

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 1867

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 8 November, 1867.

Letter Carrier, Warwick.—Letter Carrier, Dalby.—Ladies' Benevolent Society, Ipswich.

LETTER CARRIER, WARWICK.

Mr. CLARK moved—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is not advisable to deprive the inhabitants of Warwick of the services of the letter carrier at present employed in that town.

He said he would not trouble the House with saying much on the subject, as it had been already debated. He would simply do his duty by mentioning certain circumstances, on which honorable members had been mistaken. He believed the whole of the opposition to the motion had arisen, because it was supposed he was asking for something for Warwick which the town never had before. What he had, for another honorable member, tacked on his motion, was something that had not been granted before; but he now simply asked that an officer already appointed should be retained where his services could not be done without. In looking over the estimates of the Postmaster-General's Department, he found that, with the exception of one or two messengers in Brisbane, the only reduction made was that of the letter carrier at Warwick. He believed that Warwick was the largest town in which there was no regular postmaster—the town and district comprised about a thousand inhabitants; and, he asked if it was reasonable that one officer, with a salary of £100 a year, could do the work of the Post Office, and attend also to the Savings Bank, and insurance business? All he (Mr. Clark) wanted was, that the letter carrier be retained, to render assistance, also, in sorting letters, and in the clerical duties. The mails between Warwick and Brisbane went three times a week; there were, therefore, six mails to make up and deliver. Twice a week there were mails from Tenterfield and Leyburn. The Brisbane mails arrived *via* Toowoomba, at three o'clock in the afternoon; and the Post Office regulations allowed but one hour for sorting them. If the postmaster had to do the work himself, the letters would not be ready for delivery before six o'clock in the evening, when, according to the regulations, the Post Office closed, so that the letters would not be delivered till next morning. It would only be fair to such a large and important district as Warwick, that the services of the letter carrier should be retained.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was sorry that he must deal with the motion, not on its own merits, but with regard to what was to follow. He regretted that honorable members were not inclined to carry out the desire of the present Government for retrenchment. The subject of the motion was only one of the reductions which the Government hoped to effect. But, if honorable members persisted in speaking for their

constituencies, the Government would be able to effect no reductions at all. He had been assured by his honorable colleague, the Postmaster-General, that the letter carrier at Warwick was not wanted at all, and could be easily taken off; and he was bound to take his word. There was another motion on the paper for a letter carrier. He should have to apply for one for his own town, the main street of which was four miles long; yet he had never asked for anything for it.

Mr. BELL had no objection to the motion passing; but he would support it, only on the understanding that the same reasons for passing it would apply to Dalby, for which a letter carrier was to be asked. He objected to the distinction which the honorable the mover had drawn between Warwick and other towns.

Mr. WALSH said he was in a peculiar dilemma, as he had moved an amendment on the motion, the other day, when it was subsequently withdrawn. The decision the House had come to before, was singularly unfair;—there was just as much reason for a letter carrier's services at Maryborough as at Warwick. He should, however, vote for the motion; because, despite what the Premier had said, he thought the information given by a member of Parliament should be taken by the House as readily as that of an officer of the Government.

Mr. CLARK, in reply, said there was really more work in the Warwick post-office than one man could do; and, if the motion was not carried, the Government would yet have to provide assistance, and spend money, on the representations of the inhabitants of Warwick. The other evening, he had been charged with "log-rolling." He believed he should lose several votes by the statement, but he would not join the honorable member for West Moreton, Mr. Bell, in "log-rolling;" and he should hold himself at perfect liberty, whatever the decision of the House on his motion, to vote for or against the motion for a letter carrier at Dalby.

The question was then put, and the House divided:—Ayes, 11; noes, 11.

The SPEAKER said: It devolves upon me, now, to give the casting vote. My duty is to give the casting vote on the side of economy. Therefore, I must vote with the "noes."

LETTER CARRIER, DALBY.

Mr. H. THORN moved—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to consider an address to be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for 1868, the sum of £105, for the services of a letter carrier at Dalby.

He did not, he said, see that there was a necessity to say anything in support of the motion further than that, regarding the position of Dalby—the number of its inhabitants, the population that was likely to be settled

there within a few months, on the completion of the railway—the town and district were entitled in every way to what he asked for. He hoped that honorable members would consider it their duty to vote for the sum he had put down; it was a small one.

Dr. CHALLINOR said that, in the straitened circumstances of the colony, there was a great difference between conferring a new privilege and withdrawing an old one; therefore, however willing he might be to support the motion in favor of Warwick, he did not feel called upon to vote for the present one.

Mr. MILES held that a good case had been made out for Warwick; but for the motion of the honorable member for Northern Downs he saw no necessity. Dalby was a town all contained in five acres; and it would be only a little exercise for the inhabitants to go to the post-office for their letters. He was astonished that the honorable member should take up the time of the House asking for a letter carrier. Such motions did not shew any particular consideration for economy.

Mr. BELL remarked that the honorable member who spoke last acted with better judgment when he was not possessed of facts than when he had knowledge or information which should direct his action. The honorable member had supported the Warwick motion, because he knew nothing about it.

Mr. MILES had said he was prepared to take the statement of the honorable member for Warwick.

Mr. BELL: Well, at least, it was what the lawyers called secondary evidence: it was nothing like the evidence the honorable member had given of the town of Dalby. It was clear that, when the railway was completed to Dalby, which, he believed, would be early in January next, the business of that town would be very much extended. It might be that the town was contained within the area of five acres; but that did not signify its importance. There was no town outside of Brisbane where the business to be done was more extensive: it was the most important inland town of the colony. It was invidious to compare Warwick with it.

Question put, and negatived, on a division, by 16 to 5 votes.

LADIES' BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, IPSWICH.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN moved, pursuant to notice—

That this House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to consider of an address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for the year 1868, the sum of £100, in aid of the Ladies' Benevolent Society at Ipswich.

This motion was in favor of a charitable institution that had done as much service as any institution in the colony; and when he went into figures, he would convince the House that his assertion was correct. The

Ladies' Benevolent Society was a voluntary association of ladies of the highest standing and character in Ipswich, who had been moved to it by the circumstances of their town and the cases of distress that came before them. He might say that it was originally some private cases of distress in excellent families that had been reported by persons employed in taking the last census—they never came before the public—which caused the ladies, for the sake of charity alone, to enter into association. The ladies had carried on their good work of private benevolence for five years; and he found by a list which had been handed to him by one of the ladies, that the society was established since the 1st July, 1862; and that from that time to about the same month in 1867, they had relieved distressed families to within a few of 400—that was to say, 372. It was a remarkable thing that the distress and the demand for relief had increased every year; and that the crisis of the colony, last year, had fallen so heavily on the people that the ladies were known to have worked day and night in alleviating the necessities of their fellow creatures; and, he believed, it was impossible to estimate what amount of charity they had dispensed from their own private fund. The calls upon them had become so heavy, that they were forced to ask the Government for some support, and they got £100. During all the five years the society was in existence, that was all they had received out of the public funds. They did not now ask for pound for pound, because, in that case, the revenue of the colony would have to give about £1,200. The number of cases they had relieved during that time was as follows:—The first year, 22; the second, 29; third, 47; fourth, 114; and the past year, 160. He had looked over these reports—he found that he had only four years' figures—and the collections of the society, by the ladies' own marked efforts, were—first year, £115 2s. 3d.; second, £209 10s. 7d.; third, £365 17s. 9d.; fourth, £236 13s. 5d.;—making, altogether, an amount of £927 6s., according to four annual reports. Putting down for the missing report, the mean ratio of the other four, £272 14s., and adding it to the total already stated, made the amount £1,200. It could not be denied that the institution had done something more than any other in the colony—it was something remarkable, with regard to the large amount of money, and the relief afforded—though it might escape other honorable members, it told more favorably than anything else—that the expenses of the committee in one year were only thirty shillings, shewing, clearly and positively, that the ladies went into the work of benevolence for its own sake, and for no outward hypocritical show. It was impossible to impose on them. In giving charity, they generally acted on the recommendation of a clergyman or a magistrate; and, no matter what the distance,

they would go at any hour of the day, to investigate and relieve a case of real distress, to the extent of their means. The motion called for the best attention of the House; the only fault it had, if any, was that the amount asked for was too small. Institutions that got double the amount he asked for did not do as much good as the Ladies' Benevolent Society. He did not think any honorable member would, hard as the times were, be found to vote against the motion.

Dr. CHALLINOR knew that the ladies were very assiduous in their efforts, both to obtain the means of doing good and to dispense charity. He knew, in one case, that some of the members had walked out two miles to visit the house of one of the recipients; and that they did more work than what appeared by their reports they did; for, besides visiting the distressed themselves they obtained medical aid for cases which were not admissible to the hospital; and that, he considered, was so much added to the funds of the society. The ladies did all they could in raising subscriptions, and they took advantage of every opportunity of increasing their funds, by getting up balls and pic-nics, and supplying the refreshments themselves, with the assistance of friends, without any cost to the society. He felt quite sure the society had a claim on the House, and deserved all that the honorable member, who had brought forward the motion, had said in support of it; and that the House would be disposed to help a society that shewed such continued and determined efforts to help itself.

Mr. PUGH had great pleasure in supporting the motion, as the society was, he believed, the oldest of the kind existing in the colony; and, from personal knowledge, he could say the ladies had done a great deal of good. The motion ought to be agreed to, as only the other day a somewhat similar society in Brisbane had got a vote.

The question was put and agreed to.