

The Attorney-General pointed out that the Inspector of Insurance, whose opinion must be considered by the Government, recommended a three-years' system. Mr. Whitney objected to the House accepting the ipse dixit of the Inspector of Insurance.

Hon. Mr. Harcourt protested against tinkering with the insurance legislation when it was not shown to be necessary.

Mr. Foy said that if the Attorney-General had faith in his own arguments he would move to reduce the life of the policies from four to three years. If insurance companies wished to insure for five years, why should they not be allowed to do so, seeing that they were the best judges of the conduct of their own business.

The House then divided, when the second reading was defeated by a vote of 39 for to 44 against. Mr. Conmee voted with the Opposition.

#### Mr. Whitney's Election Bill.

Mr. Whitney moved the second reading of a bill to amend the election act. The bill requires deputy returning officers to be residents of the polling subdivision in which they are acting, provides that the ballot papers must be supplied by the Queen's Printer, abolishes the numbered ballot, prohibits certificates to agents to vote in polling subdivisions other than their own, requires the returning officer to furnish a certificate of the state of the poll at the close of the voting to each candidate or two electors, punishes with six months' imprisonment at hard labor, in addition to a fine of \$200, persons guilty of bribery or receiving bribes, or of undue influence, or of personation, provides imprisonment for three months for any man voting more than once, enables election Judges when corrupt practices have been proven to direct the Crown Attorney to prosecute and to have associated with him a solicitor or counsel to be named by petitioners' counsel, provides imprisonment for six months, in addition to a fine of \$2,000, upon persons guilty of destroying ballots. Mr. Whitney spoke in support of his bill, and explained the leading features. He said the Government also had a bill to amend the election law, but there was no reason why the two measures should not be considered together. If that were not done it would be because partisan motives influenced the Government to a contrary course.

#### The Attorney-General's View.

Hon. Mr. Gibson reminded the House that the Government had a bill in preparation contemplating amendments to the election law. As a result of the discussion on the two bills he believed the law would be much improved. While there were some points in Mr. Whitney's bill which the Government approved, there were many others which they did not regard with favor. Mr. Whitney posed as a purist in introducing a bill providing for heavier penalties for electoral corruption. The Attorney-General recalled that in his youth and inexperience he himself had entered the House as a temperance legislator. (Opposition laughter.) He had thought it easy to secure the absolute observance of the liquor law by

doubling or trebling the penalty, but the House thought differently, and experience proved his ideas to be incorrect. Mr. Whitney appeared to be an inexperienced man in reference to the election law. It was not by putting on impracticable penalties that the law was improved. The Attorney-General regarded the fine of \$200 and six months' imprisonment as an absurd punishment for many of the poor, miserable wretches who accepted a dollar or two for their votes, and who probably never even held one-twentieth of that amount in their own possession. Intimidation, on the other hand, was a crime for which the penalty should, in the Judge's discretion, be quite severe. The two offences should not be placed in the same category. It was preposterous that a man to whom a small amount, partly to help him and partly to influence his vote, be given should stand side by side with the man who bought up votes wholesale. In some of the recent prosecutions there had been cases of extreme hardship, because the Judges had no room for discretion.

Mr. Whitney—That is an argument against the present law.

Mr. Gibson—Yes, I am arguing against the present law. Continuing, the Attorney-General said he did not think we could impose too severe punishment upon those who deliberately interfered with the working of the election machinery. He proposed that Mr. Whitney's bill and the one to be introduced by the Government be considered together in committee, when the House could choose between what was offered.

#### Police Commissioners.

Mr. Jessop's bill to add two Aldermen to the Board of Police Commissioners in towns and cities, thus placing the control of the board in the hands of the municipal Council, was termed by the Attorney-General a retrograde measure which would convert the police force in each case into an electioneering body. The present law was giving satisfaction and should not be disturbed.

The motion for second reading was declared lost on division.

#### Police Magistrates.

Mr. Fox's bill to give municipal Councils the power to fix the salaries of Police Magistrates also fell by the way-side, the Attorney-General holding that men fulfilling such important and responsible duties should not be dependent upon municipal bodies for their salaries.

#### Simplifying the Act.

Mr. Graham's bill to simplify and render more explicit the Conmee law, under which municipalities are allowed to take over electric light and gas plants, received a second reading.

#### Permanent Pavements.

A second reading was given to Mr. Malcolm's bill putting villages in the same position as towns in the matter of laying permanent sidewalks.

#### Issue of Liquor Licenses.

Mr. Lucas made his bill, permitting a voter in any municipality to object to the issue of a license illegally, the