

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 1871**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 8 November, 1871.

Opening Speech.—New Members.—Law of Libel Amendment Bill.—Opening Speech.—Chairman of Committees.—Address in Reply to Opening Speech.

## OPENING SPEECH.

The House met at twelve o'clock.

His Excellency the GOVERNOR came down in State, and was conducted by the honorable the President and honorable members to his seat on the dais.

The PRESIDENT directed the Usher of the Black Rod to acquaint honorable members of the Legislative Assembly that His Excellency the Governor desired their immediate attendance in the chamber of the Legislative Council.

The Speaker, Mr. Forbes, accompanied by honorable members of the Legislative Assembly, having entered the chamber and occupied their respective places,

His Excellency the GOVERNOR read the Opening Speech, which was as follows:—

"HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:—

"1. I have much pleasure in thus early availing myself of your advice and assistance, and it is most gratifying to me while now, for the first time, meeting you in Parliament assembled, to be enabled to congratulate you on the improved prospects of the country, as shewn by the returns of Revenue and Expenditure for the first ten months of the year, which would indicate that the Revenue of the year will be more than sufficient to cover the Expenditure.

"2. The adjournment of the Legislative Assembly, followed by its dissolution and a general election, have occupied so much time that it is of more than usual importance that you should proceed without delay to the despatch of the business which will be brought before you. I would particularly draw your attention to the necessity which exists for increasing the representation of the Colony, for which object a Bill will shortly be introduced.

"3. The management of the Gold Fields will call for your serious consideration. I hope that the report which has been placed at your disposal as the result of the labors of the Commission, appointed by my predecessor to visit and report upon the Gold Fields, together with information subsequently received, will enable you to mature a measure which shall be for the benefit of the gold producing interests of the Colony.

"4. The extension of Telegraphic Communication in the interior is, I believe, a matter of great importance, and your concurrence in plans for carrying it out will be invited. The line to Normanton is now nearly completed, but owing to the failure of the contractors for one section, and to the fact of its having been found necessary to substitute iron posts for wood ones on a portion of the line, an increased expenditure has been incurred, which will render necessary some addition to the original loan.

"5. The necessity for making some provision for the Supply of Water to the principal towns of the Colony has become a pressing necessity, and a Bill embracing a comprehensive scheme for that purpose will be laid before you during the Session.

"6. You will be asked to sanction the arrangement entered into at the late Conference at Melbourne, by which two lines of Postal Communication with Europe were agreed upon—the one by Suez, the other by San Francisco, the respective subsidies of each Colony being in proportion to its population. The Mail *via* California will call on each voyage at Moreton Island, thus making this the first port of arrival in Australia and the last of departure. In addition to these routes, a proposal for a line through Torres' Straits, which is one of more importance to Queensland than both the others, will be laid before you, and it will be for you to decide whether it will be advisable to carry out this route also, either alone or in conjunction with other Colonies.

"7. A Select Committee was appointed by the Legislative Assembly in its last Session, with a view to ascertain how Railway Extension might be best carried out in a manner suited to the circumstances of the Colony, but did not finish its labors. The matter is one which requires much consideration, and it is hoped that the same course which was pursued last Session with reference to this subject will again be followed. In the event of

your investigation resulting in a report favorable to Railway Extension, measures will be taken to carry out that recommendation, and you will be asked to provide the necessary funds.

"8. A number of Bills which have previously been before you, some of which had reached advanced stages, will be again introduced.

"9. I have to announce that Mr. Archer has resigned the appointment of Agent-General for Emigration in England; the correspondence which has led to this decision on his part will be laid before you. Mr. Wheeler, who has for many years held the appointment of Chief Clerk in the Emigration Office, in London, has been appointed his successor at a reduced salary.

"10. A recent case of alleged kidnapping of Polynesians has been brought prominently under the notice of the Government. As the matter is now *sub judice*, I am not prepared to indicate any particular course of action. I may, however, observe that my Government will be vigilant to repress anything like slavery or kidnapping, and that if Legislative action appears to be necessary the requisite measures will be introduced.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY :—

"11. The Estimates for the year 1872, and the Supplementary Estimates for the present year will be shortly laid before you.

"HONORABLE GENTLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN :—

"12. The settlement of land under the Act of 1868 continues steadily to advance. The farmers, especially those who are engaged in the cultivation of Sugar, appear to be satisfied with their prospects; and it was most gratifying to me to observe, during my late visit to the North, the rapid strides that are being made in the development of that important industry. At Maryborough and Mackay fresh land is being brought under cultivation, and new mills are being erected; while in the neighborhood of Cardwell an entirely new district is being opened out, which, from the extent of land available, and from the character of the soil and climate, promises to prove a most valuable acquisition to the wealth of the country. The gold diggers are daily making fresh auriferous discoveries. Copper Mines, which promise to be very rich, are being opened up; and the last Mail from Europe has brought news of a considerable rise in the value of the other staple products of the Colony. I trust, therefore, that you may look forward with hope, and even with confidence, to a continuance and an increase of that prosperity which, by the blessing of Providence, you have lately enjoyed."

His Excellency then left the Chamber, and honorable members of the Legislative Assembly having also withdrawn, the House adjourned until three o'clock.

#### NEW MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT, on the House resuming at a quarter past three o'clock, said that in performing the duty of informing the House of what changes had been made in its constitution during the late recess, he had to mention that the names of two highly esteemed gentlemen had been struck off the roll of members through death, namely, the Honorable Gilbert Elliott and the Honorable St. George Gore. He was sure that honorable gentlemen would agree with him in expressing their sorrow at the loss of two such valuable members of that House. He had also to mention that he had received a letter from His Excellency the Governor stating that His Excellency had been pleased to summon James Taylor, Esquire, and Samuel Hodgson, Esquire, to be members of the Legislative Council of Queensland.

#### LAW OF LIBEL AMENDMENT BILL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL presented a Bill *pro forma* for the Amendment of the Law of Libel, and moved—

That it be read a first time.

The motion was agreed to.

#### OPENING SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT said that for the purpose of securing greater accuracy, he had received a copy of the Speech read by His Excellency in opening Parliament, at an earlier hour of the day, and, in accordance with the usage of Parliament, read the Speech to the House, excepting that portion which was addressed to honorable members of the Legislative Assembly.

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had consulted several honorable members of the House, and he now begged to move, without notice—

That the Honorable Daniel Foley Roberts be appointed Chairman of Committees for the present Parliament.

The motion was put and passed.

The Hon. D. F. ROBERTS begged to return his thanks to honorable members of that House for continuing their confidence in him by electing him to again perform the duties of Chairman of Committees.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and prepare an Address in answer to His Excellency the Governor's Opening Speech, and that such committee consist of The Honorable C. B. Whish, The Honorable D. F. Roberts, The Honorable J. F. McDougall, The Honorable W. D. White, and the mover.

The motion was agreed to and the committee retired.

On the return of the committee,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL presented the report of the committee, and moved that it be read.

The motion was agreed to.

The report, which consisted of the Address in Reply, was accordingly read by the Acting Clerk of the Parliaments. It was as follows:—

“To His Excellency The Most Honorable GEORGE AUGUSTUS CONSTANTINE, Marquis of Normanby, Earl of Mulgrave, Viscount Normanby, and Baron Mulgrave, of Mulgrave, all in the County of York, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom; and Baron Mulgrave of New Ross, in the County of Wexford, in the Peerage of Ireland; a Member of Her Majesty’s Most Honorable Privy Council, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland 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. We congratulate your Excellency on your having assumed the Government of this Colony.

“3. The various important subjects referred to by your Excellency shall have our careful attention.

“4. We learn with satisfaction of the improvement in the revenue of the Colony; the advances made in settling on the land an industrious population; and that fresh mineral discoveries are daily being made.”

The Hon. C. B. WHISH moved the adoption of the Address in Reply to His Excellency’s Opening Speech which had just been read to the House, and, in doing so, said that the Address, although short, was, he believed, to the point. In the second paragraph it pointed out that they might congratulate His Excellency on having assumed the Government of the colony; but he thought they might well go one step more, and congratulate themselves upon His Excellency having been appointed to the colony. The Address then went on to say, that the various important subjects referred to by His Excellency should have the careful attention of that House, and also that they learned with satisfaction of the improvement in the revenue of the colony; the advances made in the settlement on the land of an industrious population; and that fresh mineral discoveries were daily being made. Now, in commencing the business of a new session, it was not, he thought, out of place to look back and see

what progress the colony had made since honorable gentlemen last met in that House. The only information of an authentic character that they could have, was that furnished by the Statistical Register which was published year by year. He was sorry that a copy of that book was not on the table of the House, but he believed it had been circulated among honorable members, and he himself had seen it. Before he went into other matters, he would call the attention of the honorable the Postmaster-General to the want of uniformity of arrangement there was in the Blue Books, and which uniformity was necessary; for instance, one subject might be found at the beginning of one book one year, which was found at the end of the book another year, and it was impossible to find the two without great loss of time and annoyance. He thought the Statistical Register was a publication in which the subjects should be taken in some order, and whatever that order might be, it should be adhered to year after year. Another point, in reference to the Statistical Register, was this, that the present year was ten months old before the Register for 1870 was issued. Now, in a young and growing colony such should not be the case, as a Statistical Register should not be a thing of the long past. As it had been published for nine or ten years, they had had plenty of experience, and he would suggest to the honorable gentleman that in future it would be well if all Blue Books were issued not later than on the 1st of April in the year following. Some improvement in the direction he had mentioned should, at any rate, be made on the present system. Referring to the statistics of the colony, he saw that the revenue had steadily increased during the year 1870—of course he could not speak about the present year. In 1870 the population of the colony was about 5,000 more than in 1869. In 1870 the number of scholars in the public schools was about 5,000 more than in the previous year, and the area of land under cultivation had also increased by 5,000 acres. In those three departments there was an increase of five thousand each. On the other hand, those who were opposed to a squatting Ministry would be glad to hear that there was a great decrease in the number of sheep—a decrease of nearly 500,000. Those interested in gold would learn from the same authority, that whilst the exports in 1869 were £523,045, they were in 1870 only £489,539. That decrease was owing, no doubt, to the yield from Gympie not having been maintained. The revenue for 1870 shewed an increase of £5,000 over that of 1869; and whilst the imports shewed a decrease of nearly £300,000, the exports shewed an increase of upwards of £300,000. So that if they had to pay for imports, and receive money for exports, the balance was in favor of the colony. One matter of very great importance was telegraphic extension, but he found that in 1870 the extension was

very little over that of 1869. In the Opening Speech he noticed that the question of providing water supply to the inland towns was mentioned as a matter of necessity; but, in his opinion, that was considered a question of great importance nine years ago. It was a most important subject, as the supply of water was a work upon which any amount of money could be swamped. He trusted, therefore, that the Government would obtain the very best advice they could in reference to supplying water. Whilst on that subject, he might mention that he happened to have books shewing how much had been achieved by irrigation in India, where the works, although on a most simple plan, had converted the desert wilderness into a garden. There was no doubt that if the wrong thing was done in connection with the question of water supply, it would be an endless loss to the colony. Then it appeared that they would be asked to sanction the postal arrangements entered into at the late Intercolonial Conference, and he thought Parliament would be inclined to adopt them. The route by Torres' Straits might be very well so far as it went, but he considered the route *via* San Francisco, and across the continent of America, would be more in our line. In regard to railway extension, he believed that a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly was appointed during the last session, to inquire into the whole subject, but he did not know what information that committee had obtained, nor from what sources. It struck him, however, that the best information they could have was to be obtained from America, where the battle of early settlement had been fought out years ago, before this colony was thought of. In that particular the colony had only to tread in the path made by the American people, to ascertain how they had attained such successful results, and act accordingly. He next noticed in the Speech that Mr. Archer had resigned the appointment of Agent-General for Emigration, and that Mr. Wheeler had been appointed as a successor. That gentleman had been, he believed, Chief Clerk for many years in the office at home, and had discharged the duties of Emigration Agent when there was no Agent-General; there was therefore no doubt that he would carry out the duties very well. It must not, however, be forgotten that Mr. Wheeler would not occupy the same social position as that occupied by the Agents of other colonies. He would, no doubt, be most efficient in the office, but the appointment of Agent-General required that he should travel throughout the country; therefore, although Mr. Wheeler might be well employed in the office, he could hardly, as the Agent-General should do, travel about, associate with people, and let them know everything about the colony as a place for settlement. In the tenth paragraph of the Speech there was some allusion to the case of kidnapping Polyne-

sians. That had been very prominently brought under the notice of the Government, and was thought worthy of notice in the Vice-Regal Speech; it was evident, therefore, that it was not considered in the light of an ordinary crime. As it was mentioned, he presumed that it was the intention of the Government to inform the House, when the matter was settled, what steps would be taken to prevent a recurrence of the crime—supposing it was found to have existed. He did not, of course, know anything about the case, and indeed could not be supposed to know anything, until the whole matter was brought under the notice of the House; but, so far as he knew the feelings of the employers of Polyne-sians, he could say that anything approaching to kidnapping was utterly opposed to their wishes, and by one and all of them would be treated as the greatest crime. Then followed in the Speech the announcement that the Estimates for 1872 would be shortly laid before the other branch of the Legislature. But he had omitted to notice paragraph number two, which referred to the necessity existing for increased representation. He believed that the Estimates for the next year would not be received by the members of another House until some provision was made for increasing the representation of the colony, and he was glad to see that the Government had put that necessity prominently forward as the first thing they intended to press upon the attention of the Parliament. First of all increased representation—an increase in the number of members—and then a new distribution of electorates. That was much wanted, as at present representation was on the most absurd basis—for instance, the idea of a district like the Mitchell, with fifty-seven electors, returning one member, whilst Brisbane, with its large population, had only three. Then again, they were told that the settlement of the land under the Act of 1868 continued steadily to advance, and it appeared that whilst the revenue from land in the year 1870 was £76,563, in 1869 it was only £32,638, so that on the whole the colony had been going on steadily progressing; its resources, as honorable gentlemen well knew, were boundless, and the only thing required was to get a sufficient number of people to work it, develop its resources, and secure a largely increased measure of prosperity, not only to those who were now in the colony, but also to those who might follow. With those remarks he begged to move the adoption of the Address.

The Hon. D. F. ROBERTS seconded the motion

The motion was put and carried.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the Address, as adopted, be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President, the mover and seconder, and such other members as might be present on the following day, at eleven o'clock.

The motion was put and carried.