

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 1870**

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# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday, 15 December, 1870.*

Power of Select Committee to Sit during Recess.—Despatch of Business.—Gladstone Exchange of Land Bill.

## POWER OF SELECT COMMITTEE TO SIT DURING RECESS.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said that, as a matter of form, he wished to bring before the House for decision a question of precedent. It had reference to the joint committee of the two Houses which had been appointed, on his motion, to inquire into the traffic for a railway between Brisbane and Ipswich. The committee held their first meeting, this morning, and as the time was short before the probable close of the session, members were anxious that they should, if possible, be put in a position to continue the inquiry during the recess. His own opinion, he must confess, was that it was beyond the power of the House to give the committee leave to sit after Parliament had been prorogued. It would be most desirable, no doubt;—if it could be done, it should be done. It would take some time to collect the information required. In accordance with the wishes of some members of the committee, he brought the matter forward for the decision of the House; though, as he had observed already, he thought it was beyond the power of the House to extend the time for the sitting of a committee past the prorogation.

The PRESIDENT: The honorable member must put a motion.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: He could hardly do so——

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps it would be more convenient of the honorable member to give notice of motion. His own opinion was that

it was not possible to give the committee the power desired.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: His own opinion was the same. He would, however, give notice of motion for the next sitting day.

#### DESPATCH OF BUSINESS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the sessional order of the 17th November, in reference to the days of meeting of this Council, be rescinded, and that the following be the sessional order in this respect for the remainder of the session:—"That, unless otherwise ordered, this Council will meet for the despatch of business at three o'clock on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, in each week."

It was difficult to say whether a prorogation or an adjournment was at hand; but it would be very inconvenient that Bills coming from the other branch of the Legislature should lapse for want of the attendance of the Council.

The Hon. ST. G. R. GORE said he must protest against the rather singular motion which had just been proposed by his honorable friend. There was no person more anxious than himself to promote the discharge of the public business; but he thought there was really something indelicate in that motion. It appeared as if it was considered absolutely necessary that Parliament should be prorogued between this and, he presumed, Christmas day, instead of adjourning over the Christmas holidays, and then coming back to work some time in January. He could see no possible objection to this course, and he believed it was a course that recommended itself to several honorable members in both branches of the Parliament. It had been the cuckoo cry for long, how the business was rushed through at the close of the session. He was sure, when he occupied the position of his honorable friend, the Postmaster-General, he heard nothing else than objections and complaints against rushing the business through the Parliament. It appeared, now, that the House were to sit day and night, and, with the suspension of the Standing Orders—because, unless this was done, no good would result from their meeting day after day; they should be able to pass Bills through all their stages in one day—so that they could conclude the business by Saturday week. At all events, he supposed that was the last day that the honorable gentlemen in power would think of rushing the business through. He protested against it. There were matters of great importance pending in the other branch of the Parliament, which would in due course be brought before the Council; and, he believed, as far as he could judge by the public papers, that there was a sort of pledge given by the Government of which his honorable friend was a member, that certain measures should be taken with the greatest possible despatch. Now, his honorable friend asked the House to meet four days a

week, and put off the public business till March or April next. If that business were put off now, there was not the slightest chance of Parliament re-assembling for despatch of business till that date. On the other hand, if they adjourned over the Christmas holidays, for a fortnight or three weeks, then they could meet in the second week of January, and attend for a fortnight, and, with due decorum, despatch the business which it might be considered necessary to bring forward. There was only one week more for them to meet before Christmas, when, he (Mr. Gore) presumed, according to immemorial custom, the House must be relieved from their labors; and the four days of meeting proposed must be taken up wholly in rushing business through. He hoped the House would not agree to the motion. He trusted that there was sufficient patriotism amongst honorable members to say that, if necessary, they would attend, even at considerable inconvenience, in January. If there was a "slaughter of the innocents," as it was called, let the whole responsibility rest upon the gentlemen in office, who had the power in their hands to prevent the public business suffering by putting it off to a convenient season.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he could not allow what his honorable friend had stated to pass without remark. In the first place, he had quite misunderstood his intentions. He (the Postmaster-General) was not aware, at this moment, whether the House would or would not be prorogued or adjourned; but, whichever it should be, he thought it was very desirable that the House should be able to pass Bills coming up from the other branch of the Parliament. It was to do away with the hurry that the honorable Mr. Gore spoke of; because there was no difficulty in the House having a Bill read a first time one day, a second time next day, and the third reading on another day. The motion would enable the House to get through business, which, meeting on only two days, they could not do. He could assure the honorable gentleman that it was with the sanction of a majority of the Council he put the motion on the paper.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said he believed he had as much objection to rushing Bills through the House as his honorable friend, Mr. Gore; but, with all due deference to him, he could hardly think there was much in that suggestion, when the Government only asked the Council to sit on the same days as the other House sat.

Question put and passed; an absolute majority of the Council being present.

#### GLADSTONE EXCHANGE OF LAND BILL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that it was a measure to ratify an exchange of land in the town of Gladstone between the cor-

poration of that place and the Government, and to alter the trusts contained in the deed of grant issued to the Municipal Council. One of the Ministers, on going to Gladstone, had found that certain public buildings proposed to be erected were to be placed on an unsuitable site, and this site he exchanged with the corporation for part of a piece of land granted to the municipality on which to build a town hall, and which was not required by the corporation. It seemed that there were some doubts whether the corporation could make the exchange, and this Bill was meant to ratify the agreement. Honorable members might be informed that the Post and Telegraph Offices had been built by the Government on the land of the corporation, the town hall occupying the other portion; and the corporation would be empowered to use the land received in exchange for general municipal purposes.

Question put and passed.