

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1868

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 17 November, 1868.

Meeting of Parliament.—Election of a Speaker.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

Honorable members elected to the Legislative Assembly, met this day, at twelve o'clock, in the Lower Chamber. Shortly afterwards, the Usher of the Black Rod appeared at the Bar of the House, and announced that the Commissioners appointed by His Excellency to open Parliament desired the immediate attendance of the House to hear the Commission read.

In accordance with that request, the members present proceeded to the Upper Chamber, and being returned—

The Hon. R. R. MACKENZIE (Colonial Treasurer), announced that he held in his hand a Commission from His Excellency the Governor, authorising him, the Honorable R. Pring (Attorney-General), and the Honorable A. H. Palmer (Colonial Secretary), to administer to Members the Oath of Allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Commissioners then proceeded to administer the Oaths, first to each other and then to Members, after which the Members present subscribed to the Oath and the Roll of the House.

ELECTION OF A SPEAKER.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the duty now devolved upon honorable members of electing a Speaker. He thought it would only be necessary for him to mention in connection with that office the name of the honorable gentleman who had so worthily filled it during the three previous Parliaments. He thought it was due to that honorable member, not only that there should be no opposition to his re-election, but that the proposal should be received with acclamation. Honorable members were all aware that ever since Separation his election had been unopposed, and they had only to look back to the proceedings of the previous Parliaments, the order with which they had been conducted, and the manner in which they had been presided over, to decide them in placing his honorable friend again in the Chair. No doubt that honorable member might have at times, in his decisions, given some amount of dissatisfaction, although he did not say that he had, but, comparing him with Speakers of other Assemblies, there could be no doubt that the way in which he had discharged his onerous duties had been

beyond all praise; and there was no reason to believe that they would not be as efficiently and conscientiously discharged for the future. He had, therefore, much pleasure in moving that Gilbert Elliott, Esquire, the honorable member for Wide Bay, do take the Chair of this House, as Speaker.

The Hon. A. MACALISTER said he had much pleasure in seconding the nomination of the honorable member for Wide Bay, and he took that opportunity of contradicting a silly report that there was any intention on the part of the Opposition to offer any serious objection to it. He was not prepared to say that there did not exist some feeling of dissatisfaction on the subject on that side of the House, and he very much regretted it; but at the same time he quite concurred with the honorable member at the head of the Government that they might go a long way and find a much worse Speaker. There was, however, one point to which he desired to draw the attention of the House, and particularly of the Government. There was a period in the life of every man when it should become his desire to retire from the bustle and contention of active life; and although he trusted that his honorable friend would long be spared to discharge the arduous duties of his office, still he thought the Government ought to take the subject into consideration, with a view to make some provision for a result which must sooner or later take place.

The SPEAKER: I rise with feelings of deep gratitude to return my sincere and respectful thanks to honorable members for placing me for the fourth time in the high and honorable position of Speaker of this House; and I only wish that I had language at my command sufficiently strong to express, as I should wish, my appreciation of the honor which has now been conferred upon me. My services, such as they have been, are known to honorable members. They have now extended over a period of twelve sessions. Some of these have, doubtless, been short sessions, but others have been proportionately long; and I think I have great cause for thankfulness to Almighty God in the fact that, during the whole of that time, I have never been absent for one hour from my duties in this House from sickness or from any other cause. I can only repeat what I have said on former occasions, that it will ever be my principal object and my most earnest desire to discharge the responsible duties devolving upon me with the strictest impartiality, as I have hitherto endeavored to do, to uphold the rights and privileges of this House upon all occasions, and to preserve that order and decorum which are so highly essential in all deliberative assemblies. I would take this opportunity of reminding older members, and of impressing upon those who have been lately elected, that the fame which this House has acquired for conducting its debates in an orderly and satisfactory manner has depended in no small degree upon a strict adherence to

the rules made by this House for its guidance and government; and I do trust I shall receive that support from honorable members in the maintenance of those rules, without which the authority of the Speaker would be powerless. And by shewing due courtesy to every member, by affording every information I am in a position to give, and by facilitating the transaction of public business, as far as I can, I trust I shall be fortunate enough to experience that generous confidence which I have enjoyed during the three previous Parliaments. It now only remains for me to express my most sincere and grateful thanks to the two honorable gentlemen who proposed and seconded me on this occasion; I trust that, by no act of mine I shall ever forfeit their good opinion. I now beg to submit myself to the wishes of the House.

The honorable gentleman was then escorted to his seat by the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer, and the Honorable A. Macalister, and repeated his acknowledgments from the Chair.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said, that it was his pleasing duty, as the junior member of the Government,—junior, as he had been given to understand, in point of years, and certainly in point of Parliamentary experience,—to offer to the Honorable the Speaker the sincere congratulations of the House, on the occasion of his having been unanimously, and for the fourth time, elected to that high and honorable position. It had not hitherto been his good fortune to sit under that honorable gentleman, but they had been intimately acquainted for nearly thirty years, and had sat together in the Legislature of another Colony; and, with pride and satisfaction he had heard in England and elsewhere, that the Queensland Parliament would bear a pleasing comparison with any other Parliament in any other part of the world, in the propriety and decorum which characterized its debates. This was largely owing to the ability, tact, sound judgment, and impartial ruling of the honorable gentleman who had throughout occupied the Chair. They were there assembled as a new Parliament in that magnificent building, and, from his Chair, the Honorable Speaker could look down upon some faces which were new to him; but whether new or old, whether on the Opposition or Ministerial benches, he was sure they would all vie with each other in their efforts to lessen the honorable gentleman's very arduous duties, and to make his position as light and as pleasant as possible. He knew that he was expressing the unanimous opinion of the House in hoping that the day was far distant when the Honorable Speaker would cease to preside over their deliberations, and that he might be spared many years to fill that Chair which he had so long, so ably, and so honorably occupied.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER congratulated the honorable Speaker on his re-election, and said he would take the opportunity of

remarking, with reference to some observations made by the honorable member for Eastern Downs (Mr. Macalister), that he trusted the Speaker would for a long period to come preside over the House; but when the time arrived when that honorable gentleman should think fit to retire from his position, he (the Colonial Treasurer) felt sure that the House would be prepared to recognise the value of his past services. It would now be necessary for him to move the adjournment of the House until half-past ten o'clock on the following day, in order to give honorable members time to reach Government House by eleven o'clock, and present their newly elected Speaker to the Governor. He might also state that the causes for summoning Parliament together would, tomorrow, be announced by His Excellency in the usual way.

The motion was put and passed, and the House adjourned.