

agents' lists are completed, they are forwarded by the proper officials to the Commonwealth electoral officer whose duty it is now to so file these cards of application for enrolment or transfer in such a manner that at any given time there may be a complete list of all the electors within the Commonwealth Federal division. The card index, I am informed, is kept up to date. Every registrar must send in the claim cards to the Commonwealth electoral officer after they have been properly dealt with by himself.

The chief electoral officer remarks concerning this system that it provides a unique directory of the adult inhabitants of the state, which provides a most valuable source of reference for many and varied purposes.

I might say that this official also tells me that the system has been in force now for about twelve years—I think it is—since 1924, and that there is not the slightest discontent with it. In fact, not only political organizations, candidates and members but the populace generally are quite satisfied with it.

Mr. HEAPS: Have you any idea of the cost?

WITNESS: I will give that later. The chief electoral officer informs me that in administering the compulsory provisions of the law, every effort is made to avoid harshness. A notice reminding the public that registration is compulsory is kept in all post offices, and other officials make it their constant business to see that every person is registered. Notwithstanding that, about 25,000 persons are fined annually for failure to register.

The CHAIRMAN: How many?

WITNESS: 25,000. When it is disclosed that a person has failed to register, a notification is sent to him by the divisional returning officer. The defaulter is asked to explain, and may consent to be dealt with by the Commonwealth electoral officer, thus avoiding proceedings in the ordinary courts.

Mr. TURGEON: Will you read that again?

WITNESS: He may consent to be dealt with by the officer who asked him to explain.

The CHAIRMAN: That will mean a fine by that officer, will it?

WITNESS: Yes. He goes on to say what happens. I am informed that as a general rule defaulters agree to this—thus saving costs. The penalty usually imposed is 2 shillings 6 pence except in case of aggravated continuous default, when the full statutory penalty may be imposed. Where even the payment of 2 shillings 6 pence would involve hardship, no penalty is imposed.

The chief electoral officer continues:—

The aim of the Commonwealth is to keep the registration of electors constantly and continuously up to date, so that whenever an election or referendum eventuates a thoroughly and complete roll of those entitled to vote is immediately available.

With regard to the question asked by Mr. Heaps a moment ago as to cost, if it is convenient to the committee I will refer to that later under the subject "compulsory voting," because the cost of registration as distinct from the cost of voting has not been given to me. I have only the total cost of both registration and voting.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. Have you a comparison as between Canada and Australia?—A. Yes. I will be able to give you that.