

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 1874

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 7 January, 1874.

Opening of the Session.—The Governor's Speech.—Leave of Absence.—New Member.—Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech.—Ministerial Statement.

OPENING OF THE SESSION.

The House being assembled, at noon,

His Excellency the Governor came in state to the Council Chamber, and was conducted to the dais by the President and honorable members.

A message was sent to the Legislative Assembly, requesting the attendance of the Speaker and honorable members, to hear the Opening Speech.

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The GOVERNOR then delivered the following Speech:—

“HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—

“I have very much pleasure in meeting, for the first time, the seventh Parliament of Queensland.

“In consequence of the passing of ‘*The Electoral Districts Act of 1872*’ the House of Assembly has received a large addition to the number of its members, and as a consequence, the members of the Legislative Council have been proportionately increased; I trust that this Parliament will maintain the high character which has hitherto distinguished the Parliaments of Queensland.

“The continued improvement in the Public Revenue appears to render a reduction of taxation both practicable and desirable, and a proposal for the immediate abolition of the duty on all machinery and salt, and the gradual reduction and final extinction of the *ad valorem* duties on most of the articles now subject to them will be submitted to you.

“The necessity for the appointment of a third Judge to the Supreme Court has pressed itself on the attention of the Government during the recess, and a Bill to authorise such appointment, regulate the salary of the Judges, and provide for the better conduct of the business of the Supreme Court will be laid before you; you will also be asked to provide for a fourth Judge, to be resident in the Northern Districts of the Colony.

“The inconveniences of the present building used as the Supreme Court, and the increased traffic and noise in Queen street, render the erection of a building for the Courts of Law in a more retired position desirable. A sum for that purpose has been placed on the Estimates.

“The Local Road Boards have been found to answer so well, that the Government will feel justified in introducing a measure to place them on a more permanent footing.

"The settlement of the country by a resident population has been steadily progressing throughout the Settled Districts of the Colony; and arrangements have been made for maintaining an ample area of available land open to selection, wherever the demand for it has been proved to exist.

"A recent decision of the Supreme Court having declared it to be the law that the issue of titles to lands selected under '*The Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868*' is entirely at the option of the Executive, a Bill for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into and decide upon claims to titles to land in cases of doubt or difficulty will be laid before you.

"The Railways from Brisbane to Ipswich and from Westwood towards the Mackenzie River have been carried on very successfully under the system of small contracts, considering the limited amount of labor at the disposal of the engineers. When the works now in progress are approaching completion, a scheme for additional lines of rail and tramways in those districts which have not yet received their share of the expenditure will be submitted to you.

"Immigration from the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe has been steadily progressing, and you will find from returns which will be immediately laid before you, that more than the due proportion of the Loan has been expended; but seeing the demand for labor, and the rapidity with which all that has arrived has been absorbed, my Government have not ceased to impress on the Agent-General the necessity of sending out a regular and constant supply. Recent regulations in Germany will have the effect of stopping emigration from there to a very great extent; but the Agent-General has been directed to turn his attention to Northern Italy, from which country it is believed a large number of suitable immigrants can be procured.

"The retirement of the Honorable John Bramston from office has appeared to the Government an appropriate time for carrying out an intention they have long entertained of making the offices of Attorney-General and Crown Prosecutor non-political; and the Honorable Ratcliffe Pring has been appointed Attorney-General on that understanding.

"You will be asked to pass a measure creating a Minister of Justice, who must be a Member of the Executive and eligible for a seat in either House.

"Our increasing commerce renders it necessary to provide for additional accommodation for shipping in the Port of Brisbane, and approved plans for carrying out this object, by utilizing the Reserve at Petrie's Bight, will be laid before you. You will also be asked to sanction plans for extending George street to the river, and for building Wharves from the point of intersection to

Harris' Wharf. This will not interfere with the Botanical Gardens, but will render it necessary to erect a new Government House, for which you will be asked to provide funds; but I have no doubt that this expenditure will be more than recouped by the sale or leasing of wharfage and Store Sites, and the application of the present Government House to use as Public Offices.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—

"The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1874 and the usual Supplementary Estimates will be laid before you at once.

"I am happy to have it in my power to inform you that the financial operations of the past two years show a surplus of revenue over expenditure of about £240,000, after liquidating a previous deficit of £56,000; the greater part of this surplus my Government are prepared to recommend should be devoted to the carrying out of various public works, which would otherwise, following the usual course, be placed on loan.

"HONORABLE GENTLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN—

"A number of Bills on various subjects, inclusive of a Gold Mining Bill, will be laid before you.

"The establishment of a line of Mail Steamers through Torres Straits, yesterday initiated by the departure of the '*Sun Foo*,' will, I trust, add great and important benefits to our commerce. All the papers connected with the Contract will be laid before you, and although I regret that the arrangement proposed last session to make Brisbane the terminus of the line could not be carried out except at an unjustifiable expense, I feel satisfied that the present contract will prove of great importance to the Colony.

"The agreement entered into at the Conference in January of last year between the Representatives of New Zealand, New South Wales, and Queensland, for the construction of a Telegraphic Cable from Kimberley to Singapore, and from a port in New South Wales to a port in New Zealand, has been ratified by the Parliaments of New Zealand and Queensland, and now awaits the action of the Parliament of New South Wales which has been long delayed.

"Our overland line to the Gulf, notwithstanding the heavy floods which have occurred since its erection, has been in almost daily use.

"Consequent on the reduction of Telegraphic Charges, a very large increase in the business of the Department has taken place. The receipts are nearly equal to those before the reduction, and I have no doubt that as the advantages of this means of communication are better understood its use will become much more general. My Government propose a considerable extension of the present Lines and additional wires on the main routes.

"I sincerely congratulate you on the continued prosperity of all our varied industries. The recent discoveries of magnificent lands on our Northern Coast Rivers suitable for the production of sugar and various tropical produce, and of very extensive gold fields on the Palmer and other rivers, and which discoveries are consequent on explorations undertaken under the auspices of my Government, are most satisfactory."

His Excellency and suite having retired, and the Assembly having withdrawn, the House adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT announced that His Excellency the Governor had granted leave of absence, for twelve months, to the Honorable J. C. Heussler.

NEW MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT announced the appointment of Archibald Berdmore Buchanan, Esquire, to be a Member of the Legislative Council.

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT acquainted the House that, for the greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy of the Speech which His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to deliver, and he read that part of it which was addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

At a subsequent stage of the proceedings, and after a Bill had been read the first time, *pro forma*, in assertion of the privileges of the Council,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That a Select Committee be now appointed to consider and prepare an Address in Answer to the Governor's Opening Speech, and that such committee consist of the Honorable G. Harris, the Honorable F. T. Gregory, the Honorable W. Wilson, and the mover.

Question put and passed.

The Committee retired, and, on returning to the chamber, their report, embodying the proposed Address, was presented.

On the motion of the Hon. F. T. GREGORY, the report was read by the Clerk, 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 of

Queensland 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 Parliament.

"The various subjects brought before us by Your Excellency shall have our most serious consideration.

"We learn with satisfaction the continued improvement in the public revenue, and that in consequence a reduction of taxation appears to be practicable.

"The steady settlement of the country, the progress made in the construction of new lines of railway, in telegraphic construction, and in the discovery of new and valuable mining and agricultural land, are all matters of gratification, and our attention will be given to the best means of promoting these various objects."

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Honorable gentlemen—For certain reasons, which I will explain more fully to-morrow, my honorable colleague the Premier has thought fit to resign his office. I have, therefore, merely to move that this House do now adjourn till to-morrow at three o'clock.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: I rise to ask the ruling of the President, as to whether, the Address having been brought up and read at the table, it is correct and regular to adjourn the House without giving an opportunity to members to make their remarks upon it?

The PRESIDENT: I apprehend that the member in charge of the Address having moved that it be read and be laid on the table, it is there for that member to take up; or, if he does not do so, for any other member of the House who may wish to raise a debate upon it. It has now been read by the Clerk at the table, and it is before the House;—it is for the House to deal with. But the question is, that the House do now adjourn. No amendment can be put to that motion.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: That bars—?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: My reason for rising is, that it appears to me that a slight, or disrespect, to the Governor might be implied in the circumstance that an Address to him should have been laid on the table and shelved, or not discussed.

The PRESIDENT: The Address is before the House and can be dealt with. But if the House now chooses to adjourn, it is quite competent to revive the Address or the consideration of it when the House meets again.

Question put and passed.