

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1876

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 5 September, 1876.

Navigation Bill.—Local Government Bill.

NAVIGATION BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, in moving the second reading of this Bill, he did not intend to detain the House at any very great length; not on account of the Bill being one that did not deserve its most serious attention, but because of the fact that on a previous occasion, two sessions ago, it received very careful attention from the legislature, and had been accepted by them almost in the form in which it now stood. It was accepted by the legislature at that time, and forwarded to the Imperial authorities, being a Bill connected with shipping and navigation, which had specially to be referred to those authorities. At the same time, legislation at home was tending in the same direction—to consolidate the laws connected with shipping; and this Bill, many of the clauses of which were highly approved of by the Crown Law Officers, was returned with certain exceptions and suggestions. Those exceptions and suggestions had been embodied in the Bill now before the House, and otherwise it was in

the same shape as when it had been previously adopted. It dealt principally with consolidation of the laws affecting navigation at the present time, and when honorable members bore in mind that those laws exceeded twenty-one in number, they would recognise the desirability of having them settled and brought together in an intelligible form. In addition to the large number of Acts which at present guided their maritime jurisprudence, the Acts themselves were, in many respects, inapplicable to the present time, referring principally to the waters of Port Jackson, and to ships having convicts on board—provisions which had now become obsolete, and were not suited to the growing requirements of the maritime trade of the colony. The Bill contained all the latest amendments adopted by the Imperial Parliament, and such as had been found desirable by experience to introduce into legislation on the subject here. There was also a matter dealt with in it which could not be dealt with otherwise than by direct legislation, that was with relation to coasting vessels. At the present time, coasting vessels were subject to the full amount of the pilot dues on entering and departing from the various ports, and the charge was found to be of that oppressive character, that unless some alleviation were granted, it was likely the small coasting trade would have to be discontinued, because, at the present rates, it was being carried on at a loss to those engaged in that avocation. The Bill also dealt with giving the Marine Board more enlarged powers, so as to grant certificates of competency to masters and others, and it likewise compelled those persons to submit themselves to examination by the Marine Board to show that they were possessed of certificates of competency before they could take charge of a vessel. Another clause referred to regulations concerning the carriage of passengers to and from the different ports in the colony and outside the colony, the present authority on that subject being the Imperial Passengers Act, which was evidently totally unsuited to the requirements of the colony. It also brought the owners of vessels arriving from foreign ports, and being overcrowded and unprovided and otherwise unfit for passenger traffic, under the control of the authorities here, and enabled those authorities to inflict penalties for such disregard of the comfort and convenience of passengers. There was also a provision made for the carriage of gunpowder, the rates being revised, and made more equitable and lighter than under the present law; but on the more expensive powder and explosives, those rates were maintained. Hitherto, legislation was only in connection with gunpowder, but the Bill took into consideration all other explosives which were now used largely in mining and other operations. The Bill consisted of 196 clauses, which had been very carefully considered,

and, in fact, reconsidered. They had been drafted carefully under the care of the Portmaster; the whole Bill had received mature consideration, and he believed it would be found a most useful measure in consolidating the laws relating to navigation, and in that light he thought it was incumbent on the Government to introduce it to the attention of the House. The clauses would, he had no doubt, in committee receive a greater amount of scrutiny and investigation than could be given to them on the second reading; and as he had no doubt the Bill would, by the concurrence of the House, be permitted to proceed into committee, he should not at the present time further dilate upon it. He was sure it could in no respect be looked upon as a party question, but it was one that could be viewed fairly from all sides of the House, having for its objects the greater security of the sea-going public, greater security to the mercantile portion of the community and those connected with maritime pursuits, and the consolidation of the present Acts, so as to render them more useful and intelligible in character. He begged to move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. BELL confessed, at the outset, that he had not been able to give this Bill the attention he should desire. It was a very long one, and he understood it to be in substitution of the Bill which had been previously before the House, and he thought he noticed in it a clause that was a valuable addition; but the honorable the Treasurer, in moving the second reading, did not tell the House how far, or in what degree it varied from the previous Bill to which he had referred. He should be glad to know, before he gave his consent to the Bill—as he had not had an opportunity, or, at least, as he had not taken advantage of the opportunity of comparing the Bills as he might have done—whether there was any important difference between the Bill now before the House and that previously adopted. If there were not, he should offer no objection to it, because he knew that in most of its provisions the former Bill was a very good one indeed. If the honorable the Treasurer would assure him on that point, he should offer no objection to the second reading of the Bill, whatever might be done in committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was in a position to give an answer to the honorable member for Dalby, because he revised the Bill from the report of the Board of Trade, who recommended the Secretary of State for the Colonies not to advise Her Majesty to assent to the Bill when it went home. He had before him their report, and he paid particular attention to the different matters objected to, and in seeing, when it was revised, that effect was given to all the objections. He had in his office the original Bill, or a copy, with the notes upon it, as it came

from the Colonial Office at home, and every alteration made could be pointed out; and, if honorable members desired it in committee, he was sure the honorable the Colonial Treasurer would be prepared to do so. All the matters that were objected to by the Board of Trade had been altered in the Bill.

Mr. BELL: Then I suppose it is the same Bill?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said practically it was the same Bill.

Question put and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

The PREMIER, in moving the postponement of this Bill until after consideration of Supply, said it was pretty well understood that an understanding had been arrived at between honorable members on both sides of the House, he might be permitted to say, that before they proceeded further, they should deal with the Loan Vote for roads and bridges. Honorable members were aware that in all parts of the colony, and more especially in the North, if the works proposed by the Government were not undertaken, and if the money were not expended at the present time, it would be useless to spend it until next year, because between now and the end of the year was the only time when it could be wisely expended. With that view, and also with a view to facilitating means of communication between many parts of the colony which were suffering from the want of roads and bridges, the Government proposed now to ask for the Loan Vote of £100,000 for those works. He moved—

That this Order of the Day be postponed until after Orders of the Day, Nos. 6 and 7.

Question put and passed.