

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 1879

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 25 June, 1879.

Assent to Bill.—The late President.—Hour of Meeting.—
The Dry Dock.—Parliamentary Buildings.—Conduct
of Business.

ASSENT TO BILL.

A message was received from the Governor informing the House that his Excellency had assented to the Coast Islands Bill.

THE LATE PRESIDENT.

The PRESIDENT said he had received from His Excellency the Governor a copy of a despatch from the Right Honourable Sir Michael E. Hicks-Beach, Secretary of State for the Colonies, addressed to Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy, to the following effect:—

Downing street,
8th April, 1879.

SIR—I have received your telegram of the 25th of March, conveying to me the intelligence of the death of Sir Maurice O'Connell, the President of the Legislative Council of Queensland, which took place on the 23rd of that month.

I greatly regret the loss sustained by the Council, and by the colony generally, in the death of this distinguished officer.

I have, &c.,

M. E. HICKS-BEACH.

HOURLY MEETING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said, in reference to the motion standing in his name for to-day, it was necessary for him to inform the House that he brought it forward at the particular request of a number of honourable members. So far as he was concerned personally, he would as soon have the hour of meeting at half-past four as half-past three o'clock. At the same time, if a majority of the House felt that it would be desirable to begin proceedings an hour earlier than was this session appointed, as in former sessions—

Mr. MEYER said, he thought the honourable gentleman was out of order in making his motion at the present moment. The 141st Standing Order was—

In no case shall a motion to dispense with any Sessional or Standing Order of the Council be

entertained, unless there be present in the House an absolute majority of the whole number of the members of which the Council is composed.

There was not an absolute majority of members present, now.

The PRESIDENT: I am aware it is so. I am aware that the honourable Mr. Buza-cott has knowledge of that Standing Order. I took it for granted that he had some object in addressing the House irrespective of the absence of a sufficient number of members to enable him successfully to carry his motion through the Council.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He was going on to say, if the House would permit him, that although, so far as he was concerned, he would as soon meet at half-past four as half-past three o'clock, still he thought it would be perhaps desirable to take the whole question into consideration. He perfectly understood that he was unable to move, to-day, that the Sessional Order fixing the hour of meeting should be rescinded; but he thought the House would permit him to say a word or two to show why he had tabled the motion now on the paper. Several members had waited upon him, and said that if the Council should meet at half-past three o'clock, as before, they would be able to conclude their business, ordinarily, before six o'clock, and that those honourable gentlemen who resided out of town would be able to go home, and that to them it would be a very great inconvenience to be called upon to attend the sittings of the House in the evening, after seven o'clock. It was simply by request of honourable members who took up that position that he consented to table the motion which was now on the paper. He could not proceed with it, to-day; but he would give fresh notice of it for to-morrow, when he hoped there would be a sufficient number of members in attendance to take it into consideration.

THE DRY DOCK.

Mr. WALSH asked, without notice: If the Postmaster-General can tell the Chamber when the return will be on the table of the House that was called for about three weeks ago, respecting the Dry Dock at South Brisbane?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I am unable to give the honourable gentleman an answer, to-day; but I will endeavour to be prepared with the information to-morrow.

PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Mr. GREGORY moved—

That the report of the Parliamentary Buildings Committee be now adopted.

He said there was in it very little, indeed, for him to offer comment upon. The first recommendation of the Joint Committee of

both Houses was upon a matter which the Council would readily concur in;—he referred to the present unsightly condition of the grounds at the southern end of the Parliamentary buildings, which grounds, up to the fence of the Government House domain, the committee proposed should be planted as a shrubbery, which would make the place look much more finished than at present and something like what it should be. Anyone who took the trouble to look at the grounds would be satisfied that it was desirable to give effect to the recommendation of the committee. The cost of the work would be about £100. With regard to the second paragraph of the report, in reference to precautions against fire, he thought it was obvious to all honourable gentlemen that it was of the utmost importance that every precaution should be taken, as far as could be, to secure a large and valuable building like the Parliament Houses against every possible risk. In his own opinion, independent of that of the committee, who were unanimous on the point, the recommendation which was made last session should be as promptly as possible attended to. The danger to which the building had been exposed of destruction by fire, on more than one occasion, was, at any rate, very serious, and it was to be hoped that the recommendation would now meet with prompt attention, by the application of suitable tanks in the roof of the buildings, containing sufficient water to ensure any fire being speedily quenched by connected hose. So far as the report was concerned, he had nothing further to say; but while on the subject, he might remark that, since the report was drawn up, the committee had under consideration the importance of securing in tanks some of the large amount of rain-water which was collected upon the roof of the buildings, for the use of honourable members of the House and the offices generally. They all knew perfectly well that the Enoggera water was none of the purest. Though it was filtered for their use, yet that was a tedious process. He had been at some pains to ascertain the probable cost of, say, four tanks of about a thousand gallons each; and it was not so much as should stand in the way of having the necessary water service laid on. This would probably form a future recommendation of the Buildings Committee; and he should not further refer to it. There was another matter, in connection with the lighting of the buildings. He need hardly say that not only members of the Council, but members of the Assembly, as he had heard, regarded the lighting of the Parliament Houses as anything but satisfactory, even with the additions that had been made to disperse the light in the other Chamber. The expenditure on gas was enormous, far beyond what it should be, relatively to the

amount of accommodation in lighting which was afforded to the House.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. GREGORY: He had taken some trouble, with another honourable gentleman, a member of the committee, to inspect the lighting of other buildings in the city; and they had found that it would involve a very moderate cost to make a very material improvement in the lighting of the Parliamentary buildings. He was hopeful that the committee would be able shortly to go into the matter, and that they would bring up a supplementary report for the adoption of the House.

Mr. HEUSSLER presumed, from the remarks which had fallen from the honourable Mr. Gregory, that the Houses of Parliament were not insured. If he was correct in his idea, he took the present opportunity to say that, a few years ago, he spoke on the subject of the insurance by the Government of the public buildings. He knew perfectly well that insurance would entail a certain amount of expense; but the public buildings were of magnitude and value; and he thought it would be only wise that all the various Government buildings should be insured. Those few remarks were enough on the report; he might have another opportunity soon of returning to the subject. He knew, for certain, that such a course as he suggested was adopted in other countries;—he did not know whether it was adopted in any of the colonies. Perhaps the whole public buildings would be too much in value for one insurance office or company to take; but they might be divided amongst several companies.

Question put and passed.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

The Mineral Oils Bill was read a third time and passed, and transmitted to the Assembly for the concurrence of that House.

The Impounding Bill was read a third time and passed, and returned to the Assembly with the usual message respecting amendments made in it by the Council.
