

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 5 MAY 1869

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 5 May, 1869.

Address in Reply to Opening Speech.—Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING
SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT stated that he had obtained, for greater accuracy, a copy of His Excellency's Speech, which he would read to the House.

The Speech having been read, a select committee was appointed, on the motion of the Postmaster-General, to prepare an Address in Reply. The committee retired, and shortly afterwards brought up the following Address, which was read by the Clerk of the House:—

“ To His Excellency SAMUEL WENSLEY
BLACKALL, Esquire, Governor and Com-
mander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queens-
land and its Dependencies.

“ MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“ 1. We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Council in Parliament assembled, desire to assure your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the person and government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to tender our thanks to your Excellency for the Speech with which you have opened the present session.

“ 2. The early period of the year at which your Excellency has been pleased to summon Parliament, leads us to hope that the business of the session may be accomplished during the winter months.

"3. The important measures announced by your Excellency shall receive our most careful and dispassionate consideration.

"4. We trust that the Divine blessing may attend upon our deliberations, and that the enactment of just laws may continue to promote the growth of a free and happy people."

The Hon. JOHN BRAMSTON: Honorable gentlemen, in asking you to adopt the Address which has just been laid on the table of the House, I am obliged to apologise to the House for not being prepared to do justice to the questions such a motion embraces. This duty would have fallen to another honorable member if he had not been prevented by ill-health from attending; and I have only accepted the task since I came down to the House. I must confess that I have done so with the more readiness that the framers of the Address have, I think wisely, departed from the usual custom of making it an echo of the Speech delivered to us yesterday. That Speech contains many matters with which I, for one, cannot at all agree; but in the Address there is nothing, I think, to which the most fastidious critic can take exception. The first paragraph, thanking the Governor for his Speech, is one which always commences an Address of this sort, and may therefore be considered of a purely formal character. But it is not altogether so; for although we are indebted to His Excellency for the delivery of this Speech, we know that the Ministry are responsible for the sentiments placed in his mouth; and we are therefore at full liberty to make any remarks we choose on the various topics it refers to. I certainly think that, considering we have commenced the session in May, we ought to be able to conclude the business of the country before the summer months come on again. I think I shall not be asking honorable members too much when I ask them to accept that part of the Address, in which we assure His Excellency that the various measures to be submitted to us will receive our careful and dispassionate consideration. But in giving that assurance we cannot overlook the very questionable character of some of the measures announced, or forego our privileges in discussing them. Some of those measures I shall have to object to very considerably, unless they are greatly modified. The concluding paragraph expresses a trust that we may, under the Divine blessing, enact just laws; and I have no doubt we shall do our best to carry out that wish, if we are enabled to do so. Honorable gentlemen, I cannot sit down without alluding to one or two subjects mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. That Speech is, in its length and in its language, peculiar to the present Ministry. There are expressions in the concluding part of it which I have never before found in a Vice-Regal Speech, except in that Speech by which we were prorogued some days ago. There is a

kind of commercial spirit, if I may so term it, prevailing that Speech, which I can only hope will have its effect in the government of the country, and produce satisfactory results. It is also mentioned in the Speech, that "the reduction in the expenditure now being carried into effect will, it is hoped, have the gratifying result of leaving a credit balance on the transactions of the year 1869." That if it mean anything, it means, in Parliamentary language, that there is a surplus of revenue, and I think it might have been so mentioned. Perhaps it is that fact which has contributed to the remarkable alteration in the phraseology of this Speech. It must also be very satisfactory to learn that public and private extravagance has been curbed by the present Ministry. I do not exactly know how the Government have been able to ascertain that fact, but of course they have opportunities of obtaining information which other people do not possess, and it is gratifying to hear such a statement. There are several other important questions to which our attention is particularly invited, and considering their great importance, I am sure they will receive every attention from this House. I refer especially to the paragraph which alludes to the public works of the colony. I think it is hardly necessary to say that the public works now in progress should be completed;—that is a matter of course, and, so far, the paragraph is unnecessary. But we are also to consider the economical extension of some of these works, in order to render them reproductive. I think that paragraph might have been a little less mysterious. Then, again, the assistance of Parliament is asked "to complete certain local works." That can mean nothing but the Brisbane bridge, and I maintain that it will ultimately be necessary to have the assistance of the Legislature to carry out the completion of that work; though it is notorious that, some months ago, an offer was made to the corporation to undertake it, and that offer would have been accepted, and the work, by this time, greatly advanced, if the Government had not led them to believe that they would be able to obtain the money from the public purse. Yet, now, at a time when, although "public and private extravagance" may have been curbed, the Government are not in a position to incur any such heavy and increased outlay as that work required, they come down and ask us for the funds to complete it. When that question comes before this House, I very much fear that the Postmaster-General, and I, will be opposed to each other—that is (and I say it advisedly) if it ever does come before us; and if the paragraph refers to the Bill which has been already published as the intention of the Government on the subject. But I do not think that measure will be allowed to go to a second reading. The confiscation of private rights would be something which, I am sure, the Government could never have fully considered; at any

rate, I trust the Bill will be greatly modified before it comes before us; if ever it does come here, which I much doubt. I will not detain the House any longer, because I think the Address which I have had the honor to move does not require any further explanation, and I will leave it for honorable gentlemen to adopt.

The Hon. H. S. HARDEN seconded the motion. He said he had been asked to do so by the honorable the Postmaster-General, since he came down to the House, and, as he was therefore unprepared to make a speech on the subject, he would content himself with simply making the motion. He fully concurred with the remarks made by the honorable gentleman who had moved the adoption of the Address, that there were many points in the Speech to which exception might be taken; but he would reserve his remarks upon them until a future occasion, when they again came before the House.

The question was put and passed.

WOOGAROO LUNATIC ASYLUM.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE, with the consent of the House, moved without notice—

1. That the Legislative Assembly be invited to join this House in the constitution of a select committee to inquire into, and report upon, all matters connected with the management of the Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, and into the fitness or otherwise of the building and premises for the purpose to which they are appropriated, with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with leave to adjourn from place to place.

2. That the members to serve on said joint committee be eight, four to be a quorum.

3. That the following members of this House be appointed to serve on said committee, viz.:—Honorable J. Douglas, Honorable J. Bramston, Honorable W. Yaldwyn, and The Honorable E. I. C. Browne.

4. That these resolutions be communicated to the Legislative Assembly, by message, in the usual way.

Honorable members, he said, would be aware that when the prorogation took place, all business notices on the paper lapsed, and, among others, his notice for the appointment of the committee he now asked for. The necessity for the inquiry, as well as the principle it involved, had already been recognised; and as it was to be a joint committee, and the usual forms would have to be gone through before the committee could commence its sittings, it was desirable to lose as little time as possible. For this, and because he would unfortunately be absent from the House to-morrow, and probably for some days, he hoped the House would not object to receive the motion without notice.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he believed that during the last session the House had arrived at the conclusion that it would be desirable to investigate the subject in question; and, at the present time, the Govern-

ment were anxious to commence it, so much so, that had not the honorable member taken the initiative, the Government would have adopted a similar course in the other branch of the Legislature. He concurred with the honorable member, that any delay would be particularly inconvenient, and he was, therefore, quite ready to support the motion.

The question was put and passed.