted from one part of the district to another. It was not a wrong thing to draw attention to the fact that these men had changed their residence, and to give notice of it, but it was a wrong thing for the leader of the Labour party to come to the House and put all the blame on these organisations, when his own followers had been guilty of the same practice.

Mr. HARDACRE : What district are you referring to?

Mr. TOLMIE : Drayton and Toowoomba. There were nearly 600 names objected to in August last, and on making inquiries he found that about 400 names had been objected to by certain gentlemen whom he knew to be connected with the Labour party.

Mr. MAXWELL : That is purely an assertion.

Mr. BROWNE : Do you approve of that?

Mr. TOLMIE said he did not, and he did agree with him that names should not be taken off the roll when people remained in the same community; but the leader of the Opposition was wrong in attributing the whole of the blame to organisations, the members of which differed from him in politics. That was his point.

Mr. BROWNE: I gave you instances, in their own words, where they have been doing it.

Mr. TOLMIE: After making all due allowances, he thought it would be found that the electoral registrars in the various parts of the State did their duty faithfully and conscientiously. The electoral registrar in Toowoomba was one of the most conscientious men it was possible to find in Queensland. It was a matter of absolute indifference to him who the claimant for a vote was, but if a claim was not properly sent in, he would not receive it. It did not matter on which side he was. It should also be taken into consideration that this official was also clerk of petty sessions there, and his work was so heavy that a great deal of it had to be done after the regulation hours. In the country districts those public servants

not only worked the regulation hours
[5 p.m.] but put in a good deal of overtime without making a noise about it.

He thought it was altogether wrong to blame those civil servants and say that because a certain duty had not been performed to the satisfaction of any particular member that civil servant should be summarily dismissed, as had been stated that afternoon.

Mr. TURLEY: No one said so.

Mr. TOLMIE: The hon. member for Gregory stated so.

Mr. TURLEY: No. It was the returning officer he spoke of—a man who is not a Government servant at all.

Mr. REID (*Enoggera*): As far as Mr. Boyce and the other officials connected with the administration of the Act were concerned, he believed they did not take sides one way or the other. The trouble arose from what was known as the "Political Ass" in the *Courier* building employing deadheads to pick up names anywhere, and from those names being furnished by the Political Ass to the department, and from there being no time to verify the information so furnished. Dozens of names had been improperly removed in that way. It would be a great deal better in the metropolitan electorates if the department were to get the policemen and the postmen to give the information as to changes of residence. He knew three individuals living beside him in Toowong—two of whom had a freehold qualification—who had been improperly knocked off, simply because the information given had not been verified. In reference to the Gympie business and the wire Mr. Bytheway received, he saw a copy of the wire that was shown by Mr. Bytheway to Mr. Mulcahy, and it was to this effect—"Roll will be there in time for electors to vote." In regard to the statement that there was not time to return it he had made inquiries, and he knew that there was time to have it in Gympie. The court in Gympie was held on a Tuesday. Mr. Bytheway, as soon as the court was over, forwarded the revised list to Brisbane; it was in Brisbane on Wednesday; and two months before that the roll was set up in the Government Printing Office and standing in type when being revised in Gympie. He did not think there were more than one or two alterations that required to be made; and that would not take a "comp." three minutes. After that the forme could have been put in the galley and slips run off. But it was withheld for some reason or other. And the same applied to the Rockhampton North roll and the Drayton and Toowoomba roll. Somehow whenever a roll was delayed, it told against the Opposition side. If the Gympie roll had been there the result would have been very different—the majority would have been greater.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You would have lost. I was there and I know all about it.

Mr. REID: The hon. gentleman no doubt did good work; but he (Mr. Reid) was there too, and did better.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You got the roll for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. REID: That was the only one they could bring up.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was Drayton and Toowoomba.

Mr. REID: Whoever was to blame for keeping the roll back was deserving of censure. After the court had been through the list and decided that certain citizens had become electors, neither the electoral registrar, nor the Government Printer, nor the returning officer had power to step in and deprive those men from using their votes.

Mr. ANNEAR (*Maryborough*) wished to say a few words in reply to the hon. member for Enoggera. He wished to bring under the notice of the Home Secretary, if it had not been brought under his notice already, a matter of considerable importance. The hon. member for Enoggera referred to an association which he called the "Political Ass," and he said that that association employed men to go into hotels and stand at the street corners to attest the claims of men, whether they were qualified or not.

Mr. REID: I never said such a thing.

Mr. ANNEAR: Or knock names off the roll. He understood the hon. member to say that that association employed men to knock names off the roll, and to place others on.

Mr. REID: I said to put them off.

Mr. ANNEAR: Well, he would refer to putting men on the roll. He was at Gladstone last Saturday, and travelled with two gentlemen connected with the railway being constructed there. Their books would show that men who came from New South Wales, and who had never had a vote in Queensland, had had claims attested by a member of the House, a magistrate of the territory, who had gone to the different camps and attested the claims, which were sent in to the registrar at Gladstone. He trusted that when the Elections Act was amended no member of Parliament would be allowed to attest claims.

Mr. REID: Are they not good enough to do it?

Mr. ANNEAR: Had that not been the law he would not have had to perform the painful duty which he had to perform that afternoon. If the leader of the Opposition wanted to purify elections, he asked the hon. gentleman to commence at home. He hoped the Home Secretary would give an assurance that the case he mentioned would be inquired into. Under the electoral laws, men coming to Queensland—being twenty-one years of age—must be six months in the colony before they could get their name on any roll, and due inquiry must be made by the magistrate attesting the claim. Now a great number of men on the Gladstone line, whose names were attested by a certain member of Parliament, had not been working for three months on the contract before claims to become voters were sent in. He contended that that was wrong. He believed that every man who was twenty-one years of age should have a vote, but he should get on the roll in accordance with the law. His statement could be borne out by applying to the contractors, inspecting their pay-sheets, and finding out when the men came on to the works.

Mr. REID: Some were camped there three months before work started.

Mr. ANNEAR: Of course the hon. member for Enoggera must find a get out somewhere, but in his opinion there was no getting away from the statement he had made. He should be

very sorry to attest any man's claim unless he made due inquiry, and the applicant made a declaration.

Mr. REID : Do you mean to say that I signed the claims?

Mr. ANNEAR : No, he did not charge the hon. member with that ; but knowing as he did the hon. member who did attest the claims, he thought he would have been the last man in Queensland to attest claims without making due inquiry.

The HOME SECRETARY : The case to which the hon. member had referred was largely a matter of taste on the part of the member of Parliament who attested the claims.

Mr. REID : It is a matter of law. There is no taste about it.

The HOME SECRETARY : Some hon. members might hold the view that there was no such thing as good taste or bad taste. He held different views. He thought a member of Parliament should be very careful in certifying to electoral claims. He was constantly told of glaring cases of the kind alluded to by the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. GIVENS : What is glaring about it?

The HOME SECRETARY : If the information of the hon. member for Maryborough was right, a more glaring case of roll stuffing could not take place.

Mr. REID : Why do you not prosecute?

Mr. DUNSFORD : There is only his assertion. He has no proof.

Mr. BROWNE : If there has been a breach of the law you should prosecute.

The HOME SECRETARY : Hon. members on the other side had yet to learn that when they interrupted, and interjected, and made speeches by way of interlude while another hon. member was speaking, they betrayed the fact to the House and the public that what was being said was getting "home." He always knew when hon. members opposite began to feel keenly what was being said. They attempted to drown the voice of the speaker by their incessant interjections. He said again that if the information of the hon. member for Maryborough was correct, and upon that he passed no judgment whatever, a more glaring case of roll stuffing could not be imagined, and, if it was true, the member of the House who was concerned should be discharged from the commission of the peace. But until the matter came before him in some other form, he did not see how he could deal with it. It was no part of his duty to run about finding out whether magistrates were doing that which they ought not to do—abusing the privileges given to them by their high and important office. If he had the consciences of all the magistrates in his keeping, he should have nothing else to do. He had not, thank goodness.

Mr. REID : A good job for the magistrates.

The HOME SECRETARY : And a very good job for him. Now, he wanted to have a word or two about the Gympie case. The hon. member for Enoggera had posed as one who had special knowledge of what was going on in the Principal Electoral Registrar's office and the Government Printing Office.

Mr. REID : No, I did not.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member posed in that way, because he used some technicalities in his speech about what a man could do, and what was done, and what was not, the assumption being that he had all these things at his fingers' ends.

Mr. REID : There was no assumption whatever.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member assumed to know that it would have been the simplest thing in the world for the roll to have been forwarded from the returning officer.

Mr. REID : He sent it on Wednesday.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. gentleman, with all his knowledge, had yet to learn that the returning officer had nothing to do with it. It was the function of the electoral registrar to send the roll on to the Principal Electoral Registrar, who in his turn sent it on to the printing office.

Mr. REID : It used to be that way, so there is no need to quibble about it.

The HOME SECRETARY : How long ago?

Mr. REID : In the last Act.

The HOME SECRETARY : No, the hon. gentleman was not right there. The hon. gentleman had used some technical phrases, which he had probably got at the printing office, but whoever was his informant, he was wrong. The hon. member should have known that the last Elections Act which was passed required that the new bi-monthly roll should be embodied with or consolidated with the previous bi-monthly roll. The whole thing had to be recast because we now had to have only one additional roll. The hon. member ventured somewhat rashly, prompted no doubt by the fact that he (the Home Secretary) was under the impression that it was impossible for him to obtain a copy of the telegram, gave his version of the telegram which was sent by the Principal Electoral Registrar about four days previous to the election, and which was referred to by the hon. member for Gympie, who, though he had a copy of it, did not produce it. One hon. member did not produce the copy of a telegram that he had, and the other hon. member, from his regretting that he had not a copy, thought he could not get one, and gave his version of it.

Mr. REID : Could I have done more or less?

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member must not ask him whether he could have done more or less. He (the Home Secretary) said that he was not aware of any such telegram as that referred to by the hon. member for Gympie being sent, but he would read another telegram which was sent. Its contents were to this effect—

Mr. GIVENS : Give us the exact words, not the effect.

The HOME SECRETARY : He would give the exact words as they had come to him. They had just been received by telephone from the office, and without absolutely guaranteeing their absolute accuracy, he would give them as he had received them. They were : "Additional June roll will not be available for use on Saturday."

MEMBERS of the Opposition : Oh, oh ! and Ministerial laughter.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : There must have been a second telegram.

The HOME SECRETARY : Very well ; he would make further inquiries, and the hon. member should have all he knew about it.

Mr. REID : There were two wires.

The HOME SECRETARY : I know nothing about the other.

Mr. MULCAHY : Will not the Home Secretary give us the other one?

Mr. REID : There were two sent.

The HOME SECRETARY : Oh, that is too thin.

Mr. MULCAHY : You will find it is too thick yet.

Mr. REID : The Home Secretary seemed to insinuate that he wished to give some of his officers the lie. That was not so. He had spoken from his recollection of the telegram, and if the hon. gentleman produced it he would find that it was more or less on the lines he had stated. He was positive that the wire he referred to stated that the roll would be available on the Saturday. He forgot the date of that wire, but it was sent, and he obtained a copy of it from Mr. Bytheway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How do you know it was the Government?

Mr. REID: He saw Mr. Mulcahy write from the original telegram, and Mr. Bytheway showed him the copy of it.

The HOME SECRETARY: He must have been an incorrect copyist.

Mr. REID: At first there was no telegram.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is quite the opposite to the telegram you allege to have been sent.

Mr. REID: When the Home Secretary said that no such telegram was sent, it was before he (Mr. Reid) gave what he considered the gist of the wire. If the Home Secretary made inquiries he would find that the first wire, as far as his knowledge went, was to the effect that he had given. He challenged the Home Secretary to produce that wire.

The HOME SECRETARY: Oh, you shall have that, too.

Mr. REID: It was no use the Home Secretary trying to humbug him by saying that he assumed he knew all about the printing office and the office of the electoral registrar. All he had said could have been said by anyone who knew anything about a printing office. He challenged the hon. gentleman to prove that what he had said was wrong. It was the custom for the electoral rolls to be set up from the manuscript, and were kept there until they had been revised by the court. He contended that, in the Gypie case, if the Government had liked they could have had the rolls sent there in time. The additional roll could have been sent to assist those people to get their votes. To say that he went round about the printing office, or any other office, was all nonsense. He knew what they did, and what he had stated was correct.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*): It had occurred to him when the hon. gentleman was speaking that he appeared to be peculiarly intimate with the details of the Government Printing Office.

Mr. REID: That is only your suspicious mind.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: As to what the Political Association had done, it appeared to him that they had only done what was correct—namely, having ascertained that certain names should not be on the roll, they had intimated to the electoral registrar that they had reason to believe that certain persons had left the district. He could not see that there was anything improper in that; he thought it was very desirable. He recollected years ago, on one occasion they had fifty men who were said to be householders, and it was found that they lived in one house, which contained only one bed.

Mr. REID: That never was proved. It is only an assertion.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Hon. gentlemen on the other side were continually making assertions, and they expected other hon. members to accept them without adequate proof. When a member on his side of the House made a statement they always called out that it had never been proved. Why were not they as particular on their own side as they were with members on the Government side? They had had no corroborative proof of the assertion made by the hon. gentleman on the other side.

Mr. KERR: What about California Valley?

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Well, California Gully was a place where he believed 150 [5:30 p.m.] men had such a regard for him that they rose from their graves to vote for him and were never seen again. (Laughter.)

Mr. REID: No wonder you got in when the angels came to vote for you.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: The Elections Qualifications Committee was a "hanging committee" so far as he was concerned, because the

majority of its members were from the other side, but not one of them inferred in any way that he had anything to do with the resurrection, and they also stated that, independent of those men, he was several hundreds ahead. That was all about California Gully, and he only hoped that he would always have as loyal supporters. (Laughter.) With regard to the Political Association, from his point of view, they were rather too impartial, because they actually struck his name off. He was supposed to have left when he had only shifted to the other side of the street.

Mr. REID: It might not have been the association that struck you off.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Yes, it was. It was a case of "Et tu, Brute!"—that men on his own side struck him off. They could not complain of members or political supporters on either side calling the attention of the registrars to persons whom they believed to have departed—and when they did that they generally selected the names of men belonging to the other side—because that was not sufficient, as the electoral registrar, according to the Act, had then to make inquiries and call upon the police to verify the information. If the police verified it even that was not sufficient, because the registrar had then to write to those people asking them if they were dead or if they had left the district, and if he failed to get a reply he then advertised the names two months before any action was taken, so that if any impropriety occurred it was the fault of the electoral registrars in not doing what the Act prescribed they should do.

Mr. BROWNE wished to take notice of the remarks made by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear. The hon. member had made a very serious charge with regard to a member on that side going up to Gladstone and putting a lot of men on the roll who were not qualified. The Home Secretary said at once that it was a matter of taste. So far as regarded members witnessing claims, it might be a matter of taste. For his part he had witnessed hundreds of claims, and he would continue to do so in places where no magistrates lived, or where they could not get electoral claim forms, until he was stopped.

Mr. JACKSON: I have done the same.

Mr. REID: So has the junior member for the Valley.

Mr. McMASTER: Yes.

Mr. BROWNE: But, with regard to men making false declarations to get their names on the roll, that was not a matter of taste at all. It was a distinct breach of the law; and, if the hon. member who made that assertion knew it to be a fact, it was his duty to give the Home Secretary a statement in writing at once, giving the names of the men who had made the false declarations, and also the name of the justice of the peace who witnessed them knowing the declarations to be false. If the hon. member was a man he would back up what he said on the floor of the House by at once doing that.

Mr. ANNEAR: It can be backed up in the revision court right enough.

Mr. REID: You are not game.

Mr. ANNEAR: I am game to do anything you are, anyway.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. member made a distinct charge of perjury against a number of men who were working on the Gladstone line, and he also made a charge of conniving at that perjury against a member of the House. Well, if the hon. member was game enough to do that, he should be man enough to see it out to the bitter end. If a charge was made to the Home Secretary against a member of that House—he

did not care which side he sat on—of having degraded his position by conniving at perjury, then it would be the bounden duty of the Home Secretary to take action.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: It was all very well for the leader of the Opposition to challenge him to do this or that. The statement he made could be proved by the books of the contractors.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Did they swear they had been working for the contractors for six months? Might they not have been in the district?

Mr. ANNEAR: The contract only began four months ago, and it was some weeks since those claims were filled. Many of the men who put in those claims came from New South Wales or the other colonies, and had never been on a roll in Queensland.

Mr. REID: Prosecute them, then.

Mr. ANNEAR: That was the duty of the Government. If the hon. member thought he was going to act as public prosecutor, he was making a great mistake. He repeated that he was up at Gladstone last Saturday, and it was common property to all the residents of Gladstone. Let the Home Secretary ask to see the books of the contractors and the claims, and he would see that the claims were signed by men who had not been two months in the district.

Mr. BROWNE: Well commit them for perjury.

The HOME SECRETARY wished to make his position clear in the matter. He was certainly not going to institute proceedings against any applicants for the franchise, or against any member of the magistracy, on any statement which might be made under privilege in that Chamber.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HOME SECRETARY: They were dealing with a totally different set of circumstances there from that upon which he could act. If the statements of the hon. member for Maryborough were correct, they would probably be substantiated, as the hon. member said, in the revision court, which, he presumed, would be held in regard to the claims. They might or might not be, but he was assuming that they would. If they should be agreed with the leader of the Opposition that it would be the duty of the Home Secretary or the Chief Secretary to ask the magistrate who had exercised his particular functions in regard to those claims for an explanation, but he certainly would not do anything without first asking him for such explanation as he might be able to give. It was a very good thing in administration to recollect the fine old proverb, "Audi alteram partem"—"Hear the other side."

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*) said he knew nothing about the assertion of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, that men had got on this roll who had been in the electorate for only a couple of months. He was probably the member the hon. member for Maryborough referred to. He was in Gladstone two months ago, previous to the last registration court being held. He had held a public meeting there, and after the meeting a large number of people came to him to have their claims attested. In no case did he attest any claims without having first read over the claims after they had been filled in, or without having fully explained the responsibility, and only after having made inquiries about their residence qualification for the electorate.

Mr. FORSYTH: Where did you inquire?

Mr. RYLAND: From those who were making the affirmations, and in a good many cases he had refused to attest claims, after he had found that the term of residence did not satisfy him. He thought he had signed over fifty claims, and when it was taken into consideration that

there were over 400 men working on that line, he did not think that that was an unusual number to sign. He was very particular about signing these claims. At the meeting he had been asked if he was prepared to attest claims, as there was a great difficulty for some of these men to get on the roll.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Were not both the contractors justices of the peace?

Mr. RYLAND said he did not know; but he had replied that he believed that if these men were qualified to vote that their names should have been put on the roll. When the privilege or right to become a justice of the peace had been extended to members of Parliament it was professedly in order that members of Parliament should be in a position to attest claims in outside districts where there was no justice of the peace.

Mr. ANNEAR: How long ago was this public meeting held that you refer to?

Mr. RYLAND: Over two months ago.

Mr. ANNEAR: I was speaking about the railway camps.

Mr. RYLAND referred to the meeting he held at the 11-Mile on the Gladstone line. He had always been very chary about signing claims in his own electorate. Many people had asked him to do that, but he had told them that he did not think it was a right thing for a member of a district to do in his own electorate, but he said that he was prepared to attest claims in any electorate outside his own. However, he had attested them in a few such cases because he had found that there were no justices of the peace in the district. He did not see that there was anything wrong in that. He remembered a very significant remark being made in the House by Sir Samuel Griffith. Complaints had been made that justices of the peace in the colony of Queensland had been asked to attest claims, and that they had refused to do so, and Sir Samuel Griffith made this very pertinent remark: "Give the names of these gentlemen to me and I will deal with them." He thought it was the duty of justices of the peace to attest claims, and that they would be failing in their duty if they did not. If the House decided that it was not a proper thing for members of Parliament to attest these claims, that was another thing. He was not ashamed of what he had done. He believed that every man who had a proper qualification that should enable him to get on the roll should have every opportunity for getting on the roll. If the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, knew of any cases of false declarations having been made, it was only right that they should be dealt with. He did not at all believe in men making false declarations or false affirmations, for that would be committing breaches of the Act. He thought he had given an explanation that should satisfy the hon. member for Maryborough. When he was in Maryborough not long ago, a gentleman asked him to attest some claims, and after making inquiries, he found that the men making the claims were qualified to be on the roll. He did not attest the claims until after he had made full inquiries. He had made inquiries from several business people at Gladstone, and had found that one man was well acquainted with every man working on that railway—that he was acquainted with them personally—as he supplied them with newspaper and other literature, and being a storekeeper, he supplied them with goods, so that he ought to have known whether these men had remained the full time in the electorate, whether six or three months, as the case might be.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Leahy, *Bulloo*) thought that everybody had anticipated that there would be some discussion on the Home Secretary's Estimates on

this item, but he did not think it was anticipated that it would be of this nature altogether, and the discussion might be interesting from a variety of views. When the leader of the Opposition was speaking he made certain statements to which he (Mr. Leahy) said "hear, hear." He said that if certain things occurred it was the duty of certain persons to take certain action, but when the Home Secretary said he was not going to take any action on anything said under the privilege of this House, the leader of the Opposition also said "hear, hear."

Mr. BROWNE: If charges were made.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Charges had been made. A charge had been made by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, and as far as he knew the first time the leader of the Opposition made a statement it was entirely on the strength of the charges made. If it was true that it was the duty of the Home Secretary to do so-and-so, he (Mr. Leahy) said "hear, hear." He could assure hon. gentlemen that he would make inquiry into any matter connected with railways that was brought before him, whether made privately or not—that it would not escape his memory if something was said to him here. He had been up to Gladstone and Rockhampton frequently of late, and in travelling round these districts he had heard certain statements. Whether they were true or not, he did not know; he could only form his own opinion as to how far he could discount them. He had heard that the hon. gentleman who had just sat down witnessed a great many claims, and he had been told that a great many of the persons making these claims had not the necessary qualification at the time. However, he expressed no opinion on that, and he thought that the hon. gentleman, from his own point of view, gave a fairly satisfactory explanation of what he had done. That was to say, that the men had been in the district some time before they commenced working for the contractors. He could understand them having the necessary qualification in that case; but he was informed that a great many of them were not. He had had some experience as a magistrate, but he did not think he had ever witnessed a claim in his own electorate since he became a member. He had not witnessed a claim for years till to-day, when a man came to him with a claim and said he could not find a magistrate to witness it, and it was the last day and nearly the last minute. In connection with witnessing claims there was a very serious responsibility thrown on a magistrate. Not only were his functions judicial, but there was a point of honour involved, and there was also a common-sense point of view for him to take. There was an obligation upon him as a magistrate to satisfy himself that the claim was a just one, and in so doing he had to take steps to get the most reliable information he could get. If a man came to him to get him to witness a claim for him, and said he had lived a certain time in a certain district, and there was a man living next door who knew him, and he had an opportunity of asking that man who lived next door, he would not witness the claim, if he had no knowledge himself, till he had asked the other man. That was one of the obligations imposed on a magistrate—that he must satisfy himself with the best information obtainable. But if an hon. member departed from the judicial position and went about canvassing as an agent—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Touting!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not saying the hon. member did that; but if an hon. member left his judicial position behind him—if his mind was in that condition

that he was going about as an agent or a propagandist, he should not carry the magistrate with him. He should separate the two positions. If he occupied the position of a judge he was a bad propagandist; and if he went as a propagandist he would subordinate the position of judge. As to rambling about the country witnessing claims, as the Home Secretary said, questions of taste came in there.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Are men's names not to be put on the roll?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not passing judgment on the hon. member at all. He was merely laying down what appeared to him to be the abstract rule which should govern these cases with honourable men. If he went into the country as a propagandist to get names put on the roll, holding strong opinions on his side of the House—but not being more of a party man than the hon. member himself—though he claimed to have the average amount of common sense and strength of character, he ventured to say that he would be led away. There was nothing more certain in life than that, if a man's interest came in conflict with his duty, his opinion would generally be in the same direction as his interest. Even with the best intention a man's judgment would become warped under the circumstances. A man very often had the peculiarity of making his moral faculties subordinate to the other faculties, and he thought under the circumstances it was not possible for a strong party man to go about the country for the special purpose of putting names on the roll and at the same time act judicially. An hon. member had asked, by way of interjection, if men should go without having their names on the roll. They should not. But there was the franchise, and whether it was liberal or restricted, they, as legislators, should be loyal to the laws of the country. And it had to be proved yet that any persons there, who had a right to be on the roll, had any difficulty in getting their claims signed. If the hon. member went up, and there were no magistrates in Gladstone or around there, and if the contractors were not magistrates, and the men were denied the right of making application to have their names on the roll, while men had an opportunity personally of knowing whether their statements were right or wrong, then the hon. member would be justified in going a long way to witness those claims. But did the hon. gentleman say he inquired of either of the contractors whether they would certify that the men were qualified by residence? He did not say so. There were several magistrates in Gladstone, and, even assuming that those men were 11 miles outside Gladstone at the time to which he referred, he thought they were in camp only a few miles outside Gladstone waiting for the contractors to commence, and they had to go into Gladstone for their supplies. Nearly all the storekeepers in Gladstone were magistrates, and those local men had an opportunity of knowing if those claimants were sufficiently long in the district to entitle them to be on the roll. There was no evidence that they had made application to the local magistrates, and that the local magistrates had refused to certify their claims; and what justification was there for somebody outside holding strong political opinions to witness those claims when there were any amount of other men capable of performing the functions, because they had local knowledge? They, however, had not witnessed the claims. Probably they had knowledge that the men had not been resident long enough in the district. If the hon. member was right in his contention, he brought a very serious charge against the magistrates of the district. Taking

an impartial view of it as any outsider might take, he thought the hon. member ought to be able to show that the magistrates in that district refused to perform their duties—that was to say that they were waited upon by the gentlemen who wished to get upon the roll, and refused to perform the duty cast upon them by the Elections Act of making due inquiry into the claims of those persons who wished to get upon the roll. If they had the means of going before local magistrates and did not do so, that in itself would be strong presumptive evidence that the magistrates knew more than the claimants wanted them to know. He did not know how any magistrate, knowing a man to be resident of a district, could refuse to certify to his claim for registration. If the local magistrates refused to perform their magisterial functions and consider the claims put before them, having regard to the facts and circumstances and evidence, it would be a fair case to bring before the Home Secretary, and have an inquiry made as to whether they did their duty or not; but until some case was made out that the men concerned applied to the local magistrates, who had refused to do their duty, there was no justification for an outsider coming in amongst those people, of whom he had no personal knowledge, and acting a judicial or propagandist part, or a combination of both. It seemed very much akin to what was known as packing the bench—that was, when a magistrate came from a long distance and took up a position on the bench, where he had not been accustomed to adjudicate, for the express purpose of taking part in the decision of a particular case. Now, if it so happened that the local magistrates had refused to do their duty, and complaint was made to the Home Secretary, he ventured to say that he would have sent up Mr. Yaldwyn, or some other competent officer, to decide the cases of a great body of men who claimed to vote, and that whatever officer so sent would have acted in a thoroughly judicial and impartial manner. He would not say more on that subject at present. He wanted to come back to what had been said about a number of men who had been struck off the roll, whether rightly or wrongly he was not prepared to say. As far as he could make out, the persons on the roll who had sympathies with his side of the House suffered a great deal more in that respect than those who had sympathies with the views of the other side.

Mr. REID: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He said that deliberately. He had been over the rolls very carefully, and affirmed that that was so. Of course objections were taken to a large number of names of persons on both sides who, perhaps, had never lost their qualifications, but how could they get over that? How could the registrar be blamed? The Act did not confer judicial functions upon the registrar. It simply imposed certain obligations upon him. He had to make inquiry. If he made inquiry from any information which came to him from a reputable quarter, that was all he could be expected to do, and it was not his duty to adjudicate upon whether the information was right or wrong. He simply had to perform the obligations imposed upon him by the Act by laying the information which he received in good faith before the duly constituted tribunal which had to come to a conclusion as to whether persons were qualified to be on the roll or not. It was not the duty of the registrar to adjudicate. He had definite duties in the way of making inquiry cast upon him, and if persons gave him false information, whether they did it intentionally or not, the registrar was not to blame. The information was placed at his disposal, and it was his duty to put a challenge

before the name of the person concerned, and lay the matter before the properly constituted court for decision. They had had some very interesting evidence brought before them during the debate. They had had evidence which he had never been able to get either as a member of Parliament or even as a Minister. They were told exactly the condition of things in the Government Printing Office; they were told the exact official telegrams sent by the electoral registrar to a Government officer, and he ventured to say that persons who were in a position to get such exact information in reference to telegrams passing between officers of the Government were at no disadvantage. He did not know the person in question, but he thought when the information did come it was his duty to say so-and-so without showing the telegram. If a man showed one official telegram he would show another.

The HOME SECRETARY: Three days before the election.

Mr. REID: I said he was busy that morning when he showed the two wires.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, giving out ballot-papers.

Mr. REID: What else would he do?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All they knew was that certain information was given both inside and outside the Chamber, and he contended that a party who were in a position to get that information supplied to them were at no disadvantage with the officers of the department. He did not know whether Mr. Boyce had very much to do with it; he had known him for a very long time, and he did not know that there was any other officer in the Government service who endeavoured to carry out his duties with greater thoroughness and impartiality. He did not think the hon. gentlemen opposite had any reason to complain about his conduct. With regard to getting names on the roll and getting them off, he thought the hon. members opposite were as much concerned in that as any other hon. members. They boasted on their platforms and in their speeches about what a wonderful organisation they had, and he believed that they had taught their opponents some lessons in organisation. After all, he did not think it was a very great inconvenience for a man living in North Brisbane or in the Valley to be called upon to show that his name was entitled to be on the roll; it was no great hardship, and it tended to the purity of the rolls. The whole conduct of Parliament might depend upon 100 votes. In Gympie, the result of the election only depended upon three or four votes, and in North Rockhampton it was only a question of one or two. These few votes might constitute the majority, and might in that way influence the whole course of legislation. He thought it was necessary that every man who had not a qualification should be struck off the roll, and that all who had the qualification should have their names put upon the roll. Speaking for himself, he had no desire to hold any seat in the House unless he was there representing the majority of his constituents. He did not think that the hon. members opposite had any right to complain or make any charges against the Government side of the House, or their administration, with regard to getting men on or off the roll. He would not mention any other cases, but he would say that this case of Rockhampton North did not stand isolated in any way.

Mr. REID: Duck Creek, for instance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not referring to Duck Creek. He did not know any part of the country where a man would have to wait six months before he could get a justice of the peace.

Mr. BROWNE: How is it they do not require any of these regulations in the other colonies?

The HOME SECRETARY: Their rolls are not in such a good state as ours are. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not at the present time going into the question of what the conditions were in the other colonies, but he would remind the hon. member that in New Zealand there was no revision by a court at all. This duty was discharged by the registrar, and he did it in a way which was not at all judicial. He thought the House would object very strongly to the revision of the rolls being left in the hands of any single man, without having any evidence to guide him, as was the case in New Zealand. He thought a very strong objection would be raised to the appointment of such an officer. He did not think the New Zealand system was a good one; on the other hand, he thought it was a very bad one. There were some other matters he would have liked to refer to, but he did not wish to occupy any more time. He would certainly have liked to have heard the North Rockhampton case referred to, and he would have liked to have heard what the hon. member for that district had to say about it.

Mr. BROWNE: It is hardly fair to ask the hon. member.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As the case was *sub judice*, the hon. member was quite right in not rising to speak about it. In connection with the Gympie business, he would remind hon. members that Mr. Fisher, the late member, and now a member of the Federal Parliament, was a pretty smart man. He was a very capable politician, and had no doubt weighed the chances of the election to the fullest extent. He was not asleep; he knew exactly about these rolls, and he fixed the time exactly when he would resign.

Mr. REID: No, he did not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then he had less political foresight than he gave him credit for.

Mr. REID: He made a promise and kept it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So did the hon. member for the Valley make a promise.

Mr. McDONNELL: If you are speaking about Mr. Higgs, the late member for the Valley, he made no promise about resigning.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How do you know?

Mr. McDONNELL: I know. I am quite positive.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They all knew that the thing was engineered. They might take Gympie or North Rockhampton, and there was no telling how the votes would have gone. The Home Secretary had explained that there were only two or three weeks out of eight in which an election could have been held without the same objection being raised. He had no doubt that Mr. Fisher calculated all the chances.

Mr. REID: No, he did not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Then he had less political foresight than he thought he had. He was quite sure the hon. member for Enoggera would have done so. He would have fixed his time to resign, and he would have timed it so as to give his party the best political results. He had no doubt that in the case of the Valley, so far as possible, the time was calculated. It was held over indefinitely for the simple purpose of getting every available man on the Valley roll that was entitled to vote. If that election had taken place under similar circumstances to those at Gympie, they would have been told that Mr.

McMaster was returned because the quarterly roll was not in use; but there the quarterly roll was in use, and he (the Secretary for Railways) believed that the result showed the returning common sense of the people of this country. (Opposition laughter.) He ventured to assert that if the quarterly rolls had been in use at Gympie and at North Rockhampton the electors would have given another proof of their returning common sense. The other side only got the seat at Gympie by the skin of their teeth. He would say nothing about Rockhampton North, as the case was *sub judice*; but those places were strongholds of Labour, and they were shaken to their foundations. Under those circumstances, he did not think that members on the other side should waste the time of the Committee and of the country as they had been doing by making charges that had no foundation whatever. There was a great deal in making statements of that kind and getting them into *Hansard*, and leading people to believe that they were a suffering party—that they were sat upon by the whole of the Ministerial forces. They were making an *ad misericordiam* appeal to the electors of the country, and he ventured to say that it was only made for political purposes, although he had no grievance against them on that account.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*) did not think the Secretary for Railways was correct in speaking of a justice of the peace acting in a judicial capacity when he attested electoral claim forms. The hon. gentleman said that a justice of the peace always acted in a judicial capacity.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He is supposed to.

Mr. GIVENS: He was not supposed to. If the hon. gentleman consulted the legal authorities at his disposal, he would find that a justice of the peace acted in two capacities—judicial and ministerial—and when he attested a claim form he was most decidedly acting in a ministerial capacity. If he was acting in a judicial capacity, he would have to call evidence for and against.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He must satisfy himself that he has judicial evidence. He must weigh the evidence.

Mr. GIVENS: He supposed that the hon. gentleman would tell them that if a magistrate sat on an inquiry, like a coroner, he was acting in a judicial capacity.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Yes. He takes sworn evidence.

Mr. GIVENS: The decision of the highest legal authority in the State was that, even when a magistrate took evidence, he was not always acting in a judicial capacity, but in a ministerial capacity. That had been held by no less an authority than the Attorney-General last year. That hon. gentleman held that when a bench of magistrates was sitting on a case which involved very serious issues—perhaps imprisonment for a number of people—they were only acting in a ministerial capacity, inasmuch as it was only their business to say whether a *prima facie* case had been made out or not. Nobody knew that better than the Secretary for Railways, but he was only indulging in a bit of special pleading for the purpose of getting it into *Hansard* and gulling the people outside. Now, the complaint made by the hon. member for Maryborough against the senior member for Gympie was that when he was up on the railway line at Gladstone he attested some claim forms with a view to assisting citizens to obtain their citizens' rights. They had been told by the hon. member for Maryborough that a large number of people had recently come from New South Wales, and were working on the railway. One of the main

arguments used last year in support of the construction of railways, and in support of the passage of private railway Bills, was that they would find work for the unemployed of Queensland, but it now appeared that they had only been finding work for the unemployed of New South Wales. There was no doubt whatever that the hon. member for Gympie was performing a public duty in assisting these men to get on the roll, and it had always been the aim and object of hon. members sitting on that side to do that. He had witnessed scores of claims, and it was a matter of perfect indifference to him what their political opinions were so long as he was satisfied that they were entitled to get on the roll. It appeared on the other hand that hon. members on the other side placed every possible difficulty in the way of men obtaining their citizens' right unless they happened to be their political friends.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have no foundation for that statement.

Mr. GIVENS: He would show some foundation for it before he had finished. The matter of surprise to him was that the people were able to return one of themselves to represent them, seeing the enormous difficulties which were placed in their way by the other side. The Home Secretary, a little while ago, stated that the Principal Electoral Registrar never issued anything but general instructions to the electoral registrars. He would draw the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact that there was one particular man on the roll in this State who never had any right to be there. He was never a British citizen, but an alien. Yet he was on the roll, and was kept there for years and years, and voted, and was on the committee of Ministerial candidates, and was always a good Ministerial voter. When it was found out very recently that he was an alien, instead of immediately wiping the man's name off the roll—

The HOME SECRETARY: Which nobody can do.

Mr. GIVENS: They wired to Brisbane for instructions. Now, he wondered if he had been a Labour voter would they have wired to Brisbane for instructions? No fear! But the instructions that were sent back were to leave his name on the roll unless someone objected. Now that man's name had no right to be on the roll, because it was not entitled to be there, and because, after he became a British citizen—certainly he immediately took the oath of allegiance—he never sent in a claim. After he was objected to, the registrar, instead of disqualifying him until he sent in a proper claim—as he should have done when he became naturalised—wired to the Principal Electoral Registrar, and got back instructions that he was not to wipe him out unless somebody objected, and then a man was put to the expense of objecting and lodging the legal fee of 5s.

The HOME SECRETARY: What was the result?

Mr. GIVENS: The result had to be tested by the revision court, which had not yet sat.

The HOME SECRETARY: Will you give me particulars of that case?

Mr. GIVENS: The particulars of the case were that the alien's name was Hamilton Thornton Douglas.

The HOME SECRETARY: How was he an alien?

Mr. GIVENS: Because he was a native of the United States.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you object to him being that?

Mr. GIVENS: He did not, but he objected to anyone being on the roll who would not accept the responsibility of citizen-

[7:30 p.m.] ship—most decidedly. It was only

found out by accident that this man was an alien, although that must have been a fact known to the Government for a long time,

because it was in an official document addressed to him as an alien when the matter was found out.

The HOME SECRETARY: In what way?

Mr. GIVENS: It was an official document.

The HOME SECRETARY: It did not come before me.

Mr. GIVENS: He challenged the Home Secretary to produce correspondence in the case. He would find that a telegram was sent from Mr. Boyce to the electoral registrar in Cairns telling him that this man's name should not be struck off unless someone objected to the name being on the roll, although there was no right for it to remain on the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are now deciding something that it *sub judice*.

Mr. GIVENS: The name has no right to be there at any rate. And was it right that Mr. Boyce should have issued these instructions to the electoral registrar at Cairns? He might also bring under the notice of the hon. gentleman the fact that the department was losing a great deal of money every year from the way in which the electoral registrars in out-of-the-way places were administering the Act. If hon. members looked up the country papers they would see a list of names of men who applied to be placed on the roll, and that this list occupied four columns, and half of each was blank, simply because particulars of residential qualifications had to be there particularised in case of Labour voters, and five or six inches are left blank in other columns. These particulars were asked for from Labour voters who had shifted from one place to another.

The HOME SECRETARY: Everyone else has to supply these particulars.

Mr. GIVENS: They had not, for that could be seen by looking down the list of voters.

The HOME SECRETARY: Take the case of the Attorney-General last year. That is exactly in point.

Mr. GIVENS: He agreed with the leader of the Opposition that the great majority of the electoral registrars in the colony performed their duties impartially and in an excellent manner, but there were a few of which that could not be said—who did not deserve that being said of them. They had expressed the opinion that only men of property and with politics of a certain kind should be on the rolls, and the electoral registrar at Cairns had done that. If that was acting in an impartial and unbiassed way it would be much better if they had an opportunity of showing their impartiality in some other way. He would point out, with regard to the administration of the Act, that when notices were issued that certain people on the rolls were dead, left, or disqualified, that might not inflict any great hardship in the metropolis or city constituencies, where every man could see the newspapers every day; but in outside constituencies, especially out in the far West, it did a great deal of harm, for men there did not see newspapers for months sometimes; they did not receive the mails regularly at times, for many of the men there were continually travelling about, although they were always in the same electorate. How could they see that they were marked left, dead, or disqualified? That being so, he contended that this was not fair to those individuals. The leader of the Opposition had pointed out that a certain political organisation existed in this city for the purpose of purifying the rolls by knocking off the rolls the names of persons, but the Act provided that when they lodged their objections they should pay a fee of 5s.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Nothing of the sort. No, no.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes.

Mr. McMASTER: The matter must go to the revision court.

Mr. REID: He is quite right from one point of view.

Mr. GIVENS: The general provision of the law was that, when a person lodged an objection to a person not being properly qualified to be on the roll, he had to lodge a fee of 5s. with his objection, and that had been done in the case of the alien he had referred to. He would like to know if this purification society had paid the fee of 5s. for each of the objections they had made?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you referring to the Electoral Reform League?

Mr. GIVENS said he did not know what it was called. It might be a Jericho association, for all he knew. Why should the electoral registrars take the word of organisations of such a kind? They had sent out paid organisers.

Mr. FORSYTH: So do you.

Mr. GIVENS: There had never been a paid organiser in his electorate for the last fifteen years. As far as he knew there was no paid organiser representing his party within fifty miles of Brisbane; and the paid organisers in the outside districts were employed in connection with the industrial unions.

Mr. ANNEAR: What about the Trades Hall in Turbot street?

Mr. GIVENS: They had not at their beck and call a hiring newspaper like the *Courier*. But that was not a Government organ now. They now possessed the *Street*, a rag they had to give away—a little organ they had to keep alive at the expense of the general taxpayer by means of Government advertisements.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member of the question before the Committee.

Mr. GIVENS: Connected with this matter was the large amount of money expended for advertising.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That vote is not before us now.

Mr. GIVENS: The Home Secretary said the whole question was before the Committee, and that was part of the question. However, if hon. members were inclined to repudiate the authority of the Home Secretary—

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say what the hon. member attributes to me.

Mr. GIVENS: If he was out of order in referring to the question of advertising he would like to know what the hon. member for Maryborough's interjection about Turbot street had to do with the question. An organisation like that possessed by the other side should be carefully watched by the electoral registrars, so as not to allow themselves to commit an injustice by carrying out the wishes of that organisation. In their circulars they said they supplied lists of names of people "dead," "left," or "disqualified" to the different electoral registrars. Was it on their mere say so that the registrars filled up the lists and got them advertised?

The HOME SECRETARY: No. The registrar makes inquiries.

Mr. GIVENS said he doubted it very much. They had it on the best evidence. He knew men who had never been out of the electorate who had been marked "left," "dead," or "disqualified." Plenty of men had been marked as dead, who were very much alive.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Grimes himself was once.

Mr. GIVENS: That showed that full inquiry was not made. He objected to dictation by any political association outside, and he did not think it was creditable to hon. gentlemen on the other side that they should have an association—of which prominent members opposite were mem-

bers—organised for the purpose of getting men driven off the roll wholesale. If anybody was not of the right political brand, and they could find the remotest excuse, they knocked off his name without the slightest compunction. Nobody belonging to the Labour party ever made it a part of their function to wipe people off the roll.

Mr. FORSYTH: Bunkum! They have done it in my electorate. I can give names.

Mr. TOLMIE: And in Toowoomba.

Mr. GIVENS: There were thousands of names on the roll which the Ministerial organisation did not object to, though they had no right to be there.

Mr. FORSYTH: The same with yours.

Mr. GIVENS: There were men down for a property qualification though they had lost that qualification.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a question of fact for the tribunal to decide.

Mr. REID: It is hard to prove it before the tribunal.

Mr. GIVENS: The Ministerial organisation did not want the roll purified in those cases, because they knew that the property voter could generally—though he was glad to say he could not always—be regarded as a safe voter for the Ministerial side. They wanted above all things to have purity in political life. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) But while the present Government was in office he had not the slightest hope of getting purity in political life or political administration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Some things you cannot purify.

Mr. GIVENS: Especially the Cambooya case. The more it was stirred up the more it smelt. Almost every crime in the calendar was committed in connection with it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GIVENS thought he was perfectly entitled to bring up this case as an example of what was done in the administration of the law.

Mr. TURLEY: Maladministration!

Mr. GIVENS: There was that Cambooya case.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GIVENS submitted that he was entitled to instance that as a gross example of maladministration in connection with this particular vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GIVENS: He would like the Chairman to say if he was not in order.

The CHAIRMAN: It has always been a rule in the procedure of this House that when a question is put on the business-paper it is out of order to anticipate the debate on it. There is a motion on the paper referring to this matter, and it will not be in order to debate it now.

Mr. GIVENS submitted that though there was a specific resolution on the paper to be discussed it related to a specific matter. He was not trespassing on the resolution to discuss the report of the select committee. He was not going to discuss that or allude to it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That covers the whole ground.

Mr. GIVENS: It did not. It appeared that hon. members opposite liked to keep as far away from this as possible.

The HOME SECRETARY: There have been half-a-dozen inquiries already.

Mr. GIVENS: Yes, a man was brought before the court and committed for trial, and this pure Government filed no bill. They would not let it go to a jury.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: Isn't that done frequently when there is no case?

Mr. GIVENS: It was a marvel that a shadow of a case could be made out considering the difficulties thrown in the way by the Government.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The proofs were stolen.

Mr. GIVENS: Who stole them?

The CHAIRMAN: I have already called attention to the fact that it is irregular to refer to a motion on the business-paper.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. GIVENS again submitted that he was not alluding to the motion on the notice-paper, but had a perfect right to discuss this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The select committee dealt with the stealing of those papers.

Mr. GIVENS: He was not discussing, nor did he intend to discuss, the finding of the committee, but he was alluding to certain well-known facts with which the committee were not concerned at all, and, in reply to the Secretary for Railways, he would point out with regard to the stealing of the papers that the persons who stole them were admittedly interested in the case itself.

The HOME SECRETARY: You evidently know all about it.

Mr. GIVENS: At all events he did not know as much about it as the Home Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN: The whole of this question is involved in the motion which is at present on the business-paper and which is to be moved by the hon. member for Charters Towers, Mr. Burrows. I must, therefore, state again that in my opinion it is distinctly irregular for an hon. member to refer to this matter.

Mr. GIVENS: Seeing that it was in reply to an interjection that he brought up the case, he thought it was rather hard that he would not have an opportunity of discussing it as it ought to be discussed; and he further maintained that if there was anything in this world that wanted a full discussion it was that particular case. Time after time members on that side had been prevented from having a full discussion upon it. That case, at any rate, showed that the administration of the law in connection with the Elections Act was not what it ought to be, and further, that owing to the lax administration or maladministration of the Act, very grave abuses existed. But to leave that case and to come to a more recent instance. It had been pointed out that the June electoral roll, while it was available for the Toowoomba election, was not available either for the Gympie or the North Rockhampton election. Now, why? Simply because the Government thought it was dangerous for them to have that roll in use at the Gympie or North Rockhampton election. Was is not a fact that the Toowoomba election took place considerably before the North Rockhampton and the Gympie election?

The HOME SECRETARY: Not before the Gympie election. Do not manufacture the facts.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, he was asking for information. At any rate, the Toowoomba election came off a week before the North Rockhampton election, and yet, while the roll was available for the Toowoomba election, it was not available for the North Rockhampton election.

The HOME SECRETARY: That has been explained.

Mr. GIVENS: His opinion was that Ministers liked to get someone behind whom they could shelter themselves. They had the Public Service Board and the Advertising Board, and now the Home Secretary had got the electoral registrar. In all those instances, Ministers sheltered themselves behind the persons who had been appointed to the various offices. At the present time it was proposed to abolish the Public Ser-

vice Board, because it was found that it had become a public scandal. Then the Premier told them the other night that the Advertising Board was more or less of a failure, and by and by the Home Secretary would tell them that the idea of having a Principal Electoral Registrar was a bad one. He ventured to say that the Principal Electoral Registrar, who was supposed to be such an independent individual, was a mere tool in the hands of the Ministry. That was his honest opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: Your what opinion? That is impossible.

Mr. GIVENS: He did not know whether it was impossible for the Home Secretary to express an honest opinion, but it appeared from his interjection that it was. The fact was that, whoever was responsible, very grave abuses had arisen, and were continually coming to the surface in connection with the administration of the Act. Although very high praise had been showered upon the Principal Electoral Registrar, he did not think if the Home Secretary heard the opinion of many returning officers and local registrars that he had conversed with that he would be so very complimentary. With regard to the charges levelled against his side of their activity in getting names on the rolls, he for one did not feel inclined to apologise for that. As a matter of fact he felt rather proud of it.

Mr. TOLMIE: Do you feel proud of having got them off?

Mr. GIVENS: He had never got a man off the roll in his life.

Mr. TOLMIE: Your party does.

Mr. GIVENS: If the hon. member would bring forward one case in which a man had been unjustly taken off the roll he would give him every assistance to get that man's name restored. But there were hundreds and thousands of Ministerial voters who were on the roll who had no business to be there because they did not possess the qualification in respect to which they were registered. It was part of the duty of every citizen to see that every other citizen possessed his full rights of citizenship, and when they assisted men to get on the roll they were simply performing their duty as citizens, and he for one was not ashamed of it.

The HOME SECRETARY: A large part of the speech of the hon. member for Cairns was so irrelevant that he would not condescend to reply to it. A great deal of it was also so much out of order that he would not be in order in taking any notice of it. The part which he did intend to reply to was that in which the hon. member levelled a gross charge of bias against the Principal Electoral Registrar, and said that a certain man named Douglas, who was an alien, was allowed to remain on the roll because he was a supporter of the Government. That was a most gross and serious charge to be levelled against any public officer, especially an officer who, as far as his duties were concerned, was largely an officer of the House.

Mr. TURLEY: No.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, so far as his duties were concerned he was largely responsible to the House. But whether he was a servant of the House directly, or through the medium of the Ministry, it was equally unfair and unmanly to make such a charge. An unfortunate civil servant who was unable to reply for himself should not be subject to a charge of that kind unless the hon. member was prepared to back up the charge by some very much better evidence than he had brought forward. The facts were not at all as the hon. member stated.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They never are.

The HOME SECRETARY : Up to the time the hon. member mentioned the matter, he knew no more of it than anybody else. He never heard of the man. He never heard of his case, or knew anything about it, but he knew something about it now, because the officials in the gallery, more especially the Under Secretary, remembered very distinctly what the facts were. This man,

Mr. Douglas, was very doubtful [8 p.m.] whether he was not a naturalised subject. He had already taken the oath of allegiance in another State, and very naturally concluded, as most people did, that that was sufficient. As a matter of fact, there was a large number of people, and well informed people, too, who were unaware of the fact that naturalisation in one State was not sufficient to carry naturalisation throughout Australia. It was local in its operation. But he did not see how a man, who had already become a sworn British subject, could be said to be an alien.

Mr. GIVENS : As a matter of law he is an alien.

The HOME SECRETARY : He was a naturalised British subject in one of the States of the Commonwealth.

Mr. TURLEY : Never mind that, that does not affect it.

The HOME SECRETARY : It was a very material point, but it had been ignored by hon. gentlemen opposite. As soon as Mr. Douglas discovered that it was necessary for him to take the oath afresh, he took the oath. He (the Home Secretary) did not see how he could be an alien after he had become a naturalised British subject.

Mr. GIVENS : Certainly he was an alien.

The HOME SECRETARY : He could not see it.

Mr. TURLEY : Why did he take the oath then ?

The HOME SECRETARY : Because of the peculiarity of our law. He already held a certificate of naturalisation in one of the other colonies—he could not say whether it was in New South Wales, Victoria, or New Zealand.

Mr. DUNSFORD : I thought the old Federal Council passed a law in regard to that.

The HOME SECRETARY : It seemed that the members of the House were not very clear about it, and that being so he thought Mr. Douglas might be pardoned for not being very clear upon it himself. Mr. Douglas, as soon as he discovered that a new naturalisation certificate was required, obtained one, and it was not until after that had taken place, that the electoral registrar appealed to the Principal Electoral Registrar to know what he should do. Suppose, as the hon. gentleman desires, Mr. Boyce had told this officer to make due inquiry, where would he have gone ?

Mr. GIVENS : He would have carried out the law.

The HOME SECRETARY : No, it was his duty to make due inquiry. Where would he have gone but to the office of the clerk of petty sessions—probably his own office ? He would there have ascertained that this man had already become a naturalised British subject and his name was on the roll—how then could he have given him notice that he was disqualified ? He was on the roll, and it would have been a very nice point whether it would have been possible to remove him, he being a naturalised British subject in this colony and in another State of the Commonwealth. These were the facts of this case. The worst feature of the hon. gentleman's charge against Mr. Boyce was that he gave this advice because this man was a Government supporter. Mr. Boyce had assured him that he had not the slightest knowledge of this man's political views. It was his duty to give advice ; he gave it to the

best of his ability, and he gave the right advice, because he was of opinion that the man had complied with all the conditions. Apparently the hon. member opposite, in his loud-mouthed protestations about desiring to see people on the roll, did not think this man, who, he assumed, was a perfectly respectable man, should be put on the roll. Why ? Because he was a Government supporter.

Mr. TURLEY : Because he was not entitled to be there.

The HOME SECRETARY : When the Principal Electoral Registrar came to make objection it was too late. The man had already cured what was wrong.

Mr. TURLEY : No, he did not do so.

The HOME SECRETARY : The hon. member was one of those who were always cocksure about everything. He (the Home Secretary) was one of those who had a doubt on some matters, even if they were matters of law. He had had considerable doubt as to whether it was competent to sustain any objection against this man's vote on the ground that he was not a naturalised British subject. He might have got on the roll improperly, but, when he became a British subject, he was there properly, and had just as much right to be there as any member of the House. If any other hon. member but the hon. member for Cairns had made this charge against Mr. Boyce, he (the Home Secretary) would have expected him to make a retraction of it, and have expressed regret at having done a wrong to so worthy a public servant, but as it was he did not expect anything of the sort.

Mr. GIVENS did not see any great condensation in the Home Secretary having got up to reply to his speech. The hon. gentleman was merely a servant of the people, and when he got up and talked about condensing to reply to a charge he detracted from his office.

The HOME SECRETARY : It all depends upon what the charge is, and who makes it.

Mr. GIVENS : He did not care about the hon. gentleman's opinion, or that of anybody else. It was fortunate for the Home Secretary that he did not care very much what others thought about him, for he could assure the hon. gentleman the opinions were very uncomplimentary. The hon. gentleman stated the electoral registrar had no option but to leave the man's name on the roll. That was a new doctrine to him.

The HOME SECRETARY : He had no opportunity to take it off.

Mr. GIVENS : How was it that he had given the man notice now that his name would be taken off because he was disqualified. Although the Home Secretary had said immediately he took the oath of allegiance he had the necessary qualification, he forgot that the man had to be living in the district for six months before he became entitled to a vote.

The HOME SECRETARY : What is that but taking advantage of a legal quibble ?

Mr. GIVENS : There was no quibble about it. It was a plain statement of the law of the case. If a man was not a supporter of the Government every quibble was taken advantage of to keep him off the roll, but where it was one of their own supporters that was concerned the Government wanted the very strongest facts before they would knock him off. He did not accuse Mr. Boyce of keeping that man on simply because he was a Government supporter.

Mr. McMASTER : That was the accusation.

Mr. GIVENS : But, if that man had not been a Government supporter, he said that Mr. Boyce would never have been asked for instructions. The very minute it was found out that he was a Labour supporter, he would have been wiped off without compunction.

The PREMIER : That is not so.

Mr. GIVENS: Whether that was so or not, he was perfectly satisfied that it would be so, and that had been his experience all the time. In nine cases out of ten where a mistake was made by the electoral registrars in issuing notices of disqualification, the mistake was made where a Labour voter was concerned. Very few complaints were made of cases where Ministerial voters were knocked off while they possessed the qualification.

The PREMIER: They don't go to you.

Mr. GIVENS: There were hundreds of Labour voters in the Premier's own electorate whose names were being knocked off. Complaints were coming down every week.

The PREMIER: There are just as many struck off on the other side.

Mr. GIVENS: Well, he had not heard about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: They would not run to you about it.

Mr. GIVENS: Since he had been in Parliament he had got far more letters from Ministerial supporters to try and do something in the way of rectifying their grievances than he had got from his own supporters. When the Home Secretary said that in the case he quoted the facts were not in accordance with his statement, all he could say was that the hon. gentleman's own statement in reply was an absolute vindication of the facts as he stated them, because the hon. gentleman had to admit that the man was an alien.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not admit anything of the sort—only technically—by means of a legal quibble.

Mr. GIVENS: Everybody who knew anything about constitutional law knew that the naturalisation of any British colony or State, outside of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, only held good for the particular colony or State in which the naturalisation was taken out.

The PREMIER: Very few know it.

Mr. GIVENS: The Home Secretary had stated that Mr. Douglas had no opportunity of knowing it. Now, during the federal campaign, one of his arguments in favour of federation—and he made the statement at every meeting in his electorate, and it was fully reported in the Press—was that federation would remove that anomaly. He had also made the statement in other electorates, so that Mr. Douglas had ample opportunity of knowing it. He had no proof now—nor had the Home Secretary any proof—that Mr. Douglas ever was naturalised in any British State.

The HOME SECRETARY: The whole thing is mere statement, and I suppose mine is as good as yours.

Mr. GIVENS: It was a mere impression in the mind of the Under Secretary, the hon. gentleman said. The Under Secretary did not vouch for it, nor did the Home Secretary vouch for it. But the fact that the man was an alien, so far as Queensland was concerned—

The HOME SECRETARY: I suppose you cannot state that it was so?

Mr. GIVENS: No, he could not, but it was very likely that it was so, because he had known Mr. Douglas for about sixteen years, and, so far as he knew, he had been in Queensland ever since he came to Australia. He had known him ever since he came to Cairns sixteen years ago, and he had heard him "blowing" about being an American citizen; and, if he knew he was an American citizen then, did he not know he was an American citizen all the time? He had no objection to Mr. Douglas getting on the roll when he was properly qualified, and he hoped that he would be able to keep there; but he objected to the law being administered so as

to make fish of one and flesh of another. It should be impartially administered, so that nobody would have any grievance and so that hardship would be inflicted on nobody.

Mr. RYLAND had been credibly informed that the roll had been sent down from Gympie to Brisbane on the Tuesday afternoon, and was delivered in Brisbane on the Wednesday morning, and that there was plenty of time for it to have gone back to Gympie by the afternoon's train.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct.

Mr. RYLAND was informed that the delay must have come in somewhere—either in Brisbane or in Gympie—as there was any amount of time between Tuesday and Saturday to have sent the roll back for the election. Through the bungling on the part of someone these electors were deprived of their votes. He would like to know from the Home Secretary whether that was going to be continued. The same thing occurred at the election for Rockhampton North. Was there no provision to be made in administering the Act by which electors should be allowed to cast their votes? He did not see that there was any difficulty whatever in informing the returning officer by wire that he could let those men vote. He could have used the lists which had been printed by the local Press. He thought he was correct in stating that the Home Secretary had said that the Principal Electoral Registrar had nothing to do with confirming the bi-monthly lists—that he was only in the position of giving advice.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; the returning officer, I said.

Mr. RYLAND understood the hon. gentleman to say Mr. Boyce had nothing to do with preparing the rolls—that he was simply referred to for advice.

The HOME SECRETARY: He checks the lists, too.

Mr. RYLAND: The registration court checks the lists.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Boyce checks them, too.

Mr. RYLAND: How could the Principal Electoral Registrar know whether people living in every electorate in Queensland were entitled to a vote or no? The same thing might happen again, and the Principal Electoral Registrar or the local registrar might disfranchise scores of qualified electors. They ought to have something definite from the Home Secretary on that point, and, seeing that in more than one instance during the last six months men had been deprived of their votes, the hon. gentleman should see that it did not occur again. Perhaps he might be pardoned for saying a few words in answer to what the Minister for Railways had said about the only thing that would justify a member going into another electorate and signing and attesting claims. He (Mr. Ryland) had said there was no justice of the peace in the district in which he had attested claims; at any rate, there was no justice of the peace out there that these men could see, and he had pointed out that if they got up a requisition and sent it to the Home Secretary he would very likely appoint a justice of the peace for that district. These men had told him that sometimes they had gone into justices of the peace, who were all business men, on Saturday nights, and they had not the time to attend to the business of attesting claims. He had mentioned the matter to Mr. Boles, and the men there at that time were talking about getting up a requisition to have a justice of the peace appointed. With regard to what the hon. member for Maryborough had said, he had been informed that some of these men had been camped for over two months on the reserve waiting for the railway to start.

Then with regard to what the Minister for Railways said about these men being camped on the reserve and going into town to get claims attested, they were there for two or three months, and while they were there camped on the reserve, part of the time, they had no qualification. When these men got to work they had no opportunity for getting into town. They were working all day, and could only go into town on Saturday night.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Were not both the contractors justices of the peace?

Mr. RYLAND: He did not know. Would any business man think that if twenty or thirty men were working in a cutting and the contractor came along they would ask to be able to knock off work in order to go in and get their names on the roll. The idea was absurd. The hon. member for Maryborough had been a contractor himself, and he knew that when a contractor came along, it would not be a case of knock off work, but a case of "Wire in boys."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have not shown that these men asked the contractors to do this.

Mr. RYLAND: It was not a likely thing that these men would ask the contractors to do this—that was not likely between master and man. He was quite satisfied that these men should be on the roll, so he had attested their claims. With regard to what the Minister for Railways said about packing the rolls, he (Mr. Ryland) did not think there was any packing in the matter at all. He contended that every man who was entitled to be on the roll should have every opportunity for getting on the roll, no matter what his political creed might be, and it should be the duty of the police, or someone else, to see to that; but under the present system, they would have to jog along as best they could. When sympathy had been shown for Outlanders in other places, why should they not show some practical sympathy for the Outlanders in Queensland? If he went to South Africa he would try and get men on the rolls, for he would like to see every man in every country on the roll. He had never asked any man what his political feelings were. They could exercise their votes as they thought best. According to the argument of the Minister for Railways he presumed that they would vote for the Government at the next election because the present Government were finding work for them on this line. The Labour party were not finding work for them, but they were inducing them to get work in the country. He had really been doing the work which hon. members opposite should have been doing, that was in trying to enrol men who will cast their votes for the keeping of the present Ministry in power.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member who had just sat down had asked him a very pertinent question—as to whether what had been complained of in the past was going to be repeated in the future—that was the difficulty of obtaining the current bi-monthly rolls for use at any by-election. It was impossible for him, under the present state of the law, to answer the question satisfactorily. The matter rested with the Speaker, and he had requested him to deal with the matter, so that there would be plenty of time in which to secure to the returning officer and his presiding officers the possession of the bi-monthly rolls before he nominated the polling day. There were less than three weeks during which he can select that day, and the Government and the department would probably be taunted with mal-administration if the rolls were not available to the returning officer and the presiding officers. It was very difficult to do all that one would like, when one was met on every occasion—no matter

what was done—with a charge of mal-administration by hon. members who thought they were the only persons in the whole community who were capable of honestly administering not only their own affairs but the affairs of everyone else. It would be desirable in any future law to provide that any additional roll should

[8:30 p.m.] not come into force until a given date, say, the first of the succeeding month, that being such a date as would insure an opportunity being given to have the roll distributed among the presiding officers at any election which might take place. But that was not the present state of the law, and he was not responsible for it any more than the hon. member. At present, as far as he could see, the moment a roll was printed it became a roll. But the returning officer might be at Normanton, and what would be the use of a roll down in Brisbane? It was of no value as a roll until it reached the polling-place, and could be distributed. Hon. members should be fair enough to recognise that fact, as he was sure the country would be.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): A lot of political capital seemed to be made out of the fact that the hon. member for Gympie had attested certain electoral claims while he was in Gladstone, simply because he was a member of this House and a justice of the peace. The Secretary for Railways and the hon. member for Maryborough spoke of the matter in such a way as almost to lead people to believe that the hon. member had acted illegally, or had placed names on the roll illegally.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nobody said that.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: No; but it was inferred. The hon. gentleman gave a sort of moral sermon on the duties of justices of the peace; but he was all wrong. The hon. member for Maryborough almost accused the hon. member for Gympie of some criminal act in attesting those claims. But other members, on both sides of the House, had done the same thing. He had done it himself, and, in doing so, he had never asked the applicants what their political opinions were. A manager of a station, who was a justice of the peace, had asked him to put his name on the roll, and he had done so. There were very few justices of the peace in the bush who had claim forms, and there were very few who had Labour sympathies. If a Labour member recommended a person for appointment to the commission of the peace, it was very hard to get that person appointed, but he had known cases where other persons whose political sympathies were with the other side, persons who were managers of stations or grazing farm selectors, had been put on the commission of the peace within three weeks or ten days after they went to the district. If a man was entitled to have his name on the roll, it was only right for a justice of the peace, whether he was a member of the Assembly or not, to attest his claim. The hon. member for Gympie had stated that he had refused to attest some claims, and that in every case where he attested them he had satisfied himself that the applicants were entitled to be enrolled. The Secretary for Railways said that he never attested a claim in his own district. The reason was that the hon. gentleman was very seldom in his own district. There was scarcely any district in the colony from which more complaints came from persons who were entitled to be enrolled and were unable to get their names on the roll—especially miners—than from the district of the hon. member for Bulloo. There had been complaints coming from that district for the last three or four years. If the hon. gentleman would take more pains to see that every man in his

district who was entitled to the franchise was enrolled, it would be to his credit. Anyone could see how much easier it was for a man to get on the roll if he had the right earmark or brand than it was if he belonged to the other side in politics. The political organisation of the other side of the House had their paid organisers, and as the hon. member for Mitchell had pointed out, a paid organiser of that association in the Mitchell district was immediately made a justice of the peace, and he was now travelling round the district, no doubt for the purpose of striking off the roll those who had not the right earmark and of putting on others who were of his own colour in politics—in fact, juggling the roll. It would be far better if the electoral registrars were left more to themselves, and were not interfered with by any political organisation whatever. The Home Secretary, or some other hon. member, had said that if a person went to an electoral registrar and made a statement to him that a certain person was dead, or had left the district, or was disqualified, it was his duty to challenge that person.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say that; I said to make inquiries.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He did not think the electoral registrar should take any notice of outsiders.

The HOME SECRETARY: The law says that he shall.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: But he should not do so. The electoral registrars had the police, and in the cities postmen and others, to whom they could apply for information, and those were the only persons from whom they should take any information. When the Principal Electoral Registrar was appointed, it was said that the cause for complaints which were then made would be removed. As a matter of fact, however, complaints had been more frequent since the appointment of the Principal Electoral Registrar. There were complaints coming in from all quarters, especially lately, in view of the annual revision court which was approaching, and of the general election which was looming in the distance. The organisers were busy everywhere, and they interfered with the officers in arranging the roll, and he thought that should not be allowed. With regard to the North Rockhampton case, the Home Secretary said that the electoral registrar had kept the bi-monthly roll for eleven days in Rockhampton. When he (Mr. Hamilton) asked if he was kept in his position the Home Secretary replied "Yes," and when he said he should not be the hon. gentleman seemed shocked. The electoral registrar was paid for doing his duty, and he was not doing his duty if he kept the rolls eleven days before sending them to Brisbane.

The HOME SECRETARY: Suppose the man was over-worked.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He knew there was an election looming in a few days, and that the men who had been put on the roll were entitled to vote. He had plenty of time to send the roll to Brisbane, and it would not take long to print the names in the Government Printing Office.

The HOME SECRETARY: There was no time lost in the printing office.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: The roll should have been there in time for the people to vote. If the man was overworked he should have got assistance. If he had done his duty the chances were that there would have been no litigation over this election, and the parties and the country would have been saved considerable expense. He did not know who the officer was, but if it was a fact that he had kept the roll eleven days in Rockhampton before sending it to Brisbane, he would not keep him twenty-four

hours in the service. He would show civil servants that when they were paid to do a certain thing it was their place to do it, and that they were not going to run the country. It seemed to him from the way some Ministers spoke that some civil servants were able to do what they liked. Ministers were prepared to defend them in actions like this, but he considered it was scandalous. As to throwing discredit on the hon. member for Gympie, he reckoned that hon. member came out of it much better than those who had tried to make charges against him. His character was as high and he was as highly respected as members on the other side.

Mr. BURROWS (*Charters Towers*) contended that there was no reason whatever for the delay that had taken place in connection with the Gympie rolls. In regard to the statement that the rolls had been consolidated, such was not the case. The supplementary lists were consolidated, but they only occupied a few insignificant pages, and their consolidation was a very simple matter. No satisfactory reason had been advanced for the delay. In *Charters Towers* 1,100 odd names had been marked as "dead," "left," or "disqualified." He believed the local electoral registrar was as honest and decent a man as one could meet, and he thought that officer's leg had been pulled by other people, and he had been forced to take this action. There was a branch of the political association at *Charters Towers*, and no doubt they had been busily at work. There was one individual twenty-four years of age who was born at *Charters Towers*, and had never resided elsewhere, and he had been notified that his name would be struck off. The person who submitted that name, if he could be found, deserved to be summarily treated.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the name?

Mr. BURROWS: Joseph Healy.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not an uncommon name. It may be a case of identity.

Mr. BURROWS: There were two of the same family—two brothers. He never knew of any other J. Healy at *Charters Towers* except the father. This Healy was a prominent footballer on the *Towers*, and was known to everyone there; and the person who submitted that name must have known that it was being done with the intention of robbing the man of a right which he possessed—if he knew anything. Then there was another person occupying a similar position—well known as a handicapper of pedestrian events. He went to *Charters Towers* over twenty-seven years ago, and had not resided out of the town since, except when making a short visit to Sydney or Melbourne.

The PREMIER: There was a well-known man shot in *Charters Towers* the other day.

Mr. BURROWS: There were some other men who ought to be shot apparently if they could be got hold of. He was afraid the Principal Electoral Registrar would have a very poor chance if some people could get hold of him. He was trying to find that gentleman's office the other day, and he was informed that it was somewhere near the Town Hall. The difficulty of finding the Principal Electoral Registrar, and the place in which his office was situated, might lead a man to suppose he was conscious of some evil deeds, and for that reason had hidden away in some dark recess. He was apparently afraid of a disfranchised elector interviewing him with a bludgeon. He (Mr. Burrows) had to go back to the Treasury, and was there instructed where to find the Principal Electoral Registrar's office. Having found it he was interviewed by several clerks, who looked at him suspiciously to see if he had a revolver or other bloodthirsty weapon in his possession. They questioned him to find out whether it was his name that was struck off the roll, or whether

he was acting for somebody else, and having informed them that he was acting on behalf of somebody else, the next time he went to the office he had no difficulty in being allowed to see the Principal Electoral Registrar. The reason he went to interview the Principal Electoral Registrar was this: In Charters Towers at the last by-election certain men complained to him that their names were on the roll but that they were not allowed to record their votes, and he wanted to discover the reason for that action, because the returning officer had explained that he had been instructed by the Principal Electoral Registrar not to allow these persons to vote. The only reason that he could give was that they were not qualified, although the men themselves were prepared to sign any declaration that might be submitted to them. He was pleased to say the Principal Electoral Registrar had made a satisfactory explanation why the men were not allowed to vote. One man, a Mr. Dunne, who was a permanent resident, had gone to Ravenswood in the Kennedy electorate, and on the 25th September, 1900, he applied to be placed on the Kennedy roll, at the same time stating in his electoral form that he was on the Charters Towers roll. He only stayed in the Kennedy electorate a few months, and then came back to Charters Towers, and finding his name on the roll he thought there was no necessity to take any further action. He remained in Charters Towers up to the day of the election, and then was disqualified.

The HOME SECRETARY: He must have been unable to answer the questions.

Mr. BURROWS: No, the man was prepared to sign any declaration, and answer any question put to him.

The HOME SECRETARY: But he answered in such a way that under the law he could not be allowed to vote.

Mr. BURROWS: Nothing of the kind. The man's name appeared on two rolls with a residence qualification.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was his name on the roll on the day of election?

Mr. BURROWS: Yes.

The HOME SECRETARY: He should have been questioned as to whether he had resided the required period, and if he answered satisfactorily, he should have been allowed to vote.

Mr. BURROWS thought if the Home Secretary interviewed the Principal Electoral Registrar he would find he was in error.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the law; I am satisfied.

Mr. BURROWS: It was on the order of the Principal Electoral Registrar that the men were not allowed to vote, and if what the Home Secretary said was correct, then the Principal Electoral Registrar was wrong. The man Dunne was, as he had pointed out, on two rolls with a residential qualification; but he had come back to Charters Towers, and wished to exercise his vote.

The HOME SECRETARY: How long had he been there?

Mr. BURROWS: About seven or eight months. He was very much surprised when he was refused a vote. Clause 30E of the Act provided for names being struck off the roll straight away if the qualification ceased to exist. In that case, if the name had been struck off straight away the man would not have been disqualified because he would have taken steps in time to have it restored, but as matters stood he was not struck off until the last moment. Yet, the Home Secretary told them that the action was illegal, and that the man should have had a vote. If that was so, the Principal Electoral Registrar exceeded his duty, and had been responsible for several men who were entitled to vote being disfranchised.

There is one other little matter he would like to refer to. It seemed to him that,

[9 p.m.] considering the difficulties that surrounded men getting on the roll and the difficulty of remaining there, it was a great wonder that the members of the Labour party were elected at all. Every opportunity had been taken to disfranchise men that were favourable to them. He thought that admission was contained in the letter or circular which had been read by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Browne. Another thing he would like to refer to was that when an election took place in Charters Towers, up to the last election it had been customary for the presiding officer to supply refreshments to the officers taking part or assisting in the election—that was the scrutineers for both parties.

The HOME SECRETARY: Elsewhere the candidates do it.

Mr. BURROWS: They had never done it on Charters Towers, and he thought if they did they would lay themselves open to a charge of corruption, because a man was not even allowed to buy a drink for his supporters. During all the years past this had been done by the returning officer, and the Government had paid for those refreshments. He had been there since 1893, and the returning officer had complained to him on one or two occasions that the Government were so mean and niggardly that they would not pay his account. The subsequent election proved that he was correct, and the Government were so mean and niggardly that they objected to pay his account.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government did not pay it.

Mr. BURROWS: The Government did pay it until the last election. He supposed they got sick of paying for the return of Labour members; but if members supporting the Government had continued to be returned, he had no doubt the Government would have continued to pay for the refreshments. He thought it was the duty of the Government to provide facilities for a man to record his vote when he got on the roll, and that had not been done sufficiently at Charters Towers. At Charters Towers there was one village or town which had a population of between 500 or 600 men. In olden days, when the seat was secure to the Government, there was always a polling-booth there, and the expenses were reduced to a minimum, and every opportunity was given for an elector to record his vote. Now the attitude of the Government had changed, and the constituency had returned Labour men for so many years that the Government had altered the facilities provided for these people to record their votes. In Millchester, which is 3 miles from Charters Towers, and the surrounding districts there were a great number of men who did not knock off work until 4 o'clock on Saturdays, and owing to there being no polling-booth at hand they were prevented from recording their votes. A large number of people had practically been disfranchised during the last two elections owing to the absence of proper polling facilities. There was another matter that he wished to refer to, and that was that the elections were not always too clean, and in some cases the voting-papers of electors was tampered with with the object of giving a majority to the wrong candidate. He was given to understand that they had altered ballot-papers that were formal, and made them informal, and this had been done to increase the majority of the other man. He thought if he could bring evidence in the form of affidavits to show that that had taken place, it would be a matter for very rigid inquiry. He had with him no less than three affidavits from gentlemen who were intimately connected with an election which

took place here some three years ago—in 1899. This was at an election in which the unsuccessful candidate declared that he had been defeated by foul means, and the ballot-papers had been tampered with after they were first counted, so as to give the successful candidate a majority which he otherwise would not have got. This is the affidavit—

I, John Alexander McLean, make oath and say as follows—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BURROWS: What is the point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: The point of order is that this matter is now down for consideration by the House. There is a motion, given notice of by yourself, and it is irregular to anticipate the debate on it.

Mr. BURROWS maintained that the matter he was dealing with had never been before the select committee. It was entirely new, and he thought that he might be permitted to go on. It was not contained in the substance of his motion, because those affidavits were not produced before the select committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that the motion refers to "fresh facts and disclosures," which will be dealt with.

Mr. BURROWS would like to point out that his motion said "fresh facts and disclosures contained in the report of the select committee." The report of the select committee had nothing whatever to do with the matter with which he now wished to deal. It was a matter which had not been submitted to the committee, but was entirely new ground.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is the same subject, is it not?

Mr. BURROWS: No. He contended he was perfectly in order, and, with the Chairman's permission, he would proceed.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am of opinion that the whole question referring to the Cambooya election and the disappearance of certain papers and documents is to be discussed under this motion, and therefore the hon. member cannot anticipate the discussion by entering into it in committee.

Mr. BURROWS was not going to enter into that question at all. He was not going to speak about the disappearance of any documents at all. The documents that he was referring to did not disappear. He was not speaking of the electoral claims. They were now discussing the vote for the Principal Electoral Registrar, and under that vote he understood they could traverse election matters generally. The affidavits he wished to read had reference to certain disclosures which had recently been made, but had never been before the select committee. They dealt with the alteration of ballot-papers only. He simply wished to read the affidavits of men who were acting as scrutineers at the election to show that the election had not been conducted as it ought to have been conducted, and to show that sufficient care was not taken to prevent the violation of the secrecy of the ballot.

I remember the 18th day of March—

Mr. ANNEAR: You have ruled, Mr. Grimes—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already ruled that anything with reference to the Cambooya election cannot be discussed—that it is anticipating this motion which is upon the business-paper, and which has been placed there by the hon. member himself.

Mr. BURROWS: Well, he submitted under protest. He thought that the Chairman had been very harsh with him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BURROWS: He had attempted to do what he believed to be his duty, and the Chairman had ruled him out of order for some reason that was unintelligible to him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member objects to my ruling, he must move a motion to that effect, but he cannot question it otherwise.

Mr. BURROWS: Very well; he would have to submit, he supposed. He had not made any charge against any electoral registrar. He did not believe they were responsible for the striking off of names, or for attempting to deprive men of their electoral rights; but it appeared to him that the political organisations which were scattered all over the country had been very active in the matter, and that they exercised a very great influence over hon. members opposite—or, he should say, over those who were supposed to be entirely removed from political influence. He should expect the Home Secretary to give him a little light upon the statement he had made with respect to the Principal Electoral Registrar having exceeded his duty in preventing a certain man from voting at Charters Towers.

The HOME SECRETARY: The facts were not exactly as the hon. member had stated. The fact of the matter was that the man's name had already been removed from the roll under section 30E of the Elections Act, which was to this effect—

If it appears from the claim—

Now, the hon. member should remember that that would be the claim in regard to the Kennedy electorate—

that the claimant is registered in respect of the qualification of residence for some other electoral district, the electoral registrar shall, when the claim has been dealt with by the court, forthwith send notice of the fact to the returning officer or officers of the district or districts for which the claimant is so registered—

That was Charters Towers—

and also to the Principal Electoral Registrar. And the returning officer or officers shall forthwith erase the name of the claimant from the roll or rolls of such district or districts, and shall send him notice that his name has been so erased.

That had been done; and, therefore, his name was not on the Charters Towers roll.

Mr. BURROWS: His name was on, excuse me.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member did not understand it, apparently. Although his name was there in print, perhaps, on some unauthorised roll, on the returning officer's own roll—

Mr. BURROWS: It was on the returning officer's own roll, marked in red ink.

The HOME SECRETARY: Exactly—marked in red ink. It had been erased from the roll under section 30E. The thing was as simple as A B C. With regard to the question of expenses, he was sorry to say that Charters Towers had rather an unenviable notoriety. He thought that it was at the last general election that vouchers for a very considerable sum were sent in. He was speaking entirely from memory, but he knew that, compared with other places, the amount charged by the returning officer was very excessive. It was brought under his notice, and he asked for particulars. Amongst other things that appeared in the voucher was a lunch for forty people at 7s. 6d. a head. He did not know whether hon. members opposite thought that was a fair thing, but he did not. He then caused notice to be sent that, although the vouchers would be paid, as the money had already been spent, he gave a solemn warning to the persons concerned that nothing of the sort would be countenanced in

future, and that for any expenditure of that excessive character they would have to be responsible themselves.

Mr. ANNEAR: The same as other people.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, the same as other people; and it was possible that the vouchers were not fully paid this last time because of that warning.

Mr. BURROWS: I think the vouchers were all paid this time.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then they would not be next time, that was all.

Mr. BURROWS: But this time the scrutineers of the candidates had to pay their own expenses.

The HOME SECRETARY: That was all right.

Mr. BURROWS: The man they were speaking of, whose name had been removed from the roll, got on the Kennedy roll on 25th September, 1900. Now he remained on the Charters Towers roll after that. A notice might have been sent to his address at Charters Towers for all he knew while he was away, but after he came back he never got a notice, and his name continued to appear on the Charters Towers roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: He would not get notice; it is a consequence of his own act.

Mr. BURROWS: If that had been done immediately, or very soon after the man had left the district, he would not have been disqualified from voting when the election took place; but his name was allowed to remain on the roll until he claimed his vote. If it had been struck off on the 25th September, as it should have been, then, when he came to Charters Towers and noticed that his name was not on the roll, he could have had it put on again. The very last roll they got from the courthouse contained his name, and they were very much surprised that the roll of the returning officer had certain names marked out in red ink. The thing he complained of was that if the man's name had been struck off immediately he was on the Kennedy roll, he would have been able to make a fresh affidavit and have a vote, whereas, owing to some person not having done his duty, the man was debarred of his legal right.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member was perfectly right in saying that the name ought to have been removed from the roll immediately. But the Principal Electoral Registrar, who very carefully scrutinised all the rolls of the colony, discovered that a number of local electoral registrars had fallen into the habit of not marking off the roll men who had gone on to another roll under section 30E. That was no isolated instance; it was found generally throughout the colony. The Principal Electoral Registrar then directed the registrars to strike those names off then which ought to have been struck off long before.

Mr. DUNSFORD (*Charters Towers*): When the short amending Act was introduced in 1898, which brought into existence the new electoral department, they were given to understand that those grievances and charges which were brought before the Committee on the Estimates year after year would no longer exist. Not only did those grievances still exist, but the evil had been intensified.

The HOME SECRETARY: I deny that.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Charges such as they had spent the last four or five hours over had been more numerous than ever.

The HOME SECRETARY: Every one of them has been proved to be imaginary.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The Home Secretary had said that it was not specially the duty of the Principal Electoral Registrar to see that the rolls were in a proper state.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is as far as he can by checking one roll with another.

Mr. DUNSFORD was glad the hon. gentleman admitted that, because he had not at present seen where the responsibility rested for those grievances—

The HOME SECRETARY: What grievances?

Mr. DUNSFORD: The wholesale removal every year of citizens who were entitled to vote. That was a very important matter. They were no more justified in stealing a man's vote than in stealing his purse. Yet they had wholesale robbery of the rights of citizenship, evidently connived at by some officials of the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct.

Mr. DUNSFORD: He did not know, he had no proof; but there was the fact that in spite of the new department the grievances so often complained of were intensified. The late Sir James Dickson, when introducing that Bill, said he did so with the sole desire that the electoral roll should be maintained in an efficient manner, and that the duty of purging and keeping the rolls in a thoroughly efficient condition was of such vital importance that there should be a special officer to perform that duty. That was done. A special officer was appointed for that special purpose, and that purpose had failed.

The HOME SECRETARY: I deny that.

Mr. DUNSFORD: They had proof of it in the proceedings to-night.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is nothing in the grievances that have been mentioned to-night. They have all been answered.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Statements had been [9 30 p.m.] made, but it was very hard to produce proofs of them here.

The HOME SECRETARY: This is not a revision court.

Mr. BROWNE: The fact that there are 10,000 names marked dead, left, or disqualified, proves that rolls have not been kept in an efficient state.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is evidence that there has been a good deal of shifting about by electors.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The fact that there are 10,000 names on the existing rolls, some of which ought not to be there, was proof that the department had failed in attaining the object for which it was started.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; it proves its usefulness.

Mr. DUNSFORD: The late Premier, Mr. Dickson, further on said that the amending Bill was initiated to form an electoral department so that the rolls would be under the supervision of an officer who would be responsible to the Parliament of the day. That was what he (Mr. Dunsford) wanted. The Minister had asserted that the Principal Electoral Registrar was not responsible to Parliament.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; I said he was not responsible for the acceptances of claims and the giving of notices. He can only check them when information comes to him in returns.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Was the Principal Electoral Registrar responsible to Parliament?

The HOME SECRETARY: Certainly he is.

Mr. DUNSFORD: Yet, if these grievances were as numerous as they were made out to be, it was clear that the electoral registrar should give some reasons why these evils continued to exist. It appeared to him a very simple matter, when citizens had their full addresses given on the roll, to find out—with the whole police at their command—whether these citizens were still remaining in the electoral district for which they were on the roll. But when they found that prominent citizens in the district—living in the same homes and following the same occupations that they had followed for years, and who were entitled to remain on the rolls—had their names struck

off the rolls, it was marvellous. If there had only been a few cases instanced, it showed, to say the least of it, that there had been some carelessness. Were they to have all these grievances trotted out every year? They knew that there were grounds for these grievances, or they would not be brought up. They had not heard such a lot of grievances in other departments, although they occasionally heard some; but here they had such a lot of them. When they were voting £1,125 to this department, they should see some good results or they should not continue the department. Up to the present he could not see how the public had benefited under the present electoral law. Even the electoral registrars complained about getting orders from all quarters.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; that is not so.

Mr. DUNSFORD: He would not dwell any further on the matter, as it had been pretty well threshed out. He would merely say that there had been three sets of causes of complaint. The opposite side had complained that unions to which his party were attached had used their best endeavours to get men on the roll. That was the charge made against his side, and he pleaded guilty to it, because they were perfectly justified in using every reasonable means to assist citizens in obtaining their just dues—their certificates of citizenship. Other charges had been made that certain associations had been trying to knock men off the roll. If associations were formed for a good object, and they attained that object, that would be very good. But they saw that some of these associations had paid officials, who sent certain lists to electoral registrars, and in many cases these registrars acted on them without full inquiry. Many of these thousands of men who were marked "dead," "left," or "disqualified," were still entitled to have their names on the rolls. A very small percentage of them should be removed from the rolls. It was a very wrong thing that any association should be allowed to dictate to the Principal Electoral Registrar, who was responsible for those under him. He thought a very good case had been made out against the electoral department and the Minister.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) thought the Committee would pretty well agree that when a man had no qualification his name should not be on the roll, and that when a man had a qualification for a number of years and had not moved out of his house for twenty or thirty years he had good reason for complaining when he saw his name in the daily or weekly Press as being marked as having left his residence or otherwise become disqualified. The fact of the matter was that in the Valley electorate there had been 600 names knocked off the roll.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not knocked off.

Mr. McDONNELL: Practically knocked off.

The HOME SECRETARY: They have received notice.

Mr. McDONNELL: Their names had been published, and if they did not reply to show their qualifications, their names would be removed from the roll; but why should men be put to all this trouble, and treated with such unfairness, if there was no reason for their names being removed from the roll?

The HOME SECRETARY: Can you say how many of these men are entitled to be on the roll?

Mr. McDONNELL: The Home Secretary could find out, if he inquired at the Principal Registrar's office, that in the Valley electorate a number of persons had been marked as dead, left, or disqualified, who had lived there for a number of years, and still lived there.

The HOME SECRETARY: How many?

Mr. McDONNELL: A good many. A good many of these men do not hold the same politics as he did.

The HOME SECRETARY: A large proportion of them, I should think.

Mr. McDONNELL: A great proportion—75 per cent., he believed—of the names appearing on that list were the names of men who generally voted on the Labour side in politics. He held in his hand the names of a number of men who had been marked as "left" or "disqualified," and who had never left their premises in the electorate. He knew one man—his colleague also knew his name—who had lived in Harcourt street for thirty years, and had never left the place during the whole of that time, and yet he was marked as having "left."

Mr. McMASTER: I know one who has been thirty years in the Valley and is marked as "dead."

Mr. McDONNELL: That was worse. The electoral registrar had received notice from the man to whom he referred. He did not wish to attribute any partiality to the electoral registrar. He believed that those officers were desirous of doing their work in a fair and impartial manner, but he took exception to their being supplied with information that was not verified. He knew that the Act did not compel electoral registrars to have such information verified, and in that respect it was very faulty. There was in the Valley a National Liberal Association, an association similar to the "Political Ass.," and it was a well-known fact that an officer of that association was very busy going round the Valley finding out the opinions of as many electors as he could. This man had been supplying lists to the electoral registrar, and he did not blame him in one sense, because he had to show his association that he was doing something for his money, and he had shown that by the large list which had been published in the newspapers.

Mr. McMASTER: He is not responsible for that.

Mr. McDONNELL: He was very largely responsible for it.

Mr. McMASTER: You know different to that.

Mr. McDONNELL: He did not know different. The Labour organisation in the Valley had undoubtedly put a good many names on the roll during the last twelve months—he had attested a good many claims himself—but they did that irrespective of the political opinions of the applicants. They had never refused to put any man's name on the roll if he was entitled to the franchise. He did not believe that 1 per cent. of the names they had put on the roll had been rejected at the revision courts. The unfortunate thing was that an association like the National Liberal Association was wilfully removing names from the roll by furnishing the electoral registrars with false and misleading information. The electoral registrars were not responsible, except to the extent that they accepted information from such organisations believing it to be reliable. If this discussion had no other effect than to show electoral registrars that they could not rely on the information supplied to them it would have done some good. Should the Electoral Reform Bill, which was on the paper, be passed this session, provision would have to be made to alter the present unsatisfactory state of affairs in this connection. The Government and the Home Secretary must recognise that at the present time the Act is most unfair, and the machinery is not what it should be to deal with electoral rolls in a fair and impartial manner. Electoral registrars were imposed upon by unscrupulous persons, who desired to see the names of certain people removed from the rolls. It had been said that members on that side filled up claims, and he did

not deny it. If a man had a qualification, every effort should be made to assist him in getting his name on the roll, no matter how he might vote at an election; but so far as knocking names off the roll, he did not know of any information being supplied by the Labour organisation in Fortitude Valley to the electoral registrar with a view of getting names struck off the roll, except in a few cases where men had a property qualification and had become insolvent, and in a few cases where it was a well-known fact the men had left the district for a number of years. If the Home Secretary would make inquiries into the matter, he would find that the Labour organisations, not only in Brisbane, but right throughout Queensland, stood in exactly the same position in that respect as the organisation in Fortitude Valley. They had opened a room in Fortitude Valley every Friday and Saturday night, and any man who wished could go there and see the list that had been published showing the names of those electors who were marked as left or disqualified, and, if he was legally entitled to be enrolled, steps would be taken to have his name retained. He (Mr. McDonnell) had attended there on two Friday and three Saturday nights, when a number of men had called in a great rage, because—though they had lived in the same place for a number of years—some busybodies employed by the "Political Ass" had put them to the inconvenience of having again to prove their qualification. A number of these men did not take the newspaper and scan every name in the list, and unless some neighbours who were more of politicians, and who read the newspapers more closely, pointed out that their names were included in the list, they would be knocked off the roll when the time for revision arrived. He thought, in view of what had occurred in the past, that the electoral registrars should be more careful in the matter of accepting information.

Mr. ANNEAR: No doubt the hon. member would like the Committee to think that members on his side were the quintessence of innocence as regarded political affairs. The political association of which he (Mr. Annear) was proud to be a member was evidently waking up hon. members opposite, and he did not think the time had been wasted in discussing this important matter. Hon. members opposite took exception to the great number of names that had been advertised, thus giving people an opportunity—if they were qualified—of having their names retained on the roll.

Mr. McDONNELL: Do you justify men being knocked off the roll when they are qualified?

Mr. ANNEAR: He would come to that by and by. He knew something about that little room in the Valley where they met on Friday and Saturday evenings. He had been informed that when the Hon. J. Ferguson was a candidate for the Senate of the Commonwealth, his agent in Rockhampton sent a circular to every elector in the colony.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. ANNEAR: Perhaps the hon. member might be one of the 12,000 who could not be found—because he was informed that 12,000 circulars were returned through the dead-letter office; and that was a greater proportion than the names that had been advertised in the papers. The hon. member for Cairns made a statement with which he entirely agreed, when he said it was their duty to see that every man who was qualified should have his name put on the roll. It seemed that he had raised a hornet's nest about his head by referring to what had taken place at Gladstone. But he objected to roll-stuffing—he objected to men who were not qualified having their names placed on the roll.

He would now reply to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McDonnell. He lived in Fortitude Valley; and there was a gentleman who lived in his house and a man who worked for him. They both applied to have their names put on the Valley roll, and I believe they went to a little room, of which the senior member for the Valley spoke—of course they went to the wrong shop to have their names put on. But they got their claims filled up, and then it was shown that they resided at his house. At the same time four others went to have their claims filled in. Of course his two friends thought they were qualified to vote for the constitutional candidate at the last election, and they saw two out of the four who had their claims filled in the same night go in and record their votes, but they were told that their names were not on the roll, and therefore they could not vote. That showed the necessity there was for this organisation, which was doing such good work—that enabled men who believed in the Constitution and good government to have their names put on the roll. When the persons representing the party opposite in that little room knew that his two friends could not have their names put on the roll in time to record their votes at the election, those two claims were sent to the electoral registrar. His two friends came to him after the election and said they were surprised at not being able to record their votes, and asked what they should do. He advised them to send in two fresh claims. They did so, and they were both informed, in reply, that their claims had already been received. He thought that was a bit of sharp practice.

Mr. McMASTER: That is only one out of many.

Mr. ANNEAR: Of course, they had heard a great deal about the newspapers; and members on the Government side had been called hirelings of the *Brisbane Courier* and other organs. He had the pleasure of being supported by the *Courier* during the federal campaign, and he considered it a great compliment to be supported by such an able paper—a paper that represented the true interests of the country. The hon.

member for Gympie made what he [10 p.m.] thought a very plausible speech.

He said he went to Gladstone because no other magistrates were to be found to attest the claims of the men working on the railway. Why, justices of the peace were as thick as peas in Gladstone. The two contractors were justices, and there were also one or two living along the route of the railway. But, no! The trip of the hon. member was organised, because the hon. member for Port Curtis dared to assert his independence as a man and vote in accordance with his conscience.

Mr. TURLEY: Bunkum!

Mr. ANNEAR: It was no use telling him it was bunkum. The campaign had commenced, and even his worthy friend the member for Wide Bay was to be ousted. He had always made it a rule never to go into any man's electorate to interfere with, abuse, or traduce him. Anything he had to say to a man he said it to his face.

Mr. KERR: Shake them up!

Mr. ANNEAR: No doubt hon. members opposite were being shaken up to some tune. The Liberal Association, which upheld the Constitution, was doing good work throughout Queensland, and would continue to do good work which would counteract such work as that which his friends in Fortitude Valley complained about.

Mr. McDONNELL: The hon. member for Maryborough had made a statement which he would like to characterise outside in pretty plain

language. He did not care who the hon. member's two friends were, they had told him a deliberate and wilful lie. He challenged the hon. member to prove a single case in which a man had had his claim filled up by the organisation in Fortitude Valley, and that claim had been withheld.

Mr. ANNEAR: Will you give £10 to the hospital if I prove it?

Mr. McDONNELL: He had no hesitation in saying that in no case in which a claim had been filled up had the political opinions of the person filling it up been inquired into.

The HOME SECRETARY: How was it they did not get on the roll?

Mr. McDONNELL: The statement of the hon. member was that two persons whose claims were filled up by the Valley Workers' Organisation had had those claims held back, while the names of others who filled in claims at the same time had appeared on the roll. He had no hesitation in saying that that was a deliberate lie, and he challenged the hon. member to prove it in any way he chose. He had not £10 to give to the Brisbane Hospital, particularly at the present time, but he was prepared to hand half that amount over and give it as much publicity as possible, if the statement that the hon. gentleman had made proved to be a true statement.

Mr. ANNEAR: All right; I will accept that.

Mr. McDONNELL: He had watched this thing so long in Fortitude Valley that he believed the men who were working in connection with filling in claims there were incapable of doing so mean or contemptible an action. He felt satisfied of that, and, knowing as he did the men who had been doing that work, he could say that not in one single instance had a man's political views been questioned. He and his late colleague, Mr. Higgs, had sent in a lot of claims, and he was proud of it. They had been able to place a lot of men on the roll, and the fact that not 1 per cent. had been rejected at the revision court was sufficient evidence that those whose claims were filled in were entitled to vote. He thought, if inquiries were made, and if the electoral roll could be analysed, it would be found that a very large percentage of the claims filled in by the Valley Workers' Organisation were the claims of persons who held exactly opposite opinions to those held by themselves. He would say again that the statement made to the hon. member for Maryborough by his two friends, and he affirmed it standing on the floor of that House, was a deliberate and wilful lie.

Mr. ANNEAR: You may tell those two gentlemen that.

Mr. McMASTER (*Fortitude Valley*): It appeared to him that hon. members on the other side had been struck very hard, and seemed to feel very sore. He regretted that the leader of the Opposition was not in his place, because he had opened the ball and fired the first shot. That hon. gentleman had commenced by giving a very good advertisement to the Liberal Association that had recently been formed in Brisbane; he had read its rules, and he (Mr. McMASTER) thought he did it a kindness. He was not quite sure that the leader of the Opposition intended the kindness, but he had given that association a good advertisement, which would all appear in *Hansard*. It appeared to him that hon. members opposite were very sorry and angry at the idea of an association being formed in order to combat their tactics. It was well known that they had an association or organisation for the purpose of stuffing the rolls for years past, and in self-defence the people were now beginning to see that it was necessary that they should organise on the other side. The

hon. member, the leader of the Opposition, stated that these rules had not been in force during the Valley election.

Mr. GIVENS: You defied the rules of your organisation.

Mr. McMASTER: He did not belong to it. (Laughter.) The hon. member said that if these rules had been in existence at the time of the Valley election, he (Mr. McMASTER) would have been looked upon as a blackleg. He might inform the hon. member that that association had nothing whatever to do with the Fortitude Valley electorate; they had not interfered with it in any shape or form. They had an association of their own in the Valley. The other association had a rule which provided that there should be a branch of its organisation in all the electorates except Fortitude Valley. However, they had already commenced an association to combat the organisation on the other side. His colleague said that that organisation only sought to put on the roll parties who were eligible to be placed on the roll. He (Mr. McMASTER) had to refuse to attest a claim of a young man who was endeavouring to be put on the roll of another electorate, because he could see that the young man was not of age and ought not to be on the roll. The brother of the young man was with him, and when he (Mr. McMASTER) said that he was too young to be on the roll, he said he had as much right to be on this other roll as he had to be on the roll of the Fortitude Valley. He (Mr. McMASTER) said he was not on the roll, but on turning it up he found that he was. He then said, "You are not twenty years of age," and the young man replied "No, I shall be nineteen on my next birthday." He (Mr. McMASTER) asked how his name got to be on the roll, and he got the reply that it was done at a meeting on a lorry at the corner of Ivory street. But he would not attest the claim, and this was only one of many cases of persons who were on the roll, and who ought not to be there.

Mr. McDONNELL: How long ago is that?

Mr. McMASTER: Two or three years ago.

Mr. KERR: Oh, that is ancient history.

Mr. McMASTER: If it was ancient history it was history which was being repeated every day. They had only to go down Wickham street or Brunswick street on a Friday or Saturday evening and they would hear young men who were getting close to twenty years of age being asked if their names were on the rolls, and if they said "No," they were told that if they would go into the office it would be put on for them. That system had been going on for years, and it was time that members of the Constitutional party woke up and tried to protect their own interests. The other side had had such a long lease of packing the rolls, that they felt annoyed when a move was made to purify the rolls, and get the names taken off that ought not to be there. He agreed with his colleague that a good many names were advertised as dead, disqualified, or left, which ought not to be. His colleague, and some other hon. members, said they did not lay any complaints or give any information to the registrar or his officers. But he knew that they did. He knew that they took information in. His colleague knew that there was one man particularly who went round the Valley doing nothing but cadging for names; and if a man left, or if he was marked as being a Government supporter, or even if he moved simply across to the other side of the street, he was marked as having left the electorate. He did not blame the registrar if he did not make a full inquiry. So far as the registrar knew the man might have left. He thought the Home Secretary should allow the registrar more

help, so that he could make proper inquiries before he struck off any name from the roll. He was afraid the hon. gentleman was rather starving the department, in not giving it facilities for making inquiries. He decidedly objected to the list of names being advertised left, disqualified, or dead, before the notices were sent out to ascertain whether they had left, become disqualified, or had died. As it was, the list was advertised first, and the notice went out afterwards. To his mind that was wrong, and he did not think it was the intention of the law. He thought the intention of the law was that the notices should be sent out first to ascertain whether the information that the officer had received was correct or otherwise, and if he found it was not, or if he could not find out he could advertise the names.

Mr. J. HAMILTON: I think that is not done.

Mr. McMASTER: It was not done in the Valley. The list was published ten or twelve days before the notices were sent out. He thought this was due to the fact that the registrar had not sufficient assistance to carry out the duties of his office. In populous districts where the electoral roll was very large such as in the Valley—where there were nearly 4,000 names—North Brisbane, and Charters Towers, a man ought to be constantly employed in collecting information for the registrar as to the correctness or otherwise of the reports he had in his office. With regard to what had been said by the hon. member for Maryborough, he could only say that an old man came to him on the day of the election in the Valley; he seemed to be rather angry and he wanted to know how it was that his name was not on the roll. He (Mr. McMaster) said he supposed it was because he had neglected to put his name on in time. The man then made this statement:—"I took my own name and several others into an office"—he did not ask him at the time what office he took them into, but he made the statement that there were four others there at the same time getting their claims filled up, and he wanted to know how those young men were allowed to vote when their claims were filled up the same night as his. He had no doubt that, if he had been allowed to vote, he (Mr. McMaster) would have got his vote. A week or two after he met the other young man, and he put the question to him direct, "Where did you take your claim?" He said, "I took it to the office that was in the building opposite the hotel in Leichhardt street." That hotel had been known to him for many years as Donovan's. It was in the new buildings which had been put up, and which were known as Edwards's Buildings, and that was where the league of which his colleague spoke had its office previous to the Valley election. He also questioned the young man, "Did you take your claim yourself?" And he said "Yes." "Was there anybody else there?" "Yes." He named two out of the four that were there. He then asked him, "In your claim, did you say where you lived?" "Yes." "Where did you state?" "My residence was with Mr. Annear, Harcourt street." Whether the hon. member for Maryborough was correct or not, those were the two statements that were made to him—the one on the day of the election, and the other a week or two after. It was, therefore, now between his colleague and the hon. member for Maryborough. He hoped the hospital would get the £25, because it would mean £15 to their funds. He regretted to hear how kind the Government were to their enemies, and how shabbily they treated their friends. The cat had been let out of the bag to-night by the hon. member for Charters Towers. It appeared that the Government had paid for a luncheon at Charters Towers to over forty people,

at 7s. 6d. a head. He presumed that was for the candidates and their scrutineers. Well, he had been electi-neering for a great many years, and he had never got a penny from the Government to buy a glass of beer for a scrutineer of his. He had always to provide lunch for his own scrutineers, and he had been a fair supporter of the Government for many years. And yet they were told that the Northern people could eat and drink just as much as they chose on the day of the election at the Government expense.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not the Northern people. We do not get that in other parts of the North.

Mr. McMASTER: No wonder they laughed at the Government. If they lived to see the next election, Southern members could justly put in a claim to the Treasury to pay for luncheons for their scrutineers and assistants. A great deal had been said about the supplementary rolls not being in time for the elections at Gympie and Rockhampton North, and they had got a great deal of information. He was sure that the Home Secretary himself had got a good deal of information regarding the way in which the Principal Electoral Registrar and the printing office did their work.

Mr. REID: I never said anything about the Principal Electoral Registrar. I said what the returning officer at Gympie had done.

Mr. McMASTER: He believed the hon. member for Enoggera knew more about the working of those offices than any other member, and he hoped that the officers would give them all the same information; but they had not all got the cheek of the hon. member to go and fossick round those offices. He regretted—and he thought that the Government must also regret—that the supplementary rolls had not been ready in time for the elections at Gympie and Rockhampton North. The organisation in Fortitude Valley and the Trades Hall people prevented the late member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Higgs, resigning until the supplementary roll was made up. Mr. Higgs publicly stated in Fortitude Valley that he did not intend to resign until the names that had been corruptly struck off were restored, but, as names could only be struck off at the annual revision court in November, no names could have been struck off at that time. Of course he understood what that meant. It meant that Mr. Higgs did not resign until the supplementary roll was ready, because they were adding a large number of names to the roll. Now, had the supplementary rolls been ready for use at Gympie and Rockhampton North, the same thing might have happened there as happened in Fortitude Valley.

Mr. REID: No fear; they are more intelligent up there.

Mr. McMASTER: The other side held the seat until those names were on the roll, and until they got £40 of the State's money in order to fight McMaster; and yet, when the poll was declared, the Labour party got a nasty kick. They "lost their bus," and they had not got over it yet. Instead of holding back the other rolls, therefore, it would have been much better if the Government had sent them on. They did not expect what was going to happen [10.30 p.m.] in the Valley, because the leader of the Opposition had said at a public meeting some time before the election that the Government were not game to bring forward a straight-out candidate, that all the candidates were afraid to say they supported the Government; they came out as independents. He did not give any uncertain sound.

Mr. BROWNE: You were the only one who came out straight.

Mr. McMASTER: Hon. members on the other side felt very sore. They had been hit very hard; they had been tested at every point; they had raised a storm which they were unable to quell. In the Valley list he might particularly mention two cases. One was put down as dead whom he had known for thirty years, and was still very much alive, and residing where he had lived for the last twenty years. The other, who was marked as having left, had not changed his residence since 1893. That man's name was published, and he did not get his notice until ten days afterwards. He hoped that state of things would be remedied.

Mr. TURLEY (*Brisbane South*) said the hon. member for the Valley had just stated that the Labour party were hard hit. All they had to complain of was that the administration of the electoral laws was to some extent being made subservient to the wishes of a number of persons who had registered themselves in an organisation of which he believed the Premier was the head. And in that they were backed up by the hon. member who had just resumed his seat, who said that the matter brought forward by the leader of the Labour party was perfectly right, and that numbers of people had been objected to who were not dead, or who had not left the electorate. They knew perfectly well what had been going on for years. They knew that the name of the late Mr. Bulcock stank in the nostrils of the people of Queensland.

MEMBERS on the Government side: No no!
MEMBERS of the Opposition: Yes, yes!

Mr. TURLEY: "Bulcocking the roll" was a familiar term, and why? Because he did everything he possibly could to deprive those of another way of thinking from himself and the party behind him of the rights of citizenship; and for doing that dirty work he was sent to another place and made an M.L.C.

Mr. ANNEAR: If you live as honourable a life as Mr. Bulcock, you will have nothing to be ashamed of.

Mr. TURLEY: Yes; he also might be raised to the dignity of a member of the Legislative Council. It was amusing to hear the hon. member for Maryborough talking about his "friend" the hon. member for Wide Bay, when only last week he was charging him with corruption in connection with an election. The hon. member objected to any member going into another electorate to hold meetings.

Mr. ANNEAR: I do not object to you going to Maryborough next Saturday.

Mr. TURLEY: He was going to Maryborough next Saturday to hold a meeting, and intended to sign all the electoral claims with which he was satisfied.

Mr. ANNEAR: Can you make an inquiry into 100 claims in an hour and a-half?

Mr. TURLEY: According to the Act he could. The Act stated that the person witnessing the claim must satisfy himself from inquiry from the person whose claim was being filled in or otherwise.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: "Or otherwise."

Mr. TURLEY: It distinctly stated that so long as he got the information from the person filling in the claim he was complying with the law.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is enough to condemn you.

Mr. TURLEY: It was not. That was the law distinctly. However else could a man get a

claim filled in? They knew that for years past the only men who had their names put on the commission of the peace were men of a certain colour.

The HOME SECRETARY: No, that is not true.

Mr. TURLEY: The reason why the electoral law of 1892 was brought in was because it was recognised by the party then in power that no man would be able to get his name on the roll unless a magistrate chose to attest his claim. In hundreds of cases magistrates had distinctly refused to witness claims of people who were entitled to be on the rolls; and after a great deal of agitation, had not the electoral law been altered, and were not a few civil servants added to the commission of the peace in order to enable persons to get their claims attested? A great majority of civil servants did not care about attesting these claims; they made excuses and asked the claimant to go to someone else. Those public officials were afraid of being victimised if they witnessed any claim for the Labour party. He knew that the hon. member for Barcoo recommended as honest and straightforward a man as ever stood in the colony to be placed on the commission of the peace, and his name had been kept off time after time because he was supposed to be a supporter of the Labour party. Whenever men were recommended to be put on the commission of the peace inquiries were made, and, if it was believed that they were supporters of the Labour party, their names were left off. That was the usual practice. The list was stuffed every time with the names of men of a certain colour for political reasons.

The PREMIER: How did you get on?

Mr. TURLEY: Because he was a member of Parliament, and that had been stated by the Home Secretary. Take the case of the late hon. member for Woothakata. Since he had left the House his name had been taken off the commission of the peace, and yet he is still the same straightforward and honourable man that he was when he was in the House. Why had his name been scratched off the list? Simply because he was believed to be a man who was in sympathy with the Labour movement.

The HOME SECRETARY: No. There was another object.

Mr. GIVENS: What was it?

The HOME SECRETARY: I will tell you presently.

Mr. TURLEY: He was clerk of a divisional board; but there were many clerks of divisional boards and clerks of municipalities whose names were on the commission of the peace. Such an excuse was a very flimsy one. The objection was that he was in sympathy with the Labour movement. With regard to the hon. member for Gympie going up to near Gladstone and attesting certain claims, he could quite conceive that if that hon. member had held a meeting, a large number of people would take advantage of his being there, to get him to attest their claims. Men had gone from different parts of Central Queensland, who had their names on other rolls before, and after they had been there some time they wished to get their names on that roll. And yet hon. members opposite objected to that, because they thought they had not the right earmark. When men shifted from one place to another, hon. members opposite thought that everything should be done, whether honest or straightforward or not, to try and prevent them getting on rolls. They said that it was a matter of taste for a member of Parliament to attest claims in his own electorate. There was no question of taste in the matter at all; it was the

duity of the hon. member, after he had made full inquiry and was satisfied, to attest a claim. What had taken place in the electorate of the hon. member for Bulloo? Men there had been eched out of votes, and that matter had been brought up in the House time and again. The hon. gentleman attempted to defend that by stating that they had moved from one place to another in the district, or some other such flimsy excuse. As a matter of fact, hon. members opposite had endeavoured whenever possible to put every obstacle in the way of men being registered. The only reason why the question had been brought up this evening was that the administration of a department of the State was being made subservient to an organisation which had for its object the maintenance in office of the present Ministry, so that they might be able to carry on the class legislation which had been characteristic of Queensland for a number of years past.

The HOME SECRETARY thought that hon. members had had a very fair innings. The grievances which had been specifically referred to by hon. members opposite had been fully met. A lot of general statements had been made which it was impossible to meet. A number of grievances had also been propounded by members on that side of the Chamber in regard to the alleged misdoings of hon. members opposite and their friends and supporters which he thought had not been satisfactorily met. However, that was a matter of opinion. Hon. members opposite would, of course, plume themselves on having given an unanswerable reply to everything brought against them. At any rate, they had had a very fair innings as far as talking was concerned, and he would now ask them to allow the question to go to a vote.

Mr. BROWNE objected to the statement that there had simply been an interchange of grievances on both sides, and that they were all satisfied.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not say that everyone was satisfied. I said each was satisfied with himself.

Mr. BROWNE: When he brought this matter up this afternoon he had no idea that it would lead to so much recrimination. He distinctly stated that there were between 10,000 and 11,000 electors whose names were advertised as objected to, and that he wanted to know the reason for that, and who was responsible for those objections. The junior member for Fortitude Valley, and other hon. members, had agreed that there were a number of men objected to who it was well known were entitled to have their names retained on the roll. Another reason why he brought the matter forward was that the Government were crying out at the present time for economy in every shape and form, and that if any request was made to them for a few shillings for an old man they said they had no money to spend.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where was any such statement made?

Mr. BROWNE: He would give the hon. gentleman a fact. He was informed that the unfortunate old men and women down at Dunwich who were doing the work of wardsmen and wardswomen, for which they had in the past received a few shillings and 3 oz. of whisky a week, had had that allowance stopped.

The HOME SECRETARY: You might reserve that until the time comes for its discussion.

Mr. BROWNE: The hon. gentleman had asked him to give an instance, and he had done so. But now, coming back to the question, he would point out that when the Government were

studying economy in every way, whoever was in charge of the electoral department was not helping the Government by filling the newspapers all over the colony with the names of electors whose qualifications had no right to be challenged, as the taxpayers would have to pay the bills for those advertisements. It was immaterial which side objected to the names which were advertised; but he believed that organisations on his side had had very little to do with regard to knocking those names off the roll.

Mr. McMASTER: Yes, they have.

Mr. BROWNE: Well, even if that was the case, he would say that no matter which side was responsible for what had taken place the electoral registrars should be perfectly untrammelled in their action. The Home Secretary had admitted that they wanted more help in the office of the Principal Electoral Registrar, and the junior member for Fortitude Valley had emphasised that statement. All he could say was that if the electoral registrar was so busy, and he received a list of 200 or 300 names, as those gentlemen forming that association boasted in a circular they had supplied, the chances were that he would not trouble to go through them. Why should those persons whose qualification remained unchanged have again to prove their claims? It was unfair to the electors, unfair to the country, and unfair to the electoral department that such influence as he had indicated should be brought to bear in the matter. So far they had had no answer to that objection.

With regard to what the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, said about [11 p.m.] justices of the peace, he might say that the first time it was proposed to put him on the commission of the peace he refused; and he took the position eventually because he thought it was the duty of every man who was a magistrate to do all he possibly could to get men on the roll. He had done that in his electorate, especially in the outlying parts; and so long as he was on the commission of the peace he intended to do so. He had been invited to pay a visit to Maryborough next Saturday, and he could assure the hon. member that if there were any persons there who had been unable to get on the roll, and could show their *bona fides* to him, he would be proud to witness their claims. So far as the claim forms were concerned, he had experienced the difficulty in outlying parts of the colony of getting claim forms, and whenever he travelled now he took claim forms with him. He helped fill in the claims, and if the parties satisfied him of their *bona fides*, he witnessed their signatures. If that was not consistent with the duty of a magistrate, and the Home Secretary thought so, the hon. gentleman was at liberty to remove his name from the commission of the peace any moment he liked.

Question put and passed.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): It was the unanimous wish of parties outside that he should ask the Chief Secretary if it was his intention to bring in the amendment to the Shop and Factories Act this week, or whether he would do so at the earliest opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not in order for the hon. member to raise that question on this motion.

Question put and passed; and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 11 o'clock.