

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 1878

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1878.

QUEENSLAND.



DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

DURING THE

FIFTH SESSION OF THE SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE COLONY
OF QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF APRIL, IN THE FORTY-FIRST YEAR OF THE REIGN
OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1878.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 24 April, 1878.

Meeting of Parliament.—The Opening Speech.—Resignation of a Member.—New Members.—Absent Member.—Disallowance of Standing Order.—Assertion of Privilege.—Address in Reply.—Public Business.—Privilege.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

PURSUANT to Proclamation of His Excellency the Governor, Sir ARTHUR EDWARD KENNEDY, K.C.M.G., C.B., bearing date the 20th day of March ultimo, Parliament met this day, "for the despatch of business."

Honourable gentlemen attended timely in their places; and

The Clerk of the Parliaments read the Proclamation.

At noon,

His Excellency the Governor came to the Parliament House, and was received at the main entrance by the President and other honourable gentlemen of the Legislative Council, and, accompanied by them and attended by his suite, he proceeded to the dais in the Upper Chamber.

The House being seated,

The Usher of the Black Rod was directed to convey a message to the Legislative Assembly, that His Excellency desired the attendance of the Speaker and honourable members: and the Lower House being assembled in the place reserved for them below the bar,

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THE OPENING SPEECH

was read by HIS EXCELLENCY, as follows:—

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

"The important matters requiring attention at the present time have induced me to have recourse to your advice and assistance at an earlier period of the year than usual.

"I am glad to be able to inform you that the drought which, at the end of the year, prevailed throughout the coast districts, has not produced the disastrous consequences which at one time were anticipated. The losses in stock have, no doubt, been considerable; but agricultural and pastoral settlement has not been seriously checked. The fact that the proportion of the March rents not paid in due time does not exceed the usual average is a satisfactory proof that the energy, industry, and self-reliance of the Selectors have enabled them to overcome their temporary difficulties, and there is now no reason to entertain any apprehensions regarding their future welfare.

"I have lately had an opportunity of visiting some of the towns in the Central Districts, and while much pleased to observe the contented and prosperous condition of the people, it was especially gratifying to me to find that, as the Representative of Her Majesty the

Queen, I met everywhere with a most cordial reception.

"At a time when, from the possibility of a European war, considerable attention has been attracted to the question of Local Defences, I am happy to know that the reorganisation of the Volunteer Forces has led to their being placed on a more effective footing. The services of Lieutenant-Colonel Scratchley have been obtained as an inspecting officer; and under his advice measures are being actively taken, which it is believed will, in the event of the mother country being involved in war, render the more important points of our coasts secure from attack. An Artillery Staff Officer has been appointed; a Camp of Instruction has been formed; and other steps have been taken which are calculated to promote efficiency in the Volunteer body. You will be asked, however, to make provision for a small Permanent Staff, without which our Defence Forces cannot be made really effective.

"A commencement has been made of the railway enterprises sanctioned by Parliament during last session. The working surveys of all the lines have been pushed on with energy, and tenders have already been accepted for the construction of several sections; other tenders will shortly be called for, and my Ministers hope to have under construction within a few months the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, as well as that from Townsville to Charters Towers. My Ministers have never wavered in their opinion, which I have previously announced to you, that in addition to the main trunk lines already authorised, branch lines should be made in the more thickly-populated agricultural districts, and they had hoped to be able this year to submit the plans and sections of some of these lines; but having regard to the unsettled state of Europe, and the uncertainties and risks which a European War would involve, they fear that they will not be justified during the present session in asking your sanction to the necessary loan for their construction. In the meantime, all necessary surveys will be pushed forward in order that no time may be lost when opportunity offers for the prosecution of these important works.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

"The Estimates for the ensuing year have been carefully prepared, and will be laid before you at an early date. The Revenue returns are good, and every year shows a steady advance in the prosperity of this great territory.

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The increase of population and the rapid extension of settlement in various parts, both

of the Southern and Northern Districts, have rendered it necessary that the present distribution of electoral power should be revised and amended. A Bill will be forthwith submitted to you for that purpose, in which you will also be invited to make provision for the periodical adjustment of Representation. In all British communities possessing parliamentary institutions it is most essential that fair expression should be given to the wishes of the people by their Representatives in Parliament assembled. I feel assured that you will devote your prompt and most earnest consideration to this measure, and I trust that it may become law sufficiently early to enable the necessary steps for the compilation of the Electoral Rolls for the new districts to be taken at the usual period during the present year.

"A subject of scarcely less importance than the question of Representation is that of Local Self-Government. The time has undoubtedly arrived when some share of the work now devolving on the Central Government ought to be undertaken by the several Districts of the Colony, and a fair division of responsibility made between the Local and Central authorities. I have to bespeak your most careful attention to a Bill dealing with this subject, which will be laid before you at an early date.

"Bills will also be introduced, dealing with the following amongst other subjects:—The better regulation of the Civil Service; the amendment of the Laws relating to Public Health; making better provision for the care and education of Orphans and Deserted Children; the Regulation of Travelling Stock; an amendment of The Polynesian Labourers Act; the amendment of the Laws relating to the Resumption of Land for the construction of Roads and other Public Works; the prevention of accidents in Mines; and the repeal of the Gold Fields Act Amendment Act of last Session.

"You will also be invited to make temporary provision to enable deserving scholars from our Grammar Schools to proceed to Universities in the neighbouring Colonies or in Great Britain, until a University shall have been established here.

"I trust that these and all matters submitted to you will be dispassionately discussed, and that you may be guided to a wise decision upon all questions concerning the welfare of the people for whom it is your duty to legislate."

Thereafter His Excellency and suite left the Chamber, and the Assembly being also withdrawn, the sitting was suspended until half-past three o'clock.

The House resumed as appointed.

RESIGNATION OF A MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT announced to the House that he had received a communication from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, informing him that the Honourable William Houstoun Long had resigned his seat as a member of the Legislative Council.

NEW MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT said he had further to acquaint the House that he had received another letter from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, informing him that the Governor had, with the advice of the Executive Council, issued writs of summons to the gentlemen named, as members of the Legislative Council:—James Swan, Esquire; John Sargent Turner, Esquire; Charles Sydney Dick-Melbourne, Esquire; and James Cowlishaw, Esquire.

The Usher thereupon announced new members to be sworn, and they were introduced, and the said members took the oath and subscribed the roll in the order following:—

The Hon. JAMES SWAN, introduced by the Hon. W. Pettigrew and the Hon. D. F. Roberts.

The Hon. JOHN SARGENT TURNER, introduced by the Hon. F. T. Gregory and the Hon. J. F. McDougall.

The Hon. JAMES COWLISHAW, introduced by the Hon. F. H. Hart and the Postmaster-General.

ABSENT MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT said he had received from the Hon. G. Sandeman a notification that the honourable gentleman would not be able to attend in his place during the next two or three weeks.

In answer to the Hon. J. F. McDougall, who wanted to move for leave of absence,

The PRESIDENT said that leave was not required until after three weeks.

DISALLOWANCE OF STANDING ORDER.

The PRESIDENT informed the House that he had received, from His Excellency the Governor, the following letter:—

“Government House,

“Brisbane, 1st March, 1878.

“SIR,—With reference to the Additional Standing Rule and Order adopted by the Legislative Council on the 1st November, 1877, and presented by you on the 5th of the same month for approval, I am advised that the Standing Order of 1st November, 1877, does not come within the terms of the 8th section of The Constitution Act of 1867, and that I am, therefore, unable to approve of it.

“I have the honour to be,

“Sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“A. E. KENNEDY,
“Governor.”

And he laid it on the table of the House that it might be before them for future action.

ASSERTION OF PRIVILEGE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in pursuance of ancient practice and in order to assert the rights of the Council, moved, *pro forma*, that a Bill to amend the law relating to Weights and Measures be read the first time.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The PRESIDENT having acquainted the House that, for the greater accuracy, he had obtained a copy of the Speech which His Excellency the Governor had delivered to Parliament, and having read so much of it as was addressed to both Houses;

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider of and prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency, such Committee to consist of the Honourable J. Swan, the Honourable J. S. Turner, the Honourable J. C. Heussler, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

The Committee retired from the Chamber; and, after a short absence, being returned;—

The Hon. J. SWAN brought up the Report of the Committee and moved that it be read by the Clerk at the table.

Question put and passed.

Whereupon,

The Clerk read as follows;—

“To His Excellency Sir ARTHUR EDWARD KENNEDY, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, 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 thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present Session.

“2. We shall not fail to give our earnest consideration and attention to the different measures which will be submitted to us; and we beg to assure Your Excellency that our best efforts will be made to promote and advance the general welfare of the community.”

The Hon. J. SWAN said that, after a residence of over thirty years in Brisbane, he felt it an honour to be amongst honour-

able gentlemen of the Legislative Council. With reference to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor, he had no hesitation in saying that he did not think a better or more practical speech had ever been delivered at the opening of any previous Parliament in Queensland. After looking over it, he had just jotted down a few notes of comment. The second paragraph of the Speech dealt with a matter that all honourable gentleman were more or less personally acquainted with. It was gratifying to hear that the selectors had so well overcome their losses by the drought; and, he might add, as far as his own observations had extended, stockholders and agriculturists in general had equally risen above their severe losses. As a proof of this, honourable gentlemen need only refer to what His Excellency said in regard to the payment of the March rents, and to the drought not having produced the disastrous consequences which had been anticipated. He had no doubt that, as far as the Council were concerned, aid would be given to the Government in their efforts to make the Volunteer Force a body second to none in the Australian colonies. From what he had seen of those forces at the late encampment at Sandgate, if they continued their present discipline, he should not feel the least alarm for the safety of the community should a foreign enemy double their number manage to land: the Volunteers would, he thought give a good account of any hostile invader.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. J. SWAN: As regarded the railway enterprises sanctioned last session, he thought the present Ministry had done their duty, and that progress had been made, as far as time and other circumstances would allow. Still, he hoped, if the unsettled state of Europe should end in peace, that the Ministry would be enabled not only to carry out the lines already authorised, but to see their way to initiate those branch lines that were more urgently required;—the more so, as it was found that population was increasing with a rapid extension of settlement throughout the colony, to save a great future outlay in purchasing land alienated and occupied. The sooner such work was accomplished the better. When the proposed Bill dealing with the electoral power and local self-government were introduced, he believed the Council would give them the utmost attention, and help to render them as efficient as possible—as would, also, be the case with all other measures introduced. With those remarks, he begged to move—

That the Address as read by the Clerk be adopted.

The Hon. J. S. TURNER seconded the motion, and in doing so said he had no intention of occupying much time, as all the

matters in the Governor's Speech which he had thought it desirable to refer to had been sufficiently dealt with by the honourable mover; it therefore only remained for him to express his personal appreciation of His Excellency's Speech and his general approval of the policy which it served to indicate, by supporting with great pleasure the adoption of the Address.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he should hardly like the Address to pass without some comments upon the different matters before the House in the Governor's Speech. The honourable gentleman who moved the Address stated that a more practical Speech had never been read to Parliament. As far as the practicability of the Speech went, he (Mr. Murray-Prior) certainly could not agree with the honourable gentleman; but he thought that a more difficult Speech for an oppositionist to answer had seldom been made.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: A great deal indeed was said in the Speech, but it in reality amounted to very little. In fact, it was put in a way in which nearly everybody must agree with—except a few matters on which he should remark. He trusted sincerely that England would not be brought into a war, and that therefore the Queensland Volunteers would not have to defend the colony. He had no doubt that, if our coasts should be invaded, every person capable of bearing arms would be glad to assist the Volunteers in defending "hearths and homes." For himself, he always thought the Volunteer movement was good; it was beneficial to the rising generation—promoting *esprit de corps*—giving youth a good carriage and making them more manly than they could otherwise be, without military training;—therefore, he trusted the Volunteer Forces would be supported, and that they would get anything they required for their most effectual organization. The Council would support them, if measures came before the House, in the only way that they could do so. With regard to the paragraph in the Speech about railways, no doubt the Government had brought forward many schemes and had managed to get them passed by Parliament. He disagreed with all their policy in that respect, with the exception of the extension of the main trunk lines; and he favoured those only where the country was in a position to provide for them. Several of the Government proposals were for lines which could not possibly pay; lines which were made for political purposes, which gave work to certain people, and, in fact, gave encouragement to log-rolling. Persons residing in the districts where they were made would be benefited, but at the expense of the whole colony. It was the duty of every member of Parliament

—every honourable member—to think of the country alone and not of the individual gain of any district or of any set of persons. He saw from the Speech that Ministers, by the mouth of his Excellency the Governor, declared that they had never wavered in their opinion as to the necessity for branch lines in the agricultural districts, and that they had hoped this year to be able to submit the plans and sections of some of those lines. That was very good. He knew that the people in his district and in other neighbouring districts were very anxiously looking forward for those lines to be carried out, as they had for a long time a firm belief that they would be undertaken. No doubt the Government were making surveys, which would seem to show that it was their intention to proceed at once with those lines. But, at the same time, it was the general opinion of the people referred to, from the action which they had witnessed, that though the lines were promised, yet they would not be carried out for some reason or other. There was in the Speech one mistake, as far as Ministers were concerned; it was, that they gave no hope to the people in the districts concerned that the small lines would be carried out; they simply said, they would not be carried out this year. In his opinion, they gave very good reasons; and he perfectly agreed with them, and was very glad they had put the matter so. But, still, he thought they would find that they would lose some of their supporters through their candour. As to the Bills which were foreshadowed in the Speech, very much depended upon their nature and context. The Council were not told what they would be. The Representation Bill, and the Local Self-Government Bill would be very difficult to deal with, and only when honourable members should have seen them would they be able to judge whether or not they could support them. There was one other measure which he thought a very good one, if it should be what it ought to be, that for the Regulation of Travelling Stock. He saw that a Bill to amend the Polynesian Labourers Act was to be brought forward; and certainly it was a very great necessity, judging from the way in which the law was worked at present. If the action of Ministers foreshadowed some of the features of the Bill, he did not think the sugar planters would be very much pleased with it. With reference to the proposed repeal of the Gold Fields Act Amendment Act, honourable members who acted with him in opposition, last session, had told the Postmaster General that that Act was not likely to be in force a long time; and, therefore, he was very glad to see that their predictions were about to be verified. The Government were doing a very wise thing in proposing its repeal. Of course, he had

no intention—and he did not know that any other honourable member had any intention—of bringing forward an amendment on the Address. If the promises of the Speech were carried out in accordance with the wishes of his side of the House, no one there would find fault with the Government. It was not usual, it would not be at all politic, for any one on that side to move any amendment; and he did not see what amendment could be moved. The Council were not a party House. He had made his few remarks to indicate what action he should take. It was the duty of every member of the House to give every measure brought before him his best consideration, for the benefit of the country at large; and the Council were ready to pass good measures. If the measures of the Government should be what the Council might think bad for the country, every member would feel it to be his duty to resist them.

The Hon. J. F. McDougall observed, with reference to the paragraph of the Governor's Speech touching the drought, which it was generally thought had broken up, he could not agree with it. He was sorry to say that he thought we were at the commencement of the drought, not at the end of it! He could not admit that the fact of the payment of the large proportion of the March rents was a proof at all of prosperity, of energy, of industry, on the part of the people. It showed, what was perfectly well known, that means could be found to meet a contingency; but it was by no means a proof of the people's well-doing. With reference to the Volunteer movement, though the Government had, perhaps, begun rather late, yet a greater effort should be now made than was the case in past times. Steps should be taken, at the commencement, to familiarise the people with arms and military exercises; and in every school of the colony a system of training to that end should be pursued. It was perfectly well known that what was called "playing at soldiers" was not liked by persons grown up; men did not like to be laughed at going through their preliminary drill. Such objections could not have place if the youngsters at every public school were trained for their duties as Volunteers when they assumed their position and responsibilities as citizens. He quite agreed with the paragraph referring to the redistribution of seats in the Assembly, believing that the time had arrived when a reform of the representation of the colony should take place. Certainly he did not see that much could be said against the Speech; it was one that did not profess a very great deal, and not more than the Government were able to carry out. As he had no intention of opposing it, he should content himself with the remarks he had made.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said the remarks which had fallen from the last two speakers very nearly disposed of the several questions which he had proposed to address the House upon; but he still thought there were one or two points worthy of the attention of honourable members that he would say a few words about. As regarded the Speech as a whole, there was very little to cavil at. It dealt in generalities. As already remarked by one honourable member, it depended upon the way in which the measures proposed should be framed, whether or not they would be carried—upon their value or utility, and the benefit or the harm that might result from them. Amongst other matters, he must refer to that clause of the Speech referring to the prosperous condition of the country. He was in a position to affirm absolutely—he did not speak from suggestions—that the apparent prosperity of the selectors, from their having paid up a large proportion of their rents in March, was not the result of their being in a pecuniary position to pay; but it was simply in consequence of the turn which had taken place in legislation, enabling selectors within certain limits to obtain advances upon the security of their property—their selections. They had been able to borrow money to pay their rents. He was in a position to assert that a very considerable per centage of selectors would not have been able to pay, had they not obtained the money by pledging to a certain extent their lands for the security of the sums advanced to them. Further, he was happy to say, that there were still such elements of prosperity in the colony that he hoped, if the drought was come to an end, the selectors would very quickly tide over it. Therefore, the latter portion of the second paragraph of the Speech might be very fairly taken as not wide of the mark. In regard to the Volunteer Forces, he was very pleased to see that it was contemplated to provide a small but efficient permanent staff. He trusted that when the Ministry were carrying out a measure for that object they would be firm in endeavouring to impress upon honourable members elsewhere the necessity of providing amply for the Volunteer Forces. It might be very well at the present moment, while there was an imminent risk of a European war, to attach importance to the measure; but it was not sufficient to do it when under pressure. Maybe, peace would be established within a few weeks. He sincerely trusted, if such should be the case, that the Government would not in any way withdraw from the position they had taken up, but that they would use their best endeavours to place the Volunteer Forces on a permanent and satisfactory footing. He felt sure that there were many honourable members of

the Council who would thoroughly endorse any measure of that sort when it was placed before them for their concurrence. In regard to the Bill for the amendment of the electoral system of the colony, it was really one which it would be impossible to offer any comments upon at this stage, owing to honourable gentlemen not having the measure in their hands; yet it was one that would be fraught with good or evil entirely according to the nature of its various provisions. It was to be hoped, however, that no effort would be made to very largely increase the representation. It had been already found what an inferior class of men came forward for legislative honours even with the limited number now to be chosen. How small, then, would be the chance of the electors to select competent or suitable men for the responsible duties of legislators, if the representation of the country should be materially altered in regard to the number of representatives to be returned. He trusted that the measure, when it came before the Council, would be one that, from the nature of its provisions, they would be able to support. Passing to the Local Self-Government Bill, such a measure, if honestly framed, was much to be desired. The subject had been before Parliament for two or three years, but had always fallen through from some cause, principally on account of the great difficulty of getting honourable members to agree on the various complicated clauses of the measures proposed. He hoped that the one now proposed by the Government would be sufficiently simple in its provisions to enable the Parliament to carry it into law. It would be a step in the right direction. An honourable member had already referred to the proposed Bill to regulate travelling stock. As the subject was one he had taken a great interest in for many years, and having been entrusted by an honourable member of the Council to draft a Bill dealing with it, he spoke from no momentary thought, but after mature consideration, when he said that such a measure was very necessary, and was capable of being made effective for good. He hoped it would be a good measure, and he thought that under any circumstances the Ministry had done well to propose to bring the subject forward to enable both Houses of Parliament to avail themselves of the opportunity of discussing it, and expressing their opinions with regard to the best provisions to be made. It was further proposed in the Speech to amend the law relating to the resumption of land for the construction of roads; and that was a matter which needed reform. During the past three or four years the country had been entirely in the hands of the Attorney-General—subject to his dictum as to what was law and what was not. Up to that time there had been several enactments

under which resumptions had been made for public works, and more especially the resumption of freehold property for the construction of public roads. The Statute 4th William IV., No. 11, was the principal one, and certainly it protected freeholders to a certain extent, though it was a cumbrous law with many defects. He trusted that if the present state of things was swept away it would give place to some enactment that would confine within reasonable limits the interferences that owners of property were subjected to, and the vexatious treatment they underwent by the authority of the Attorney-General. As to the Gold Fields Act Amendment Act, more than one honourable member present must recollect that it was distinctly pointed out and affirmed as a strong conviction entertained last session by some who opposed the measure, that the Act would never stand the test of twelve months' operation; and, in yielding under protest, they did so because satisfied that no other course than the one now proposed would eventually be pursued—its speedy repeal. Now such was the result of that piece of legislation; the same Ministry that had promoted it now proposed its repeal. There was one other part of the Speech that he proposed to comment upon; the proposal to make provision for deserving scholars for the Grammar Schools to proceed to Universities in the neighbouring colonies. On this subject he had expressed himself very strongly before, which left him loth to pass it by in silence now. The increasing of the expenditure of the colony for the higher class education he always objected to. The burden now borne by the colony for educating the children up to a certain standard—to his mind, a very efficient standard—was quite as much as the State could reasonably be called upon to bear; and any attempt to go beyond that by a measure such as he understood was proposed by the Government would be prejudicial to the best interests of the country, and was such as the House should not be called upon to accede to. If, however, it was to be a limited vote, to send a few scholars who really showed by their talents that they deserved to be advanced to a University, he thought the State might reasonably be called upon to enable such meritorious youths to pursue their studies in the higher sphere and to have the advantages of an academic course. No doubt, there were many who otherwise would run the risk of not arriving at that high condition of mental culture which they desired and were fitted for; simply on account of their parents not having means at their disposal. He trusted that when the proposal of the Government was brought to maturity, the provision made would be supplemented by corresponding fees from the class to be benefited, so as to produce

a fund that would go towards augmenting the amount to be disposed of by the Government under the authority of Parliament; something that should not be burdensome on that class, and that should not prevent wealthy colonists from making in time donations towards the object aimed at. It was, he thought, only fair that parents whose children were to have the advantage contemplated should pay something towards a fund to enable scholars to proceed to the Universities. He had no intention whatever of opposing the Address in Reply; but he had offered his remarks thinking that the present was a suitable occasion on which to express one's opinion.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had it in command from the Governor that His Excellency would be pleased to receive the Address at half-past Twelve o'clock tomorrow; and he expressed a wish that the mover and the seconder and such other honourable members as could conveniently attend would accompany the President to Government House to present the Address.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL laid on the table a heavy batch of returns, despatches, and other papers; and he also gave notice of a series of motions for the appointment of the sessional Standing Committees, and upon other matters. In reference to the latter, he took occasion to express his hope that honourable members would make a House on the next sitting day. He gave his opinion that until the question of the vacant seats of Messrs. Buchanan and Wilson had been determined, twelve would be the number of members necessary to form a quorum; and as there were several important matters to be dealt with, one especially in which he was personally concerned—leave of absence for one month to attend the Intercolonial Conference—he should be glad if a quorum would be present.

PRIVILEGE.

The PRESIDENT said he was desirous to bring under the notice of the House a circumstance which in some small degree affected the privileges of the Council, at any rate, which required attention. It was the fact that at the conclusion of last session, two Bills were reserved for the Royal Assent. No notification was given to the Council of those Bills having received the Royal Assent, and no notice up to the present time had been given except through the *Government Gazette*.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He might interpose by saying that, to-day, he laid on the table of the House a despatch stating that Her Majesty had given her assent to both the Bills in question.

The PRESIDENT: It ought to be communicated to the President.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes; by the Private Secretary.

The PRESIDENT: Yes; a notification ought to be given of those Bills having been assented to.
