

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 17 MAY 1877**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday, 17 May, 1877.*

Governor's Answer to the Address.—Chairman of Committees.—Sittings of the House.—Standing Orders Committee.—Other Standing Joint Committees.—Mr. Ramsay's Seat.—Leave of Absence.—Distress on the Western Railway Works.

## GOVERNOR'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS.

The PRESIDENT reported to the House that, in accordance with the order made on the last day of meeting, he, with the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply to the Governor's Opening Speech, and other honourable members of the Council, attended at Government House and delivered that address; and that His Excellency was pleased to return the following answer:—

"To the Honourable the President, and to the Honourable the Members of the Legislative Council.

"MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN,—

"I thank you for your loyal Address.

"I rely confidently on your co-operation in all that may tend to the honour and prosperity of Queensland.

"A. E. KENNEDY.

"Government House,

"16th May, 1877."

The Clerk was instructed to place the document on the records of the House.

## CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That leave of absence, for the period of three months, be granted to the Chairman of Committees.

He said, the circumstances under which this application was made were fresh in the memory of honourable members. They had medical testimony that their Chairman, who had been doing duty for the last sixteen years, could not in the ordinary course of events be expected to perform his duties

for some considerable time to come. It would be becoming on the part of the House to grant the leave asked for. He hoped that in the interval the honourable gentleman would be restored to his usual vigour, and be enabled to return to his position. The motion would not have been made had the honourable gentleman not occupied the position of Chairman so long, and, under the circumstances, he (the Postmaster-General) thought there could be no objection to it.

Question put and passed.

#### SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business, at three o'clock p.m., on Wednesday and Thursday in each week.

Those were the usual days that had been found generally convenient for honourable members. But, since he had tabled his notice of motion, a suggestion had been made, that it would be more convenient for the bulk of honourable members if the time appointed for the meeting of the House were half-past two instead of three o'clock; thereby making the actual hour of assembling practically three o'clock, instead of, as now, half-past three. He might state that, personally, he had no objection to the House meeting earlier—in, fact, it would be better for him;—if it was agreeable to honourable gentlemen, he should amend the motion to meet their view.

After deliberation, the question was put as it stood.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY said he should be very sorry to oppose the will of the House in this matter; but he was in favour of retaining the old rule of meeting, which he understood to be three for half-past three o'clock.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: That was the present motion.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: He spoke on behalf of the medical men, for whom the early hour would be inconvenient, and would, of course, destroy entirely their chance of making an afternoon visit to their patients.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE: Give the patients a chance!

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: His honourable friend said they should give the patients a chance. Well, he (Dr. O'Doherty) spoke from a selfish motive.

After further deliberation,

The PRESIDENT reminded the Council that by altering the usual hour of meeting they might perhaps interfere with some business passing between the two Houses. The Assembly met at three o'clock, and it might be inconvenient if the Council met at a different hour. That was

the objection taken once before to altering the time of meeting.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said he was one of those who, in discussing the matter quietly, yesterday, when there was no quorum, considered that there would be great convenience in altering the hour of meeting. On many occasions the mere fact of having an extra half hour before dinner time would obviate the necessity for re-assembling in the evening, and, in that view, he had expressed himself in favour of a change. But, if there was likely to be any inconvenience, he did not wish to press his view any further. He thought, however, that to meet half-an-hour earlier in the day would be a great convenience.

Question put and passed.

#### STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members, viz.:—The Honourable the President, the Honourable H. G. Simpson, the Honourable A. H. Brown, the Honourable George Edmondstone, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and with authority to confer on subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

This motion was necessary to meet one of the provisions of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Council, which said that, at the opening of the session, a committee of five members should be appointed a Standing Orders Committee. He had selected the names of gentlemen who would be generally acceptable to the House. He had put his own name down, because he believed it was the practice to include the representative of the Government in the Standing Orders Committee. If it was not thought necessary by the House that he should be a member of the committee, he should feel no regret, his time being otherwise fully occupied.

Question put and passed.

#### OTHER STANDING JOINT COMMITTEES.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. Library Committee.—That The Honourable The President, The Honourable E. I. C. Browne, and the mover, be appointed Members of the Joint Committee to manage the Library.

2. Refreshment Rooms Committee.—That The Honourable The President, The Honourable J. C. Heussler, and The Honourable K. I. O'Doherty, be appointed Members of the Joint Committee for the Management of the Refreshment Rooms.

3. Parliamentary Buildings Committee.—That The Honourable The President, The Honourable H. G. Simpson, and The Honourable F. T. Gregory, be appointed Members of the Joint Committee for the Management and Superintendence of the Parliament Buildings.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE said, before the question was decided, he wished to bring before the notice of the House, a subject which would fairly, and especially, come under the consideration of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee, when duly formed. It was a subject he brought before the House last session. Although the Council came to a decision upon it then, and perfectly agreed with the views he held, and although some action had been taken further; yet so far nothing practical had been done. It was this:—He brought to the notice of the House the want of lights in the stable-yard of the Parliament House: it was perfectly dangerous for honourable members going out there on a dark night. There was not a single light there to light them on their way. Again, there was only accommodation for six carriages in the coach-house. If a seventh vehicle went there it must remain out in the stable-yard, in the rain or heavy dew, as the case might be. The subject was one which affected both Houses; and he thought that the members of the Assembly on the joint committee would have taken notice of it, as their House were really more interested in the want of the accommodation than the Council, being more numerous and having more frequent and late sittings. He hoped that it would be taken up by the committee immediately, and that they would see that the requirements of the House were met. Certain action, he believed, had been taken by the President in regard to the requirements of the Council, during the recess; and the House might desire to hear some explanation touching the result.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable gentleman had alluded to a subject which he took a little interest in, and which he brought before the House on a previous occasion; and he recollected that allusion was made by the honourable gentleman, last session, to the want of lights in the stable-yard. He (the President) could assure the honourable gentleman that he had made every exertion in his power to get a lamp placed there. It had been asked for over and over again, but it had not been placed there, and who to get hold of to do it, he really did not know. He trusted, however, as the honourable gentleman said, that when the Parliamentary Buildings Committee were formed and met together, they would be able, with the assistance of the House, to devise some scheme by which the wants of the Council establishment would be met as they arose. The honourable member was reported in "Hansard" to have said:—

"He should take the opportunity of bringing before the House one requirement which was urgent, and that was the lighting of the stable-yard. It was not necessary to all members of the House, because all were not in the habit of using the stables; but to those who did use the stables, the yard was really dangerous at night, especially on a dark night."

He drew his attention to the subject, and he (the President) sent a request to the Secretary of Public Works thereupon: he spoke to the then Minister for Works, who was now the present Treasurer, and that honourable gentleman stated that the stables would be enlarged. Though he had sent in a requisition, yet the work had not been done. The stables and the coach-house were certainly not adequate to the requirements of honourable members of Parliament. As further attention had been called to the subject, it must be that very shortly the inconveniences complained of would be remedied.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON said he was very glad the question had been raised by the Honourable Mr. Browne, because he was one of the sufferers. It must be in the knowledge of every member of Parliament that a very considerable proportion of honourable members not only of the Council, but of the Assembly also, lived so far from the Parliamentary Buildings that they were compelled to use vehicles of some sort to perform their duties. In regard to the yard being without lights, he could bear out the Honourable Mr. Browne's remarks: it was positively dangerous for honourable members in the dark when a number of them were going away at night. In fact, he believed the honourable gentleman and himself very nearly had a collision once, in consequence of the darkness. Seeing that the subject had been brought up again, and that a new committee were to be appointed, if he was appointed a member he should make it part of his duty to endeavour to get something done. As to the latter part of the complaint, insufficient accommodation in the coach-house, he thought that would fall through; because it was possible, from what he heard—the President might be able to tell the House something?—that the money required for enlarging the buildings might be voted this session; in which case, the enlargement would involve the removal of the stables and coach-house;—and it would be a pity to spend anything to increase their accommodation, if they were likely to be removed in the course of the year. As to the mere lighting of the yard, he did not see why such an urgent requirement should not, as it ought to be, carried out immediately. He was very sorry to have heard—he could not say on unmistakable authority, but on authority that he gave credit to—that the present Minister for Works simply declined to sign any vouchers for the Council; and that the honourable gentleman had done so consistently for many months past. Whether the honourable gentleman had expressed his refusal to sign anything for the Council in so many words, he (Captain Simpson) did not know; but he had heard, on good authority, that every voucher from the Council was quietly laid aside, while every

voucher from the other House was signed and passed. Why that should be so, he was at a loss to account.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He did not know anything about his honourable colleague having refused to sign vouchers for the Council. He very much regretted that the Honourable Captain Simpson had made such a statement to the House, without being in a position to justify it in any way. From what he knew of his honourable colleague, the Minister for Works, he was sure there was no truth whatever in the statement. If his honourable colleague had come to such an important decision as to refuse to pass vouchers from the Legislative Council, he thought he would have communicated the fact to him (the Postmaster-General), especially as he was a member of the House. It would be a great discourtesy to him, on the part of the Minister for Works, to come to such a decision. The Honourable Captain Simpson should not have made the statement he had made to the House. As regarded what had been stated by his honourable friend, Mr. Browne, he agreed that it was essential to have a lamp in the yard; and he knew of no reason why a lamp should not be put up. He did not know who was in fault. However, as the matter had been brought up, he should make inquiries into it, and endeavour to get it remedied.

Question put and passed.

The resolutions were ordered to be communicated to the Legislative Assembly by message, in the usual form.

#### MR. RAMSAY'S SEAT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That an Address be presented to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government bringing under his notice the fact that the Honourable Robert Ramsay, an honourable member, is believed to have been absent from this Council for two successive sessions without the permission of Her Majesty or of the Governor of the colony, contrary to the provisions of the 23rd section of the Constitution Act of 1867, and praying His Excellency to submit the legality of the seat of the said honourable member to this House for hearing and determination.

He said the motion had been tabled in pursuance of the provisions of the Constitution Act, which, amongst other things, provided that

"If any Legislative Councillor shall for two successive sessions of the legislature of the said colony fail to give his attendance in the said Legislative Council without the permission of her Majesty or of the Governor of the colony signified by the said Governor to the Legislative Council \* \* \* his seat in such Council shall thereby become vacant."

Then, he found on reference to the records of the House that the Honourable Mr. Ramsay was summoned to the Legislative

Council early in January, 1874; he occupied a seat in the House on three occasions during January, 1874. The House then was adjourned for some time, and, on the 28th of March,

"The President informed the Council that he had received a letter from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor announcing that His Excellency had been pleased to grant leave of absence to the Honourable Robert Ramsay, for twelve months from this date."

The session of 1874 passed over in due course; and the next session began on the 27th April, 1875, and concluded on the 10th September of that year. Another session commenced on the 23rd May, 1876, and ended on the 1st December, 1876. During those two last sessions it did not appear that Mr. Ramsay received the permission of either "Her Majesty or of the Governor" to be absent; and, as he was not present in the Council, therefore, in pursuance of the twenty-third section of the Constitution Act, he had forfeited his seat. The twenty-fourth section of the same Act provided that

"Any questions which shall arise respecting any vacancy in the Legislative Council \* \* \* shall be referred by the Governor to the said Legislative Council to be by the said Legislative Council heard and determined."

It appeared that on such an occasion the course adopted was for the Council to put the Governor in motion; and accordingly, he proposed to follow the usual course, by Address, which he asked the House to agree to.

Question put and passed.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion, unopposed, by the Honourable E. I. C. BROWNE, leave of absence for one month was granted to the Honourable Louis Hope.

#### DISTRESS ON THE WESTERN RAILWAY WORKS.

On the usual motion for the adjournment of the House, by the POSTMASTER-GENERAL,

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY rose to call the attention of the Council to the very grave state of matters that had developed itself along the Great Western Railway line. He said he could only judge of it from the reports in the daily press, and from the proceedings in the Lower House of Parliament. From the statements in the papers and the discussions in the Assembly, it seemed to him that the Council would not be doing their duty as one of the branches of the legislature if they did not give their attention to the state of matters existing along the railway line from Dalby to Roma. A very serious attack of fever had shown itself amongst the people employed on the works in progress.

According to the report of the special commissioner sent up by the leading newspaper of Brisbane, the fever affected at least seventy-five per cent. of the men employed on some particular parts of the line; and, in addition, it affected their wives and families direfully. He had had personal experience, here, in Brisbane, of such being the case. In conjunction with many other persons, he had had to put his hand into his pocket to assist families that had been brought down, or sent down, by railway, and that had been conveyed to this city without absolutely any provision whatever being made to put them in the hospital or to relieve them in any way in their distress. To his personal knowledge, one family, consisting of father and mother and three children, all affected with a bad form of fever, were found at half-past ten o'clock at night, on the platform of the Railway Station, in Brisbane, without a penny in their possession to procure food or shelter, or attendance; and no provision had been made for them. He believed that that family had been forwarded from the Downs, aided by the contributions and assistance of the servants of the Railway Department. It happened that he was called upon to attend them on the occasion. He said such a state of things deserved the most serious attention of the Government.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: That was not a singular case. From the reports that had been published, there were many precisely similar cases; and confirmation of the statement was given in another place a few nights ago. He might say generally that an amount of suffering of the most intense and heartrending kind existed at the present moment amongst numbers of our fellow-colonists, who happened to have dropped upon that special portion of the railway line in course of construction between Dalby and Roma. He had read statements in the press, and he had heard it stated, that the Government had no business to interfere in cases of the kind. He could conceive of nothing more inhuman than such statements. He hoped there would not be found in the Council Chamber the echo of such, and that not a voice would be raised favouring such inhumanity. He said decidedly that the subject demanded the prompt and energetic interference of the Government. Honourable gentlemen knew what a class the navvies were—the men who dug out and built up the railways of the colony,—they were not men of capital; they worked hard, and lived on the returns of their daily labour. If they could not work, they had not the means of living. It was for the Government, when they found that a frightful disease prevailed amongst those people, a disease which could only be

paralleled by the terrible Panama fever, of which most honourable gentlemen had heard;—it was for the Government to interpose, and not to leave those people alone. They should be looked after by the contractors, some said. The contractors never contemplated anything like what had occurred; and he did not think it was a fair thing to throw upon their shoulders all the responsibility and care of the sick and distressed people. They had, he believed, done their duty in a very humane manner whenever they had been called upon. But it was not right for the contractors to be called upon to protect the people under the circumstances that existed. He held that it was essentially the work of the Government to step in and to protect, in some efficient way, those people from the effects of the frightful fever. There were, of course, different methods in which the Government could interfere. They could step in, as had been done already by the Colonial Secretary, and have recourse to measures that, so far as they went, were praiseworthy;—but, as he believed, those measures were scarcely adequate to meet the emergency that had arisen. As he had learned, the Colonial Secretary himself, when informed of the prevalence of sickness, went as near as possible to the scene of distress; but, as the honourable gentleman admitted, electioneering considerations really prevented him from taking such active steps as he might have been inclined otherwise to have taken for the relief of the people; and, after consulting with some persons, and expressing his willingness to do all he could do, he caused several special hospital tickets to be issued, and arrangements to be made to have the sick people brought down as quickly as possible to Dalby, Toowoomba, and Brisbane. It was a fact, that the fever had become developed to such an alarming extent, that all the hospitals from Dalby down to Brisbane were now overcrowded. That was the case in Toowoomba, where not only the Hospital was overcrowded, but, in addition, the Immigration Depot was filled with the sick. The Brisbane Hospital was also overcrowded from the number of fever patients taken into that institution. A grave question now arose. He submitted that the most judicious and economical way of meeting the difficulty was not adopted; and, most certainly, it was not the most humane mode of dealing with the sick. It had given rise to the necessity for dragging the poor people hundreds of miles while absolutely suffering from the fever; and he could say that some of them had been found in Brisbane in a very much worse condition than when they started. They were first carried in carts and other rough conveyances, which alone could be got hold of in distant places; then they were

put into the railway; and, with not a single soul to do anything for them, they were landed in Brisbane exhausted. What could be expected but that they would be worse for such treatment? A rational course should be adopted by the Government. At the nearest possible place to the scrub that a healthy spot could be found, a depôt should be formed to which the sick people should be brought; and thus would be avoided the danger of dragging them long distances. He held that it was the urgent duty of the Government to look after the wives and families of the unfortunate men who were struck down in the way described. He could not believe that we had reached that cool heartless stage at which the condition of unfortunate women and children left absolutely destitute of the means of living were to be contemplated with indifference by the Government; or, that they could be regarded as utterly valueless, or not worth the little cost in money, or time and trouble, needed to save their lives. The colony paid £16 per head on an average for bringing those people out here; and, on the ground of economy alone, we ought to protect them now, as much as possible. So far from blaming the Government, or leading the House to believe that the Government were not anxious to do as much for the poor people as ought to be done he wished only to urge that they had not taken the steps that ought to have been taken in such an emergency as had arisen. If there were no sanitary authority in the colony, he could believe there was a difficulty in the way of their acting in the best manner; and that they ought to catch hold of any medical man, and, asking his advice, act upon it forthwith. But there was the Central Board of Health, whose Chairman was the Colonial Secretary; and it seemed to him (Dr. O'Doherty) that the obvious course for the honourable gentleman was to apply for advice to that body, and to act in accordance with its advice;—that was, if the functions of the Board were, as he took it, they were, to advise the Government in matters of the kind under notice. He, for one, could not understand why the Colonial Secretary should have acted as he had done, and why he should not have applied promptly to that board for advice as to the most judicious course to adopt in meeting the difficulty presented to him. He was not the apologist of the board; he did not pretend to any such position. But the Central Board of Health had been appointed by the Government as an advising body in all matters affecting the public health; and really, he could not understand why it had not been applied to. If it had been applied to, it would at once have advised the Government to send a skilled medical man on to the scene, with instructions to advise the Government how to deal with all cases of

fever already existing, and also to adopt preventive measures against the extension of all disease. That it seemed to him, was the most important thing. Judging from the special reports of the *Courier*, the fever was progressive and was increasing; and the probability was that as the works extended, the fever would go on increasing. Therefore he held that it was but an act of humanity for the Government to take the most active and energetic measures to prevent, if possible, the further progress of the disease. He should, perhaps, apologise for taking up so much of the time of honourable members; but he had waited to see if an older member of the Council than himself would have referred to the subject. He believed it was of the greatest importance. Having himself witnessed the frightful effects of the fever in some cases, he thought he should be wanting in his duty as a member of the legislature, if he did not call the attention of the Council to the subject.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN must say that he agreed with a great deal that had fallen from the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty. He had heard of the subject lately; not being far from the scene of distress, he had been brought into contact with persons who had been there, and had heard a great deal from them immediately; and he did not think the account given by the honourable gentleman of the state of the people affected by disease along the railway line was at all exaggerated;—he believed, indeed, that the state of affairs was worse, in many cases, than had been described. Although it might be a disputed question, whether the Government were bound to step in or not—he would not himself dispute it for a moment—yet they were bound to see that some relief was afforded to those persons who were not capable of helping themselves. With the part of the colony where the Western Railway was now extending he had been familiar many years. Where the people were cutting through the great scrubs there was not, for many a mile, a camp in the immediate vicinity of the line; there were no roads by which ordinary vehicles could travel. He would put it to honourable members—How could men lowered by such a weakening disease as that which affected them, get away from the evil without ambulances? He was only astonished that they had not heard of greater mortality having taken place. The Government were, he thought, bound to make special inquiry as to the best way of assisting to remedy the evil. One thing he must mention, because he was inclined to think there was some truth in it; it was, that a great deal of illness had been caused by the number of places, commonly called “shanties,” for the sale of grog without

license, existing along the line. He could give that on pretty good authority. It was a subject that the Government ought to investigate closely by means of the police. He had himself thought of bringing it before the notice of the Government, so that steps might be taken to suppress the evil. However, he hoped sincerely that they would adopt the suggestion thrown out by the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty.

The PRESIDENT said he felt very glad that the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty had brought the subject under the consideration of the Council, because he agreed with him that it was one which the Upper House of Parliament should not allow to pass without remark. To honourable gentlemen who were familiar with the outside districts of this colony, fever and ague was nothing novel. They were very well aware that on occupying new country it was always found more or less prevalent. He had seen, and so had the honourable gentleman who spoke last, a new district depopulated, so far as servants were concerned, from the effects of fever and ague. But they had never seen it attack large bodies of men, as the navvies on the railway line were; they were almost an army, forcing their way through the dense scrubs of the interior;—and, under the circumstances, it was a contingency that the Government should make some provision for. He thought that hospital accommodation should be provided as near the scrubs as possible—at no very great distance away, at any rate, and where there was clear air and good water. The buildings might be of wood, portable, and constructed so that the floors should not be in contact with the ground. They could be built in Brisbane, and put together at the most favourable places for establishing hospitals. Indeed, he could not understand why some arrangement of that sort should not be provided, because the existing evil was a growing one. Honourable members must recollect that they were legislating for carrying railways through remote tracts of country for years to come, in order to open up the land for settlement and to be put to better use than it was put to at present. They saw only the commencement of the evils of fever and ague, and they would do well to look ahead and provide means for meeting future evils of the same kind as they were now considering. As the subject was started, it would be as well for some honourable member hereafter to make it his speciality to move for a Select Committee to inquire into it, and to report upon the best way of providing for dealing with it, even in more distant places than where it existed at present.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON: Being a member of the Central Board of Health, the same as his honourable friend, Dr.

O'Doherty, he thought it necessary to say a few words with regard to the subject which had been started by him. First of all, he would commence by saying that although he would not, for a moment, hesitate to press upon the Government the necessity for carrying out everything that might be required in the present instance; yet, in future, it ought to be a warning to contractors. The expense, in the first instance, ought fairly to fall upon the employers of the labourers who were sick. He knew, however, that such sickness as prevailed was totally unexpected; or, no doubt, it would have been provided for. It would be, as the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty properly said, inhuman in the Government not to take every possible step to minimise the distress of the sick people and their families. He should not go further into the subject, because the House had had suggestions from the President and the Honourable Mr. Sandeman as to the mode of dealing with the evil. All he would say, was that, in the first instance, the responsibility rested on the Commissioner for Railways; but not as an excuse for the Government not having done all that should have been done. In reference to the suggestion of the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty, regarding the Government consulting the Central Board of Health, he might mention that the board was appointed in 1872, and that by the Act constituting it the Colonial Secretary was made chairman. During the time that had elapsed since, the colony had four different Colonial Secretaries. The first one, Mr. Palmer, attended regularly the meetings of the board, and took the greatest interest in its proceedings. He was perhaps the most regular attendant of the whole of the members of the board. From the date that Mr. Palmer ceased to be Colonial Secretary, Mr. Macalister, his successor, attended the board meetings twice. During his term of office, Mr. Stewart made his appearance twice; and the present Colonial Secretary, the other members of the board had not the pleasure of seeing yet. Under the circumstances, it seemed almost a farce that such a body should be in existence. If the board was not to be utilised for the purposes for which it was instituted by Act of Parliament, it ought to be abolished. There was work for it to do, if the Government paid proper regard to it. There was something ridiculous in the Colonial Secretary being chairman and never consulting it in such a special and important matter as that under notice. The Government seldom consulted the board, and so far it had little to do beyond what was brought under its notice by the local board in certain matters of regulations. The present chairman took no interest in it in any way. He urged upon the Government that the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty



had suggested the proper course for them to take. A progress report from the Central Board of Health had been laid on the table of the House, from which honourable members could see what had been done heretofore. If the Government would consult the board, the outbreak of fever on the railway would be met in some regular and rapid manner. However, he did not wish to blame the Government in any way.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE said he did not wish to continue the discussion. He was glad that it took place. The House were indebted to the Honourable Dr. O'Doherty for starting it; and the apology made by him for so doing was perfectly unnecessary. He could not agree with the Honourable Captain Simpson that the contractors were first responsible for the welfare of their employees. The latter were employed for daily labour or for certain work; and if they did that work and gave their labour they were paid; if they did not do it, they were not paid. There was nothing in the contract or agreement that the contractors were to provide for the men in their illness. As a matter of proper feeling and humanity, he thought the duty of looking after the sick lay upon the whole colony. When honourable members spoke of the Government they spoke of the representative authority of the colony, the only authority that could carry out the wishes of the whole colony. Therefore he could not agree with the honourable gentleman in his proposition that the responsibility lay, in the first instance, with the contractors; it was a responsibility belonging to them as to all other colonists—one in which they all shared as Christians.

Question put and passed.

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