

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 1 AUGUST 1878**

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Parliamentary Buildings. It struck him that there was very little, indeed, for him to say beyond what appeared in the report itself. From the report it was seen that the Colonial Architect had been examined on all essential points connected with the Parliamentary Buildings; and the weight of evidence went clearly to show not only the importance but the immediate necessity of steps being taken to carry out the recommendations of the committee. If the whole of the works in connection with the Parliament House were carried out forthwith, there would be a rather large sum of money required. In view of that, the committee had carefully deliberated, to ascertain what portions might be eliminated from the complete design, so as to reduce the expenditure within a reasonable compass, consistent with the really pressing requirements of the Parliament. He (Mr. Gregory) need scarcely recapitulate the items detailed in the evidence of Mr. Stanley, as the report, with the minutes of evidence, was in the hands of honourable members; and he would merely state that the amount asked for was principally on account of the erection of new refreshment rooms and other buildings, such as stables, necessary for the actual requirements of honourable members in the performance of their Parliamentary duties. Hitherto the accommodation in those respects had been inadequate; and the increase to the number of members of the Legislative Assembly just authorised by law rendered some such provision as was now recommended by the committee absolutely imperative. At present there was available from former appropriations for works in connection with the Parliamentary Buildings, a balance of £5,240; and a further sum of £6,010 was asked for, to carry out the necessary works to which he had already referred. By adopting the most economical course, the committee deemed that the amount named would be adequate. Other members of the committee would be able to give the House further information, if it was required.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Perhaps it might be considered a matter for comment if he did not say something about the report. He had his own individual opinion upon it, and that led him to agree with the recommendations of the committee. It must be self-evident to all who were in the habit of using the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms that, during the summer months, they were exceedingly unhealthy and absolutely unfitted to the purpose for which they were intended. There might be a difference of opinion as to the amount of accommodation or luxuries which might be afforded to honourable members in the refreshment rooms; but he thought it would be admitted by everyone that refreshment rooms of some sort were a necessary

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 1 August, 1878.

Parliamentary Buildings.—Conduct of Business.—Volunteer Bill.—Appropriation Bill.—Volunteer Bill.—Toowoomba Gas Bill.—Conduct of Business.

#### PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY moved the adoption of the Report from the Joint Standing Committee of both Houses on the management and superintendence of the

adjunct to the Parliament House, for the convenience of those persons who did not live in the immediate vicinity of the House. Under the circumstances, therefore, refreshment rooms being regarded as a necessity, it struck him that honourable members were agreed that they should be healthy, and of a character in keeping with the architectural design—not an eyesore—of the other portions of the Parliamentary Buildings. The plans attached to the report displayed a tasteful design, which would be an ornament to the city, and in every way suitable to honourable members; the sum asked for was not, he thought, excessive; and he had no objection to the adoption of the report.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN said he agreed with the last speaker in seeing very little objection to the cost of the additions to the Parliamentary Buildings proposed. One thing appeared to be lost sight of; that was the drainage about the House. During the wet season he had noticed along the corridors the evidence of defective sewerage in the walls being saturated by damp rising from the foundations. He knew that it had been proposed that proper appliances should be carried out, and that expenditure was necessary for the perfect drainage of the premises. Speaking of that, was incidental to the subject of the report; but he could not help asking the members of the committee, if they had any information to give the House with reference to the improvement of the drainage of the Parliamentary Buildings? Perhaps, it would be carried out in connection with the erection of the new refreshment rooms. As the Postmaster-General said, it was essential that the refreshment rooms should be healthy; and nothing would tend to that so much, or was of such primary importance, as efficient drainage. He (Mr. Brown) should like to know, now the *façade* was in course of construction, if it was proposed, at the same time, to perfect the drainage of the premises?

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY, with the permission of the House, said he would afford the honourable gentleman an explanation with regard to the drainage of the buildings. The attention of the Colonial Architect had been drawn to the great want in that respect; and that officer had stated that a drain could be constructed for a very moderate sum along the corridor, inclining from both ends, with an outlet from the centre of the building, or falling from the centre to both ends, with an outlet at each end. The Parliament House was a very long building; and the question arose, which was the best plan;—but, he (Mr. Gregory) thought that it would be best left in the hands of the Colonial Architect to decide.

Question put and passed.

#### CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

On the Order of the Day being called, The POSTMASTER-GENERAL expressed his desire to postpone the second reading of the Public Works Lands Resumption Bill and the Local Government Bill until after the consideration in committee of the Volunteer Bill and the Toowoomba Gas and Coke Company Bill. There was a large number of members present, and he took it that there would be no objection to the change he proposed in the order of business, as it was desirable to have as full an expression of opinion on the Volunteer Bill as possible; and as there might be a difficulty in getting a full House after tea. If the House had no objection, he should make a motion accordingly.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

On question put and passed, the first and second Orders of the Day were postponed until after the consideration of the other orders remaining on the paper.

#### VOLUNTEER BILL.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House resolved into Committee of the Whole for the consideration of "a Bill to amend the law relating to the Volunteer Forces in Queensland."

Clause 2—Interpretation.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN suggested that it was of very great importance to define the meaning of the words "actual service," which appeared in several clauses of the Bill.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: If the honourable gentleman would permit the interruption, he would state that he had anticipated the possibility of its being held that the expression was ambiguous; and he proposed that between the words "actual" and "service" the word "military" should be inserted. The words "actual military service" were adopted in the Imperial Statute, and were held to be in themselves sufficiently explanatory;—they implied that the service in which a volunteer would be engaged was of a military, a warlike, character, and were intelligible, without interpretation. As the Bill now stood, he admitted that it was somewhat defective in the respect mentioned; because, in several clauses the words "actual service" occurred, and in two or three other clauses the words "actual military service" were used. It might possibly be held, after the Bill had passed, that it was the intention that there should be a distinction between the two forms of expression, when there was no difference meant. The difficulty would be got over by using one form of expression throughout as in the English Act.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: The explanation met his views.

The Hon. W. D. BOX: Did he understand that a volunteer could not take credit

for other services than "actual military service," say, in resisting invasion? Because, if that view was taken, there had been hitherto no actual military service; nothing beyond enrolment and drill of volunteers.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL**: Nothing he had said warranted the honourable gentleman in arriving at the conclusion which his words seemed to imply. The question raised had reference to penal clauses applying when volunteers were called out for actual military service; in other respects, the Bill dealt with the force as volunteers. For instance, there was a clause which provided that persons enrolling should undertake to serve for so many years. Whatever shape that clause ultimately assumed, the service of the volunteers would be held to mean all classes of service;—if in the case of invasion, actual military service; if there was no invasion, attendance at drill, and so forth.

Agreed to.

Clause 10—Qualifications of members as to age, &c. :—

No person shall be eligible as a volunteer under this Act who is not a natural born or naturalised subject of Her Majesty or who is not except in the case of band or cadet corps of the full age of eighteen years and in the case of band or cadet corps of the full age of twelve years, and who has not passed a medical examination nor shall any person be deemed a volunteer except as a cadet until he shall have taken the oath of allegiance hereinafter prescribed."

The **HON. G. SANDEMAN** said he had heard the question mooted, whether for volunteers the passing of a medical examination was necessary? There were many strong objections to it for a volunteer force, though for a militia force it was quite right. He should like to hear from the Postmaster-General whether he had considered the question.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL** said he thought it was a very good provision, that persons joining the force should pass a medical examination. Some stipulation of that sort was desirable; as it was not the halt, the lame, and the blind who were wanted to become volunteers, but those persons who would be able to do service in any emergency arising. It must be borne in mind that the State would be put to considerable expense for the force;—capitation allowance, arms and accoutrements, ammunition, butts, targets, and instruction in drill. If a man were enrolled who should prove physically incapacitated for actual military service, the money expended on him by the State would be thrown away. He should undergo a medical examination of such a character as to satisfy the authorities that he was fit to undertake the duty which his enrolment as a volunteer entailed upon him; or he should not join the force. In the army, recruits had to undergo a very severe examination, and be proved free

from any physical taint whatever. He (the Postmaster-General) did not know that the examination for volunteers need be so stringent as that; but, at all events, a man ought to present a physical appearance to satisfy the medical examiner that he was fit for the service expected from him.

The **HON. G. SANDEMAN** asked the honourable gentleman, as a volunteer officer, whether the conditions for a medical examination might not have a deterrent effect on persons desirous of joining the force?—He saw the honourable Dr. O'Doherty had entered the committee: perhaps he might be able to enlighten them on the question.

The **HON. F. T. GREGORY**: The question had been raised in the several volunteer corps, and discussed by both officers and men, as he had been informed by one of the leading officers. It resolved itself into this, practically:—The commandant, on whom it would, of course, devolve to accept the service of any particular volunteer who presented himself for enrolment, would deem it his duty to keep out the halt, the lame, and the blind; and it might be safely left to him, under the regulations to be drawn up for the guidance and management of the force, to prevent the admission into the force of anyone known to be physically incapacitated; and, if any person should press to be enrolled who was supposed to be physically unfit, let him submit to a medical examination. To bring the question to an issue, he (Mr. Gregory) proposed

That the words "and who have not passed a medical examination," be omitted from the clause.

The **HON. J. C. HEUSSLER** supported the clause. There were many persons in the world very anxious to do their duty who overlooked the fact that they were unfit for many undertakings until it was pointed out to them. A medical examination had been the means of saving, or prolonging, many a man's life, by informing him of the direction in which danger or risk lay; and, really, it was an advantage rather than otherwise. Elsewhere in the world, if a young man wanted to join the military service, he was obliged to undergo a stringent medical examination. He might mention that when he was a young man, he had to go through the same process, to ascertain if he was fit for service under conscription.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL**: They wanted to make a soldier of him in that case.

The **HON. J. C. HEUSSLER**: With due deference to the Postmaster-General, whether volunteers or soldiers, the force under the Bill was for military service, and the question was not altered. The House wished that the men enrolled should be able to work—to march, to undergo drill—

and not, after a few hours' exertion, to be incapacitated, or, perhaps, to fall down dead. Young men especially did not know whether or not they were affected by organic disease of the heart; and it would be the duty of the medical officer to point out to anyone wishing to join the force if he was so affected and unfit for service; and it would be best for the candidate that he should know if he was incompetent. The medical officer might be part of the force. By the examination, there could be no question of favour as to joining.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY had no hesitation in expressing his opinion that, if the House proposed to make the Bill a purely volunteer measure, he saw no occasion for a strict medical examination; but if they proposed carrying out the Bill in its integrity and compelling every man enrolled to bind himself by oath to serve for a period of years, and calling on the Government to furnish him with all the paraphernalia of a military man, then he insisted that a medical examination was absolutely essential. There might be men, as anyone knew who had much to do with life insurance practice, who were utterly unconscious that they had mortal disease within them, which rendered them totally unfit for military work, and who learned with amazement, for the first time, that they were afflicted with anything of the kind and were so unfit. If the House proposed, as he hoped they did, to convert the Bill into a purely volunteer measure, of course it would not be binding on any man connected with the force to continue in it, if his capacity proved unsuited to service. As to the argument of the honourable Mr. Heussler, he (Dr. O'Doherty) quite agreed with it in regard to a man binding himself to serve for some time, or to become a soldier, that he should undergo a medical examination: it was right for the State, and for himself.

The PRESIDENT: He thought the honourable gentleman who had just spoken, had "hit the nail on the head" exactly. If the House meant to have a Volunteer Act, the tenth clause should not be contained in it; and a Volunteer Act was all that was, at the present moment, required. It had been forgotten, in reference to the question raised—and his honourable friend, too, had not noticed this particular item—that if a medical examination of volunteers was enacted, provision must be made for a professional examiner, and for his fees to be paid: a guinea must be provided for each examination.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: The examination would not be worth anything, Sir Maurice, without it!

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Ha, ha! and Hear.

The PRESIDENT: A medical man would not choose to be a volunteer and have to

make medical examinations. As the honourable Dr. O'Doherty said, he hoped the House really intended to make the measure a Volunteer Act *per se*; in which case there was no necessity for such a provision as that for a medical examination.

The Hon. W. D. Box supported the amendment for the sake of securing a volunteer measure, he believing that the halt, the lame, and the blind, could be kept out of the force without the necessity for a medical examination.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: Hitherto, the volunteers had done the work that they were expected to do. The Bill would not entail heavier work on them than the existing law did. The feelings of those in the force should be considered; and in that way he saw no necessity for the provision that was objected to. He had not heard that the force underwent great fatigue even in the late campaign at Sandgate. The President had taken a practical view of the matter. It would be hard to inflict upon a volunteer, who was a professional man, the duty of examining candidates—though perhaps a doctor could detect disease in the examination;—and it would be hard, also, to make the candidate pay the fee for his examination. He (Mr. Brown) asked the Postmaster-General, whether the volunteers or the Government would have to pay? On the whole he thought it would be satisfactory to the volunteers, and best for all, to expunge the clause.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER begged to assert that he had had a great deal of experience as a volunteer in Europe. He found that where very stringent rules were not observed, volunteering was all very well for a show, until anything in the shape of actual military service was to be done—work, such as quelling riots, or something of that sort—when they generally stayed at home.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh! and Hear, hear.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER could mention many instances when he spent excellent afternoons in the town where he mostly lived in his early years, Frankfort-on-Maine; where there were the most beautiful volunteers he ever saw in his life;—they went out on all kinds of sham fights, and brought out the best sausages and champagne and other French wines; but, he assured honourable members, when there was anything to be done, such as quelling a bit of a riot, they never came out.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: He thought mankind was about the same all the world over. A good citizen was by no means a good military man: far from it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: He put it to the House not to pass a Bill that invited every one to join the force "for fun";

but to make the measure such a one as that those persons who had not the intention of doing actual service should feel that it was better to stay away. In that view, he would go into another question, the payment of volunteers. When the proper time should come, he would request the Postmaster-General to introduce a clause to pay something like a pound a month, or £12 a-year to volunteers, and at the same time to make very stringent rules for the service, imposing all kinds of drill, and when the men did not attend, fines for their non-appearance. That would make them efficient, even though the force might be smaller than under another system. Only a few days ago he had a letter from a nephew, who had joined the volunteers in his native country; or, what were called volunteers, by young men entering a couple of years earlier than they were obliged to do by law the military service. Like any young man, his nephew liked to enter a crack regiment, and he chose the Hussars. He had to undergo drill every morning for four or five hours; he had to ride, until as he said, the blood came out of his boots; he had to provide all his accoutrements and his horse; he had to clean his horse and everything, himself; and, only after he had done all that for three months could he get permission to keep a servant to do it—and he had the privilege of paying his servant. He (Mr. Heussler) must not forget to say that, before entering the regiment, that young man had to pass an officer's examination—to be allowed to be a volunteer.

The Hon. W. D. Box and the Hon. G. SANDEMAN rose to order.

The CHAIRMAN thought the honourable gentleman was going too far.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: He knew he was departing a little from the clause, but it was to illustrate his argument. But he wanted to show that the severe drill and discipline he described made out of a boy a good and proper serviceable man, and a soldier. The House did not want crawlers in the Volunteer Force. Rather than that it would be better to leave the clause as it stood, and to pay the volunteers who were enrolled. The colony wanted men for military service; if ever such a service was needed from the volunteers.

The Hon. F. H. HART said his honourable friend had rather wandered from the question, which was, whether or not there should be a medical examination for the volunteers. He should have passed his remarks by, if the honourable gentleman had not cast a slur on the volunteers. He understood that the honourable gentleman referred to volunteers in Frankfort-on-the-Maine! Certainly, no volunteers of Great Britain or her colonies ever refused to come out at the call of duty. He could say for himself that he was formerly

a volunteer in Victoria, and when the force was called out, on account of riots in Melbourne, not one man refused to turn out; and he, himself, did military service. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman, that the men should be paid; only if they were paid but two pounds, they were not volunteers. The Bill was not a volunteer measure, but partook too much of the nature of a Militia Bill. He hoped to see it altered very much in several respects. As no provision was made for payment on account of the medical examination, he thought he could not do better than support the amendment.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted be so omitted—put and passed; and the clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 11—Volunteers to serve for a certain time and to be sworn:—

Every person now a member of a volunteer corps or becoming a volunteer under this Act (except in the case of members of cadet corps) shall be deemed to have undertaken to serve as a volunteer continuously from the date of his enrolment under this Act for a minimum period of three years unless within that time he be dismissed from or otherwise under the provisions of this Act duly relieved from further service. And every person desiring to become a volunteer under the provisions of this Act shall before he is enrolled take and subscribe before some justice of the peace for the colony of Queensland the following oath viz.—

#### FORM OF OATH.

"I A. B. do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will from this date be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and Her lawful successors as sovereigns of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of this Colony of Queensland dependent on and belonging to the said United Kingdom and that I will faithfully serve Her said Majesty and her successors as a volunteer in the Volunteer Force of Queensland within the said colony for the defence of the same against all Her enemies and opposers whatsoever during a continuous term of three years from this date and thereafter until I shall be legally discharged from such service or incapacitated therein.

"So HELP ME GOD!"

The Hon. W. D. Box feared that the clause would cause a great number of resignations on the part of the members of the present force. It was not clear to his mind that provision was made for persons being able to resign after the passing of the Act.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That was specifically provided for by clause 9, already passed. Volunteers in present corps might resign within three months upon giving fourteen days' notice of their intention so to do. Every clause must be read with the context of the Bill as a whole. Clause 9 could not be omitted by inference.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN supported the view of the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill.

The Hon. W. D. Box was satisfied with the explanation given, as to clause 9.

The PRESIDENT: The eleventh clause was the one which, in his opinion, made the Bill a Militia Bill rather than a Volunteer Bill. The term which it was contemplated by the clause to impose, three years, was far too long to impose upon any citizen who merely volunteered his service without pay or reward of any sort, but the instruction which was given to him; and it struck him (the President) that if the clause remained in the Bill unaltered, it would militate very injuriously against the force. The Volunteer Force, to his mind, deserved every consideration from the Legislature, for it had remained enrolled and had performed its duties, as required from it, for many years past under circumstances of great discouragement.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

The PRESIDENT: Therefore, he thought the House ought to be very cautious in their legislation not to impose such onerous terms as would be likely to prevent any large number of those now enrolled continuing in the force. But he did not object to some term being fixed during which a volunteer should consent to serve; provided that it should be specified in a subsequent clause of the Bill that if he was compelled from circumstances over which he could not exercise control to retire he should be enabled to obtain his release. He should, therefore, move, by way of amendment on the clause—

That the words "three years" be omitted, with the view of inserting in lieu thereof, the words, "one year."

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said he fully appreciated the object of the amendment, which brought the committee back to the question which was started at the commencement of the debate—was this to be a Militia Bill or a Volunteer Bill? If the latter, he could not see why the volunteers should be bound to serve so long a term as three years. An honourable gentleman had just drawn his attention to the fact, that men who were in the Navy six months, were then eager to leave it; whereas, when they had served twelve months, they were glad to remain. If the volunteers were to be enrolled under too severe restrictions, that they could not get out of, the force would be injured. It would be much better to make the service easy—so long as discipline was strictly maintained—and to relax the clause, which might prove galling, and would therefore be useless. The hon. Mr. Heussler had shown that the great want was efficient men. Well, he (Mr. Gregory) feared that the most competent men in the force would be driven out if the restrictions were made too severe. He was not sure that the term proposed by the President was not too short, but taking it all round he was inclined to support the amendment.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN did not agree with the last speaker. There was nothing very stringent or harsh in service for three years being insisted upon. The duty of the rising generation was to be educated as volunteers, in military exercises. No unwillingness to serve was manifested by the people, as the present corps had not decreased, but on the contrary, increased in numbers. The clause would strengthen the hands of the officers of the Volunteer Force, as it would enable them to feel that they had a certain strength, or number of men, to bring into the field; and they liked to see the fruit of their labours in drilling the men and familiarising them with discipline. The committee valued the opinion of the President, not only as that of a military man, but of one who had experience of the colony; the honourable gentleman's argument, however, was hardly borne out. By the time the men had got over the "goose-step," they would be resigning, if the amendment should be carried. The proposed limitation of the period of service would be unwise; because, it was desirable that discipline and order should be maintained with a degree of stringency over a definite time such as was fixed by the clause. He thought the volunteers would prefer the clause as it stood.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: This seemed to be the most important clause of the Bill; and he was bound to say, from inquiries he had made, and as his own individual opinion, that it was one which if carried in its integrity, would interfere with the success of the measure most seriously. He quite agreed that it would be a mistake not to have some degree of stringency in the measure, to ensure that the young men volunteering would continue for a sufficiently long time in the service to become familiar with discipline and drill. The question was, whether one year or three years should be the term of service. He assured the honourable Mr. Brown that very much the largest number of the best volunteers were of opinion that if the force was called upon to serve three years, the best men would leave it. They said it was not on account of any inconvenience on their part; they would be willing to serve three years in the Volunteer Force, or more, as many of them had served; but, in the arrangements that it would be necessary for them to make in their various employments, they would be compelled absolutely to choose between their employers and the force. He could understand how many of the men employed in large establishments, in banks, if they went to their employers and stated that they were bound to take an oath to do a certain amount of work every year as volunteers, would find their employers turn round and tell them they must make their choice between one and the other. Some

said, that it had been stated distinctly by their employers that they could not consent to such a thing as was proposed in the Bill—that the employés must go and support themselves by volunteering if the Bill, passed and they desired to remain in the force. Of course, an argument of that kind was an unanswerable one. He thought that, admitting, as the House did, that many volunteers had sacrificed a great deal of time, and many of them money, in maintaining the service, the period of one year would be better than three years; and for the reason that undoubtedly many young men would join who would find, in five or six months probably, that volunteering was not their vocation, and would want to retire. Then it would never do to bind for some years, whilst it would be found, on the other hand, that men who were fit for service would continue in the force long after their period of service had expired, because of their real liking for the exercise and discipline. One year's service was enough under the law;—if a man was inclined to be soldierly, it would be ample time for him to be enabled to settle to his work. Under the present circumstances of the colony, it would be found that the Volunteer Force would be better kept together if the law was not too stringent.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN admitted that there was some force in the argument that employers might object to their servants being in the force; but their objections would be to clause 39, not to clause 11.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: Or clause 32.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: Volunteers would not be called out more frequently under the Bill than under the present statute; except in so far as clause 39 implied that a great claim would be made on their time, and to that employers might very reasonably object. There was also provision in clause 27—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL thought the honourable gentleman had best stick to the clause at present under consideration.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: That made a second claim on the time of one who had been a volunteer. As clause 11 contemplated that a volunteer might be relieved from service on account of some special emergency, or upon good ground shown to his commanding officer, he imagined it would not be a difficult matter for him to get that relief granted: if an employer said a man must leave the force, or if a man had to remove to some distant locality.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: As the honourable Mr. Brown had pointed out, the question of drill was not raised at all by the eleventh clause. The object of a fixed period of service was two-fold: first, to secure efficiency on the part of the volunteers, that they must go through a course of training extending over a definite term; secondly,

that there should be security to the State that a certain number of volunteers should be available on emergency. If no period was fixed, it would be possible for a volunteer to impose upon the State the expense and trouble of supplying him with arms and accoutrements, ammunition, drill; and he, without giving any notice, might withdraw from the force without having rendered any equivalent for the expenditure on his behalf. A term should be fixed; and it was for the committee now to fix it. He did not think that three years was too long a term; but he could not disguise from himself that there was a feeling against it in the corps, as stated by the honourable Dr. O'Doherty; and, rather than jeopardise the present force, and with the view of educating the volunteers and the public into the knowledge that there was no hardship in the terms proposed, he would accept the amendment as a compromise, on the understanding, however, that in a subsequent part of the Bill which gave a volunteer the option of going out of the force on the expiration of his service, the notice to be given by him should be extended to three months, instead of one month. That would give a service of fifteen months. If a volunteer attended drill during the whole time, he ought to attain a respectable amount of efficiency, and would be available in any emergency arising. He (the Postmaster-General) was utterly opposed to those honourable gentlemen who thought that no term should be fixed. Volunteers must give some service of a definite character, for a specific period, in return for what the State did for them.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER supported the amendment.

The question was put on the amendment, which was affirmed in respect to the clause and the terms of the oath; and the clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 17—Power to corps to make rules.

In answer to the Hon. A. H. BROWN,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it was the practice at present to have by-laws for each independent corps. He could see that there were reasons for it. Some corps might be prepared to go to expense, having members willing and able to afford it, which other companies would not be able to incur, for ammunition, extra suits of clothes, and so forth; all of which would come out of their funds. It was provided that certain fees should be paid by subscription. The plan was found to work admirably at present, and should be continued.

Agreed to.

Clause 20—Government to provide arms, &c.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN asked whether it would not be wise for the Government to furnish musical instruments, and let the corps provide instruction. Everyone knew

the fascination a fife and drum band had for a corps. To provide bands would be money well expended, and it would induce many persons to become volunteers. Heretofore, he understood, the force provided its bands.

The PRESIDENT agreed with the honourable gentleman that each corps ought to be provided with a band. Hitherto the musical instruments for the Volunteer bands had been paid for by subscriptions amongst the officers and those who were inclined to support the volunteers. In the army the band instruments were provided by the officers of the regiment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he knew the band of the Volunteer Rifles cost the sum of £200 a-year. The expenses in connection with it were borne by the officers of the corps and by subscriptions from companies of the battalion, each company being set down for £25 a-year. That amounted to £125 at once. He conceived that considerable difficulty would arise if each little country corps of fifty men wanted a band, and great expense would be entailed in meeting it. As the corps got the capitation allowance of £3 per annum for every efficient volunteer, they could supplement that amount with their subscriptions, and provide their own bands from their funds. It would be well to leave it to the officers of the force to do as the President pointed out was done by the officers of the regular forces, and not to make the bands a charge on the State.

The PRESIDENT: The army was paid by the State. He thought there ought to be on the Estimates a sum for the band. Formerly £100 a-year was provided for the head-quarters' band.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY asked, if the question of honorary members of the corps had been thought of. In many instances, the most liberal contributors to the bands and equipments of corps were private persons, who, without the obligation to attend drill, or to qualify as efficient volunteers, became honorary members.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Provision was made under existing regulations, in the absence of any statutory enactment, for the election of honorary members; and the matter would be determined by regulations under the Bill applying to the force generally or to individual corps.

The PRESIDENT: The Governor's regulations.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Bill proposed to deal solely with effective volunteers.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER: Would the Government not make an appropriation to the same amount as the subscriptions of the Force?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That would be provided for in the Estimates; not in the Bill.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: The subscription of £200 a-year showed him that the Volunteers recognised the value of bands, and their earnestness, and their pride in the service.

Agreed to.

Clause 22—Capitation allowance.

In answer to the Honourable A. H. BROWN,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the "minimum number" of a corps entitled to the allowance would be fixed by the regulations of the Governor in Council. A large discretion was left to the Governor as to the internal management of the Volunteer Force.

Agreed to.

Clause 23—Benefits and interest, &c., not forfeited by services in the Volunteer Force.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY wished to know if volunteers now in the force who should not complete the period of five years to entitle them to land orders would get any consideration *pro rata* for the time they had served.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Certainly not.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY thought the Bill would be a breach of an existing contract.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The twenty-seventh clause dealt with existing volunteers. Volunteers enrolled under the law granting land orders for certain service would be entitled to them only on the completion of five years' service in the force. Clause 27 provided that when they had completed their five years they could retire.

Agreed-to.

Clause 26—

Any volunteer leaving one part of the colony for another must attach himself to any local corps which may have been or shall be established near to his place of residence and where no such local corps exists he shall report himself personally or in writing to the nearest police magistrate at least twice in each year and such police magistrate shall make returns of the same on the first January and the first July in each year to the Colonial Secretary.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY: The condition to report to the "nearest police magistrate" was objected to, as it was thought to be very much like the old convict system. He would suggest that volunteers should report themselves to the commandant of the Volunteer Force at the periods named in the clause.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had no objection to the proposed amendment. He was sure it never occurred to the proposer of the Bill that a sentimental objection would be raised, that the condition for an unattached volunteer to report himself to the nearest police magistrate was similar

to the system in force in regard to ticket-of-leave holders in the old convict days of the colony.

After deliberation, the clause was amended, so as to read,

That a volunteer shall report himself personally or in writing on the 1st of January and 1st July each year to the Commandant.

Clause 27 was amended as follows, in the third paragraph and first subsection, on the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, consequent upon amendments in preceding clauses:—

After the expiration of such five years or one year as aforesaid it shall be lawful if the United Kingdom shall not then be at war with any foreign power for any volunteer not being under arrest as hereinafter provided and not being on active military service to resign and quit his corps on the following conditions—

(1.) Giving the officer in command of his corps at least three months' notice in writing of his intention to quit the corps.

And an amendment of the last proviso of the clause, referring to the liability of ex-volunteers to be called out to join their corps, was moved by the Hon. A. H. BROWN, who argued that, having done their duty, such persons should be allowed to remain citizens if they chose.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The objection the honourable gentleman had taken did not really arise under clause 27, but under clause 33. The proviso of the present clause applied to persons who joined the force with the full knowledge of the condition staring them in the face; but the subsequent clause dealt with those persons who had become volunteers before the passing of the Bill, which would be *ex post facto* legislation; and it was just as well to decide now whether there should be an obligation upon ex-volunteers to act after their period of service had expired.

The PRESIDENT: The clause was hardly in accordance with a Volunteer Bill, and if it was passed it would create a very great difficulty at the threshold. No man would undertake an obligation which was to follow him all his life until he was fifty years of age. It was in imitation of the arrangement made, now, with the army at home, to provide what was called "the first Army Reserve." But advantages followed those who formed the reserve, after they had been discharged, upon the fulfilment of their regular service in the army, which advantage compensated for their liability to be called out. It was seen by the late papers that the first reserve had been called out. No doubt, it was an effective arrangement for a standing army; but it was hardly one to meet the case of volunteers. They would not impose a life-long obligation on themselves for no consideration whatever. They might be got to serve the first period, but they could hardly be got

to agree to put their shoulders under the yoke for the remainder of their natural lives. It would be prudent, to maintain the efficiency of the Volunteer Force, to leave the proviso out altogether.

The Hon. W. D. BOX trusted that the House in their wisdom would not accept the proviso. A young man might become a volunteer, but he could not retire into the position of a simple citizen until he was fifty years of age; he must serve again, if called upon, though he had given the State his service. At twenty, a young man's opinion and habits were not formed, he had not arrived at the years of discretion: he might like volunteering then; but at thirty or fifty, he might not care to be under the orders of the commandant.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY considered that the proviso was very suitable for a Militia Bill, but not for a Volunteer Bill. He moved—

That the proviso be omitted.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN withdrew his amendment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he did not think it mattered a jot whether the proviso was in or out; because every man who was worth a threepenny bit would present himself when the force was called out. He was inclined to think its omission would not jeopardise the Bill in another place. As the majority of the House were in favour of the omission of the provision, he thought it would be best to let it go, though he should prefer it left in.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN asked if the Governor had not power to issue a mandate that all persons should turn out for actual military service if required?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No. The exercise of such a power would make the peoples' blood boil. In times past, the power claimed by the sovereign to have a standing army jeopardised the liberty of the people; now, the House of Commons voted an amount annually for the army. If the people did not come forward at the time required it was in the power of Parliament to make provision for calling them out, to defend the country. Perhaps, it would be best to postpone the exercise of that power in the colony until the occasion for it arose.

The question, for the omission of the proviso, was put and affirmed; and the clause as amended was agreed to.

Clause 28 was amended, as follows, by the omission of the condition of liability of officers to be called out for actual service:—

All commissioned officers shall be entitled at the expiration of five years' service to retire on their respective ranks and to wear their uniform under the system pursued in regard to officers of the reserve forces of Great Britain.

At this stage, the POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved the Chairman out of the chair—the committee to resume at a subsequent stage—in order to ask the House to deal with the

#### APPROPRIATION BILL.

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Assembly transmitting the Appropriation Bill, No. 1. Before communicating it to the House, he deemed it his duty to state that no provision had been made for the Council's Establishment for the last month. Though provision would now be made, yet he considered that such a state of circumstances as he mentioned should not exist without the House being informed thereof. It was of importance that proper provision should be made for the Council to conduct their business as a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature. The message was as follows:—

Mr. PRESIDENT,

The Legislative Assembly having this day passed a Bill entitled "A Bill to Authorise the Appropriation out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland of the Sum of £100,000 towards the Service of the Year ending on the last day of June, 1879" beg now to present the same to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

H. E. KING,  
Speaker.

Legislative Assembly Chambers,  
Brisbane, 1st August, 1878.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL then asked the House to allow of the suspension of so much of the Standing Orders as would permit a Supply Bill for the month just expired to be passed through all its stages in one day. There was an absolute majority of the Council present, now, and he did not really know that he could count upon a full attendance of honourable gentlemen after dinner. He moved, without previous notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the Appropriation Bill being passed through all its stages in one day.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was then read the second time, considered in Committee of the Whole, read the third time and passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly.

The sitting was suspended for an hour, and resumed after 7 o'clock.

#### VOLUNTEER BILL.

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Clause 32—Governor may call Volunteers on actual "military" service—was

amended by the insertion of the word in inverted commas. In reference hereto, further,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, at first, proposed to limit the power to call out the volunteers, "in case of apprehended or actual invasion of any part of the colony," to make the Bill assimilate to the English Statute; but, subsequently, on the suggestion that the amendment might have the effect of restricting the clause, by rendering it incompetent to the Governor to call out the volunteers in case of civil riot, he decided to let the question rest. He did not know whether it was the intention to have the volunteers available or not in the latter case.

The PRESIDENT: The volunteers could not be used for any internal disturbance.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY said he had heard the honourable Mr. Hart say he had been called out in Victoria to quell riots.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes: he had been surprised to hear it.

The PRESIDENT: It should be remembered that on the occasion of a disturbance in Brisbane, some years ago, the Government dared not call out the volunteers; but the volunteers were sworn in as special constables.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: As there was some doubt about it, he would let the matter stand. If the Government could not call out the volunteers, it was no use having the words of limitation in the clause.

Clause 33—Government may call on ex-Volunteers to join—was omitted.

Clause 34 was amended, in the second proviso, as follows:—

Whenever any volunteer corps or any part thereof shall be so called out for actual military service such corps and every member thereof shall be and until released therefrom shall continue subject to all the provisions of the Mutiny Act or in case of naval volunteers to all the laws and customs for the time being in force for the government of Her Majesty's ships vessels and forces by sea Provided always that at least one-half of the members of any court martial which may be summoned for the trial of any volunteer shall be officers of volunteers and that no person shall be a member thereof who is not an officer of volunteers or an officer of Her Majesty's army or navy Provided also that it shall not be lawful under or by virtue of this Act to inflict on any volunteer any corporal punishment except death or imprisonment And no decision of any such court shall have effect until confirmed by the Governor.

Clauses 35, 36, and 37 were consequentially amended in respect of actual military service.

Clause 39—Period and times and places of training and exercise.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved amendments in the clause to the effect that the Volunteer Force should be called out for

continuous training and exercise for a period of not less than six days, terminating on Easter Monday, in each year, at such places as the Governor might appoint; and providing that the commandant, for any sufficient cause, should have power to excuse the attendance of any volunteer when so called out. He said he need not point out, as he did so on the second reading of the Bill, that if the force was to be of any value whatever, it would be bound to have continuous training for a certain period. The period of continuous training provided by the clause, taken in connection with the ordinary drills of the respective corps, would be sufficient to give the volunteers that amount of efficiency which would suffice for the protection of the country in any emergency that was likely to arise. It had been pointed out that as the force was composed chiefly of artisans who could be ill spared for a continuous period from their occupations, if the law was of a very stringent character, it might drive many valuable men from the service. Therefore, an opportunity should be afforded to men to be excused for sufficient cause from attending any particular portion of their continuous exercise; with the security, that the excuse must be such as to satisfy the commandant, who would not raise any unnecessary objection to men who should be obliged to be absent, and who would protect the State as far as possible while inflicting no hardship on individuals. There was also the advantage in fixing the period of continuous training as he proposed, that Easter was the time when the largest number of holidays observed by the community came together, and when the season was the most suitable for volunteer exercise. An equal number of holidays might fall together at Christmas, but, in this climate, that was not the time of the year for continuous training, and men could not be worked at their best, as they could at Easter. It was a further advantage that the force would have a distinct intimation of the period when continuous training would be required.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY desired that the amendment should be for continuous training for not more than six days.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL considered that the volunteers should understand that under ordinary circumstances they must work for six days. It might be that the training of the force would extend over twelve days, or more, by relays of men called out for their six days' continuous training. If the clause said not more than six days' continuous training, pressure might be brought to bear, or representations might be made, to reduce the continuous training to two or three days. As long as the six days' training was got out of the men, the State would be satisfied.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN, coinciding with Dr. O'Doherty, and in the interests of the men with their employers, desired to see an amendment made to fix the minimum of continuous training—about three days.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL could not accept such an amendment, which would make a farce of the Bill. Power was given to the commandant to accept reasonable excuse for non-attendance at continuous training and exercise.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY said the explanations of the Postmaster-General, who had had consultations with the volunteers, did away with the objection he had to the proposed clause; and he should not press his amendment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL disclaimed having taken the volunteers into his confidence; and they had not taken him into theirs. From conversations he had had with them, he learned that it was desired that reasonable excuse should be accepted from those who could not attend continuous training when the force was called out.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: The honourable gentleman, as a volunteer officer, must be in the confidence of the volunteers, and must speak with authority. Would the continuous training apply to all volunteers in different parts of the country—at Rockhampton and Maryborough;—and would they all be assembled together?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No. Each corps would be called out "at such places as the Governor may appoint." The volunteers would be available in their own districts.

The PRESIDENT said, if he were to take any exception to the clause, it would be, that the time provided for continuous training and exercise was not sufficient. He was quite sure that a volunteer could not be made an efficient soldier, that was, fit to take the field for service, on six days' training in the year: it was impossible. But, with the odds and ends of instruction he got in the meantime, he might be made a useful help to any force. He (the President) thought that something of the indefiniteness of the clause might be got rid of, if a proviso should be added fixing the remuneration for the period of continuous training at not less than the average wages of a labourer.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: His impression was that the regulations would fix the amount at six shillings a-day, and half-a-crown for half-a-day.

The PRESIDENT: That was quite enough. The clause, as amended, would be a very good one.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN presumed that the commandant would be present at the encampment.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yes; he was part of the Volunteer Force.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN could not see the advantage of fixing the time for the continuous training and exercise at all places alike, as the commandant could not be at Brisbane and at other places at the same time.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL pointed out that by clause 19, every corps was liable to be inspected by the commandant or some competent officer appointed every six months. He could put the corps through evolutions, for the purpose of ascertaining its efficiency, in an afternoon; but its efficiency depended on the continuous training and exercise prescribed, under its own officers, and on its regular drill by its own drill instructor and officers at odd times throughout the year. The advantage of fixing Easter was that it was the period at which most people could have holidays without inconvenience to their ordinary avocations.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN: It was highly desirable that the commandant should be present for the continuous training of any corps. Distant corps should have the same advantages as those in Brisbane.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL allowed that the commandant might under the regulations alternate his visits to other parts of the colony than Brisbane at the period of continuous training; but it was most probable he would be with the head-quarters of the Volunteer Force. It did not follow that Brisbane must necessarily be chosen for an encampment. The railways offered facilities for the movements of corps, and those of Ipswich and Darling Downs could be brigaded with the metropolitan corps at different places wide apart.

In answer to the Hon. A. H. BROWN,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that there was no paid commandant appointed. Major Moore was an executive officer, acting under instructions from the commandant. The arrangement made with Colonel Scratchley was, that his services would extend over the different colonies, and that a proportionate remuneration would be given for the days he spent in this colony. He was engaged for three years, and would spend forty-two days of the year in Queensland. He was inspecting officer, and would visit other corps than those in the metropolis.

The Hon. G. SANDEMAN and the PRESIDENT supported the representations of the Postmaster-General, in response to the urgency of the Honourable A. H. Brown, in respect of the presence of the commandant during the period of continuous training and exercise of country corps.

As amended, the clause was passed in this form:—

The Volunteer Force shall be called out for continuous training and exercise for a period of not less than six days terminating with Easter Monday in each year at such places as the

Governor may appoint and for such day or days during which any Volunteer may be on duty when the Force is so called out he shall be entitled to pay at such rates as may be fixed by the regulations. Provided that it shall be lawful for the commandant for any sufficient cause to excuse any Volunteer from attending during the whole or any portion of such continuous training and exercise.

Clause 49—Commencement and short title—was amended on the motion of the Hon. F. T. GREGORY, by the substitution of "October" for "September"—so that the operation of the law should commence from next quarter day.

The House resumed, and the Chairman reported the Bill with amendments.

#### TOOWOOMBA GAS BILL.

The House resolved into Committee of the Whole for the consideration of this Bill in detail.

Clause 1—Power to manufacture.

The Hon F. T. GREGORY said he did not know whether this was the appropriate time to refer to the quality of the gas. There were various standards fixed by the authorities in England as to the quality of gas supplied by manufacturers to consumers; and a fixed standard must be kept up under heavy penalties. One that he should refer to was that of a gas company in Victoria, and it was nearly identical with those first-mentioned. The popular average standard was found to be about the same;—a consumption of five cubic feet of gas per hour should give an illumination equivalent to the light of twelve No. 6 sperm or composition candles. It was true that several gas companies had been already formed in this colony without any reference whatever to the quality of the gas supplied to the public. For that reason he might refrain for making it compulsory upon the Toowoomba Gas Company to supply gas up to a fixed standard. But seeing that an existing evil was likely to become of some magnitude under monopolies possessed by the gas companies, which made it difficult to oust them, a beginning might be made by an amendment of the Bill, to be followed up by a general Act, compelling the company and other companies to supply an article of a certain fixed standard. The constituents of gas of an inferior kind were detrimental to health and, otherwise, to works of art. It had been found that as low as one-ten-thousandth part of sulphurous oxide in illuminating gas injured all kinds of gilding. Bi-sulphide of carbon was a noxious and poisonous ingredient of such gas. One-fifteen-thousandth part of that ingredient made the gas objectionable and injurious. Those were the main matters which had attracted the attention of chemists who studied sanitary questions, in regard to the standard of gas manu-

factured for illuminating purposes and domestic use. It would be highly desirable to render the works of gas companies subject to inspection by qualified officers; and the companies and the public would profit thereby. A short clause would suffice for the amendment of the Bill. He had not drafted one, but his honourable friend, Mr. Brown, had taken one from an Act in force elsewhere. He was satisfied in drawing the attention of the committee to the subject, and should not press for an amendment.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL**: No doubt there was a great deal in what the honourable gentleman said; but he looked on the Bill in the interests of the company that was to be incorporated for the manufacture of gas; and he thought that to insist upon making any amendment in the Bill such as was indicated would not be acting impartially or justly to the Toowoomba Gas Company. The Bill was identical with the measure passed, last session, incorporating the Ipswich Gas Company; and with the Acts in force relating to the gas companies of Rockhampton and Brisbane. It would be making an invidious distinction, not just to a large population or to the Toowoomba Gas Company, to handicap that company with restrictions that were not imposed upon other companies. If it was so, that the deleterious ingredients mentioned were constituents of the gas supplied to the public, honourable gentlemen might spend some time judiciously for the benefit of the inhabitants of Brisbane and other towns by maturing a general measure stipulating that all gas manufactured for illuminating purposes should be free from those ingredients. But they might rely upon it, that, at the outset, the Toowoomba Gas Company would do the best they could, in order to get customers. The temptation to supply an inferior article would be on the part of a company established in its trade in the community. There would be ample time, next session, if not this session, for a comprehensive measure to be brought in dealing with the subject.

The **HON. A. H. BROWN** said, the observations of the honourable Mr. Gregory were somewhat similar to those he should have made. There were several defects in the Bill, and it was not a good one. The main consideration of the House should be for the good of the country; and they should look to the quality of the gas supplied to the public. He admitted that it would look invidious to make conditions in respect of the Toowoomba Gas Company that were not imposed on other similar undertakings. The **Postmaster-General** recognised the necessity for improving the law; but he did not promise to undertake it himself. Comparing the Bill with an Act in force in Victoria, he

(Mr. Brown) mentioned that the latter measure specifically stated the quality of the gas insisted upon by the authorities. The Bill should do the same. Referring to the bad gas supplied in Brisbane, he remarked that, either from the use of superior coal or from improved manufacture, the quality during the last few days was improved. The metropolitan company possessed a monopoly, and he thought it was an atrocious proceeding that that company should supply gas of such a character as he had recently to describe in the House. The shareholders of that company received something like 30 per cent. profit, and surely they could afford to give the public gas fit to be used. From the Bendigo Gas Company's Act, passed in 1860, he read the following description of the standard of gas to be supplied to the public:—

All the gas to be supplied by the company shall be of such minimum quality as to produce from an argand burner, having fifteen holes, and a seven-inch chimney, or other approved burner and chimney, and consuming five cubic feet of gas per hour, a light, equal in intensity to the light produced by nine sperm candles of six in the pound, burning 120 grains per hour.

That was definite, and it was what should be insisted on in Queensland. Government inspectors should be appointed to inspect the quality of the gas supplied. A suspicion was aroused that more gas was paid for than was used, and a case was recorded against the Brisbane Gas Company, of their having charged the Government for a month's supply to Government House when no gas was consumed there. It was during the time that the President was Acting-Governor, and when the honourable gentleman did not occupy Government House, and gas could not be burned. Not desiring to injure the passing of the Bill, he should look forward to next session for the introduction of a measure to effect the improvements in the law that were now required for the regulation of gas companies.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 11—Power to enter and inspect pipes, lamps, and metres.

The **HON. W. D. BOX** again raised the question of the appointment of inspectors, in the interests of the public, under other authority than that of the company.

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL** argued that the reforms suggested by honourable members should be in a general measure, applicable to all gas companies, and not be included in the Bill to incorporate the Toowoomba Gas Company. In answer to a suggestion that the Bill was a Government measure, he stated that he took charge of it as a private member.

On the resumption of the House, the Bill was reported without amendment, and the report was adopted.

## CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, referring to the remaining Orders of the Day on the business paper, said that in the present state of the House, and at so late an hour of the evening, it would be hardly fair to go on with the Public Works Lands Resumption Bill and the Local Government Bill, though he was ready to go on ; and he should like to adjourn until to-morrow, and thus have an extra sitting-day this week. However, as there was no Sessional Order for sitting on Friday, it was hardly competent for the House to meet to-morrow. He knew it would be inconvenient for some honourable members to meet next week, though they wished to take part in the discussion of the measures before the House ; but, considering the late period of the session and the desirability of getting through the public business as soon as possible, he did not feel disposed to consent to an adjournment over next week. The other House had adjourned, he understood, until Thursday next, in order that honourable members might proceed to the Toowoomba Show. He wished to test the feeling of the House whether or not he should go on.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY had no objection to sit and discuss the measures on the paper for the next two hours ; but it would be hardly fair, the House being so thin. He had a very strong objection to one of the measures, and should like to express his opinion upon it. He hoped the House would adjourn over next week, and then have an extra sitting day, as it would be utterly impossible for many honourable members to attend, on account of the Toowoomba Show.

The Hon. A. H. BROWN asked, if it was possible to adjourn until to-morrow ?

The PRESIDENT: No. It would be establishing a very dangerous precedent. Absent members would not be aware of the meeting to-morrow.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said, he thought there was a precedent.

After consultation, the matter dropped, and the House adjourned until the next sitting day.

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