

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 JULY 1879**

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given by him on Wednesday last, to move, now, without previous formal notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to allow this Bill to pass through its remaining stages this afternoon.

He was quite certain that no opposition would be raised to the motion, because every honourable member of the House was desirous that the Bill should go through with expedition. And it would be, he believed, a matter of consideration to the recipient of the annuity provided by the Bill to have it decided without further delay.

Question put and passed.

#### ELECTIONS DURING RECESS BILL.

Mr. WALSH said, he should like to ask the Postmaster-General—What course the Government meant to pursue with regard to the Bill that had dropped off the paper—the Legislative Assembly Bill?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: In reply to the honourable Mr. Walsh, he had to state that he had no present intention to ask permission to place that Bill on the paper again. It was not one which the Government had any particular interest in, and he should not have taken any steps to press it on the House, but for the consideration that it would be regarded as a discourtesy to the Legislative Assembly if the Council had refused to entertain and discuss a Bill which the other House had sent up solely referring to the circumstances of that House. As, however, the Bill had met with strong opposition in committee, and had dropped off the paper by a “count-out,” he did not intend to proceed further with it.

#### LADY O'CONNELL PENSION BILL.

Upon the Order of the Day being called for the consideration in Committee of the Lady O'Connell Pension Bill—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That the President do now leave the Chair, and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole for the consideration of this Bill.

Mr. WALSH said he wished to express his opinion to honourable gentlemen, in as few words as he could—as, owing to his absence he had not been able to do so before—that he deeply regretted, both for the credit of the colony and for the honourable memory of the predecessor in office of the President of the Council, and also for the sake of the widow of the late Sir Maurice O'Connell, that the Government had thought fit to make her such a small allowance as was provided by the Bill. The pension proposed was not a fit recognition of the services performed by the late President; it was not what was due to his honour; it was not sufficient for his widow to adequately fulfil her short mission in this life.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Wednesday, 16 July, 1879.*

Parliamentary Buildings.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Elections during Recess Bill.—Lady O'Connell Pension Bill.—Wrecks and Salvage Bill.—Newspaper Comments and *Hansard*.—Conduct of Business.

#### PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Mr. TURNER moved—

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

Question put and passed.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said, before the Order of the Day was called on, he desired, in pursuance of the intimation

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: He could say that he knew how it was regarded by respectable colonists elsewhere who were well-wishers of Queensland, as well as how it was regarded by a large number of his fellow-colonists; and he knew it would be held to reprobate the character of Queensland rather than to raise her character for generosity. He had no objection to the motion.

Question put and passed.

On the formal motion to postpone the preamble,

Mr. MURRAY-PRIOR said he must express his feeling that it was a pity some more adequate provision had not been made than was contained in the Bill. He presumed that the Government did not see their way to carry it; still he wished they had tried to do so. He had hoped that a larger income than £250 a year would have been provided for the widow of the late President of the Council. However, the House could not alter it; and he rose merely to state that he thought the pension inadequate.

Mr. HEUSSLER said he wished to record his opinion before the House that he was very much disappointed to see such a pittance as the pension for the widow of the late President. He was one of those who advocated always true economy; but, in the present instance particularly, he found that the line of demarcation of judgment had been overstepped in the wrong direction. There were a great many things he could point out in which real savings might be effected; and amongst them, he remembered that he had the honour of mentioning, last session, was one upon which something like £5,000 a year was expended—the *Daily Hansard*.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. HEUSSLER: He knew that those remarks would be very unpopular; but he believed he was right, and that some day it would be seen that he was. He regretted that the House could not alter the figure; but he felt bound to record his opinion against the provision as inadequate.

The Bill was advanced through Committee, and reported to the House, without amendment. It was then read the third time and passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly with the usual message.

#### WRECKS AND SALVAGE BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Assembly returning the Wrecks and Salvage Bill with certain amendments, and requesting the concurrence of the Council therein.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House resolved into Committee of the Whole for the consideration of the message.

Mr. MEIN: As the amendments were not in type, the most convenient way would be for the Clerk-Assistant to read the schedule of amendments sent up with the message.

The CLERK-ASSISTANT read as follows:—

Clause 18—After paragraph 1 of the clause, insert new paragraph (2), viz.:—"In saving the lives of the persons belonging to such ship or boat."

Clause 19, line 51—After the word "lives," insert the words "out of any moneys appropriated by Parliament for that purpose."

Schedule.—Line 5, after the word "exceeding," insert the words "one pound." Line 10, after the word "of," insert the words "ten shillings." Line 11, after the word "of," insert the word "five." Line 20, after the word "of," insert the word "two." Line 21, after the word "of," insert the word "one." Line 24, after the word "than," insert the word "six."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: As they were clearly verbal alterations, and not likely to be objected to, he moved—

That the amendments of the Legislative Assembly in the Bill be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was reported to the House, and the report was adopted. It was then ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly with a message in proper form.

#### NEWSPAPER COMMENTS AND *HANSARD.*

Mr. WALSH said he wished to make a statement, and, in order to do so, he must move the adjournment of the House. He should make it clear that the time had arrived when the Council ought to take the necessary steps to make the public aware of their proceedings, if not daily, at any rate, more expeditiously than was now the case. In other words, the conduct of the Press towards the Council was such as must necessarily drive them into issuing a *Daily Hansard*, as the conduct of the Press did undoubtedly compel the other Chamber to do, at large cost to the country: considerable expense was necessarily incurred for the daily publication of the debates, because of the conduct of the public journals. If honourable gentlemen would take that into consideration, and that the very small document he held in his hand had only been put into their possession this very day—he verily believed that if any celerity had been used, or any instruction had been given, it would probably have been put into their hands last Thursday or Friday, or on Saturday at the very latest;—they would, perhaps, agree with him. Well, the inconvenience that not only members of the Council were put to, but the country also, was, that while there were certain privileged individuals who were able to report upon their proceedings, and unkindly, unjustly, criticise them, honour-

able members had no opportunity of placing before the country the facts, so that they might be judged upon their merits, and not upon individual or party charges levelled against them by the Press, or a portion of the Press, that was influenced by members of a party.

Mr. MEIN : Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH : It was their bounden duty, on behalf of the country, to protect themselves in their Chamber from such a disadvantageous condition of things, and to protect the country against the ignorance it laboured under in consequence, just as the other House had been compelled to do and did do. He had had something, a great deal, to do, he might say, in conferring what he believed to be an inestimable advantage on this country;—that was, causing the *Daily Hansard* to be issued from the other Chamber. He knew that the result had been in a remarkable way beneficial. He knew that, to a great extent, it prevented unjust charges being brought against individual members of the House—that was, one-sided charges;—and that it prevented individuals being condemned before they were heard—condemned on suppressed evidence, for party and political purposes, and for vicious reasons.

Mr. MEIN : Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH : The *Daily Hansard* had thus been of incalculable advantage. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, the people now had the advantage of seeing the proceedings of their representatives as they were. It enabled the representatives of the people to stand fair before the country, and it enabled the people to see who were really their representatives, and who were not, in the other Chamber. For instance, he might state that it was entirely due to the *Daily Hansard* that a certain popular gentleman, a friend of his own, was unseated, or rather defeated in his candidature for a seat, not very long ago;—it was in consequence of the distribution of *Hansard* through the electorate. Though on the part of that individual, he (Mr. Walsh) regretted that occurrence; yet he did not say it, so far as the country was concerned. But, in enabling the constituencies to know what was going on in the Assembly, and that their representatives were doing the best for the country according to their lights, the *Daily Hansard* was a great gain. There might be some difference of opinion, whether that gain was in all respects salutary. But, sinking his own particular feelings, now, to apply the argument more closely, he pointed out that in regard to the Council, owing to the almost entire suppression by the Press of what transpired in their Chamber, honourable gentlemen found themselves condemned, they found themselves praised, without the

public knowing whether that condemnation or praise was just or unjust. Therefore, they were bound, on behalf of the country, as well as in justice to themselves, to try to prevent that or to remedy it. He held before him the most undeniable proof of the statement he made. He found in a Rockhampton journal of the 24th June, that the following information was vouchsafed to certain readers of a certain portion of the Press of this colony—that was ably represented in the Council, mind!—

Mr. MEIN : Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH : He found this information—which, he thought, it would be prudent in him not to characterise in the Chamber or to give his opinion about;—and he would lay it before honourable members simply to show the kind of strictures that they were subjected to by the Press, or a portion of the Press, that suppressed, or transformed, or distorted, what took place in the Council, whilst they had no means of disseminating what really did occur through their own *Hansard*. The following was published of certain honourable members of the Council on the 24th June. He might as well mention, at once, what must be news to the Postmaster-General, that it was published in the *Morning Bulletin*:—

The serenity of the Upper House has been somewhat disturbed since the elevation of the irrepressible Mr. Walsh to that Chamber. He has already distinguished himself by bringing one or two motions before the House, whereby he raised discussions of very questionable utility; but on Thursday he added to his notoriety by forming an unholy alliance with Messrs. Mein, Swan, and others of the same stripe—

Well, he did not know whether that was intended for an ignominious term—"the same stripe;" but it struck him that it was not a very dignified one to use to honourable gentlemen sitting in the Council who were probably in the colony thirty or forty years before the hireling who wrote that stricture upon them.

Mr. MEIN and the POSTMASTER-GENERAL : Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH : It went on to say that, on the occasion referred to, they were allied with the object of shelving the Election of Members During Recess Bill, or of worrying the Government in the person of the honourable the Postmaster-General. If the latter is the object of the league between Messrs. Walsh and Mein, they have not made a very successful beginning.

Whether they had or not remained to be seen.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : He had not seen it. That was new to him.

Mr. WALSH : Well, the honourable member would acquit him of any connection with such an object, he thought. Would honourable gentlemen bear in mind that that newspaper was published in

Rockhampton on the 24th of June, whilst the only information that the public could possibly get—owing to the way in which the proceedings of the Council were reported—would be, he supposed, about the time that honourable gentlemen themselves had the opportunity of first seeing what those who were present on the occasion had said?—and that was on the following day, the 25th of June. Remember! here was an instance in which, at a distance of five or six hundred miles, the action of the Council and the proceedings of honourable members were misrepresented, and their conduct was criticised, before the inhabitants of Brisbane had the chance of knowing what really had taken place;—before even honourable gentlemen themselves—before the President, certainly, as the proceedings were in Committee of the Whole—had an opportunity of seeing what was their dereliction of duty, or if they had done their duty, as he (Mr. Walsh) thought they had. Therefore, he said it was not good for the country, and it was unjust to the Council, themselves, that such a state of things should be allowed to continue; for, whatever might be their qualities, whatever might be their defects, whatever might be their virtues, it was best for all concerned that they should be made known, at any rate, contemporaneously with the criticism of the parties who made such strictures as he now referred to.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: He had to mention another instance in which he did not hesitate to say the Press maligned those whom he justly called his honourable and venerable friends whose names were allied with his own on the 24th of June. He found that on the 1st of July, the following information was vouchsafed to the Rockhampton people from the same source, apparently, as the other:—

In the Upper House, the Hon. Mr. Walsh continues to hold the uneven tenour of his way, and he and Mein—

He really thought that was a most disrespectful way of speaking of a gentleman who had occupied as high a position in the Council as the proprietor of that paper.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH (*reading*):—

He and Mein are “mates” and divide the obstruction between them. It seems possible that the Legislative Council, during this and future sessions, will be roused from its usual state of lethargy by the erratic William Henry. The latest crotchet of Messrs. Walsh and Mein is that a Bill relating to the election of members during recess, applying solely to the Lower House, introduced at the request of the Speaker to meet certain defects in the existing law, and passed by the Chamber, is unnecessary. They

affect to believe that it may open the door to improper practices by a Government sufficiently corrupt to take advantage of its provisions.

Now, if there could be a more dishonest stricture than that, he could not understand how; because it was the Postmaster-General himself who advocated the necessity of the Bill to prevent a dishonest Government, if there should be such, taking advantage of circumstances which could not exist; and he (Mr. Walsh) quoted the words of the Postmaster-General over and over again in arguing against his assumptions.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: He said if the colony should be unfortunate enough to have a dishonest or corrupt Government, the Parliament were not to legislate in anticipation. The journal went on:—

Not being able to successfully oppose the measure in the usual legitimate manner, they, yesterday, resorted to the dodge of a count-out of the Chamber, in order to prevent progress. When or how the vagaries of the two cronies will finish, I don't think even Zadkiel himself could pretend to predict.

Who Zadkiel was, he did not know: he presumed somebody connected with the *Bulletin*.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: Having said so much, he thought he had shown sufficiently to all honourable gentlemen present that it was absolutely necessary to protect themselves from such aspersions, to protect the honour, and the character, and the doings—he repeated, the doings—of the Council from such injustice. Especially, he called attention to the circumstance that that injustice was inflicted on the Chamber—he would not say, with the honourable gentleman's permission, but, under suspicion—with the supposed consent of the Postmaster-General, the leader of the Legislative Council.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: It was a very important matter for the House to consider. He was firmly impressed with the idea, seeing the injustice of the comments in the Press, for the purpose, apparently, of opposition to that “erratic” member, himself, and to those honourable gentlemen of “the same stripe”—God only knows what that meant!—that it would be well for the country if other members of Parliament were striped in the same way; and he only wished that others possessed the same respectability, and experience, and prudence.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL and Mr. MEIN: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH: Simply because they did not see their way to blindly allow the Upper Chamber to be turned into a mere registering establishment, for stamping the measures of the other Chamber—because they did not do what they were told, they

were to be subjected to those strictures;—strictures perpetrated, bear in mind! before any information could be extended to the people of the colony by the Council, and perpetrated by those who knew very well that, by their suppressing the proceedings and business of the House and making their own misrepresentations, certain of the people were absolutely prevented from viewing both sides of a question. That was a serious charge against any newspaper; and he said that the journal that ventured to criticise certain proceedings of the House as he had shown was well aware that the Council were not in as good a position to defend themselves as the other House, and that it had therefore condemned the Council as far as it possibly could. Such a paper was a disgrace to the country, and did not represent the British Press as it ought to be represented.

MR. MEIN: Hear, hear.

MR. WALSH: What had the Council been maligned for? Why were he and other honourable gentlemen named associated together with the ignominious "stripe" of correction? Such terms were applied to them simply because they had seen fit to try to prevent a Bill passing through the Chamber which had come up from the other Chamber, and which the Postmaster-General himself confessed he saw no necessity for, but which the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly was anxious to get passed. Were the Council to follow any suggestion or demand? The time might come, as was before remarked, when the country would have a corrupt Government, or a Speaker who would commit any number of *laches*; and, simply because the Council were requested to do so, they must blindly pass a Bill to set right, or wash away, the corrupt or stupid action of such a Speaker, because he said he had done some wrong, or to condone the misdeeds of such a Government. The reason given by the Postmaster-General was an ample justification of what he (Mr. Walsh) and his honourable friends on his right and on his left did on the occasion in question. Yet they had reflections cast upon them in the way he had shown. It would be a reflection upon the Chamber, it would be a disgrace to any honourable member of the Council, to allow such strictures to go forth without denouncing them, knowing that they were not in consonance with their opinions, and seeing that the course honourable members were pursuing on that occasion was a very legitimate one—when they were not obstructing the transaction of the business of the country, but trying to prevent the statute book being trammelled with such a useless measure as the one presented to them. His honourable friends and himself showed that their proceedings were *bonâ fide* by the heart which they

threw into their work, by the arguments which they used. Yet, notwithstanding all their labour—and it was unpleasant to him—they were ridiculed simply by a portion of the northern Press; and, he durst say, by the Press in other parts of the colony. Apparently, unless the House took the matter into their own hands, that was what they must always expect. If such things were to go on, he said it was time they freed themselves from such domination; it was time the Council, as well as the other Chamber, had a Daily *Hansard*, that, at any rate, should proclaim to the country what they did wrong and what they did right. Now, their proceedings were suppressed, so far as they could be, owing to their want of wisdom, he might say, or to the want of their better arrangement hitherto. Honourable members themselves, unless they happened to be in their own Chamber, had no chance of making known to each other and to the world what they were doing there. He trusted that honourable gentlemen would at any rate acknowledge that he had laid a case before them which demanded serious attention. He trusted that, owing to the admission of the Postmaster-General respecting the intention of the Government in regard to the Elections During Recess Bill, that the proceedings of honourable gentlemen on his (Mr. Walsh's) side who were "striped" were justified, and that the position they took up was a correct one. He trusted, moreover, that their critics would, at least for the future, do them the justice of letting the public know what they were doing and what they were condemned for. However, he cared little for them. He cared for the benefit of the country, in the advancement of its true interests. He believed that the true interests of the country had been advanced by the publication of the Daily *Hansard* of the Legislative Assembly; and that the true interests of the country would be advanced, in a lesser degree, by the adoption of the same course by the Legislative Council. He begged to move—

That this House do now adjourn.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL confessed that he had been entertained as well as instructed by the remarks of his honourable friend. At first, he had to state, with regard to the extracts which the honourable Mr. Walsh had read from the Rockhampton journal, that he had no more to do with them than the honourable member himself had. He might state, further, that, so far as the editorial control of that journal was concerned, it was entirely out of his hands. Although he was still, as a proprietor, he supposed, responsible for anything that might appear in that journal, yet he disclaimed

any other responsibility concerning it. Of course, as his honourable friend would understand, being a resident of Brisbane, he could have no editorial responsibility in connection with any Rockhampton paper. It was in hands which, he believed, were perfectly able to conduct that journal respectably. Though he did not defend the extracts which had been read to the House, yet he had no doubt they had been hurriedly inserted and allowed to appear in the paper, and that the full purport of them was not perceived when they were received. He thought that honourable gentlemen would understand that such cases would occur in the conduct of a daily journal; and that, sometimes, expressions would appear which could not be defended on examination afterwards. He regretted exceedingly that those expressions were published, and he disclaimed any responsibility for them other than that legal responsibility which he was compelled to assume as a proprietor. He should say no more on that particular subject. At the same time, he could scarcely sympathise with his honourable friend in the object he had referred to to-day. The Council did not, he thought, require a Daily *Hansard*. In the other House it was desirable, because honourable members of the Legislative Assembly had constituents, and those constituents should be well informed as to the proceedings of their representatives. The absence of such a reliable record had the effect, he believed, at times, of causing members of the other House to be unfairly dealt with by their constituents. Simply, the other House was that in which the most important measures of Parliament were brought forward; there they were first discussed; there they underwent examination and criticism far more searching than they could get in the Council; and it was, therefore, more desirable that the utterances of members of the Assembly should be distributed broadcast, than that the debates of the Council should be published frequently, as the functions of the Upper Chamber were to a considerable extent those of mere revision. He quite admitted that there were subjects on which the Council could take the initiative; but nearly all the important measures that were passed by Parliament were initiated by the other House. Hence the necessity of greater publicity and more full attention being given to the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly than to those of the House in which his honourable friend and himself now sat. He might remind the honourable gentleman that to publish a Daily *Hansard* for the Council would involve a great deal of expense. They should have a staff of reporters.

Mr. WALSH: How? Business all over by six o'clock!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Oh, no! In addition to that, there would be an increase in the expense of printing *Hansard*. He admitted that if any important object were shown to be necessary of accomplishment, even the expense of bringing out a daily *Hansard* for the Council would not be such as the House could hesitate to incur; but he did think that, seeing the nature of their proceedings, and seeing that they had no constituents to render an account to, it was at all necessary to enter into that undertaking. A full report of the proceedings of the House would be supplied by the daily journals of the city when any very pressing or important business was under discussion; and he did not think that a daily report should be furnished at the expense of the country. He knew that in the other House there were a great many supporters of *Hansard*; but there were a great many who thought that it was unnecessary and too expensive, and that it ought to be suspended.

Mr. WALSH: They were afraid to be reported.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No; he thought the tendency was, rather, the other way. There was far too much speech-making in that House; and the reports were getting so voluminous, that, as a rule, people did not read *Hansard*—they read only particular speeches. He thought that very few persons who received the Daily *Hansard* now attempted to read it all through. If the reports of the speeches delivered in the Council were to be published daily, *Hansard* would be still more voluminous. However, if people did not consider *Hansard* worth reading, now, they would not then; at any rate, they could see the whole of it. He did not know who was the member of the other House who was defeated through the publication of *Hansard*. He hoped it was not the honourable gentleman himself.

Mr. WALSH: No; it was the Government did that for him.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: He did not think that was true. He thought that any defeats that were sustained by former members of the other House must have arisen from other and different causes.

Mr. WALSH: He was sure it was the Government, and the honourable member was a member.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Well, he thought it was satisfactory to the country. Although some former members of the other House might have been excluded, yet he did not think any great disadvantage was sustained. If the country had not the advantage of the honourable member's presence in the Lower House, the Council included him amongst their number. He (the Postmaster-General) had no doubt that his honourable friend would render a very excellent account of himself. The

honourable gentleman would assist the Legislature in making laws as perfect as possible. He (the Postmaster-General) would suggest, if the honourable gentleman had any serious intention of advocating the publication of *Hansard* daily, that he should bring the subject forward in a legitimate form and move for the appointment of a select committee.

Mr. MEIN said he thought that the discussion raised by the honourable Mr. Walsh could not be considered a profitless one, if it resulted simply in the denial of responsibility that the Postmaster-General had given with regard to the articles that appeared in the paper of which he had avowed himself the proprietor. He might say that he was not a regular reader of that paper, as there were a great many things in the management and conduct of it which did not fall in exactly with his views; and he had abandoned reading it, as a rule. However, his attention had been directed to the paragraphs that appeared in it, and that were now placed before the House, and he had naturally felt a little annoyed about them. He must say matters had looked very suspicious. It was a singular fact, or, rather, it might be regarded as a singular, if an undesigned, coincidence, that the proceedings of the Legislative Council had attracted the notice of the correspondent of the *Morning Bulletin* only since the honourable Mr. Buzacott had taken his seat in the House. It was also singular that the honourable gentleman was the proprietor of the paper, and that those two articles appeared as rapidly as possible after discussions had taken place in the House, in which discussions the honourable gentleman had evinced a very warm interest and narrowly escaped defeat. The conclusion that any person would naturally deduce from those facts would be, that either the Postmaster-General himself, or somebody very warmly interested in his career, prompted by him, had written those articles. However, he was gratified at hearing from him his disavowal of responsibility for them. He trusted that, his attention having been directed to them, he would be induced to put a stop to such comments in future. The question of a daily *Hansard* had been raised in the Council on a former occasion, when he opposed the proposal, on the ground that the expense of establishing it would be more than the country would consider the House entitled to incur. But he must say that when the shoe pinched, his inclination was, somewhat, to go the other way. He now realised more than he had been able to do on that occasion—and the facts adduced by the honourable Mr. Walsh made him modify his views somewhat—that it would be of value. The Postmaster-General had stated what he considered was the differ-

ence between the two branches of Parliament, inasmuch as the Assembly were a body composed of members having constituents, while the Council were a body with nothing of the sort. The Council certainly had no constituents who had elected them, or before whom honourable members had to go to give an account of their stewardship; but they had, in one sense, a much larger constituency than members of the Legislative Assembly—their constituency was the whole colony. They were not cyphers in the State; they were a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature. They could do a great deal of good, or harm, by their actions.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MEIN: It was of vital importance, therefore, that their conduct should be put fairly before the people of the colony. Look at Victoria and New South Wales! What were the questions which most deeply agitated the public mind there, at present? The relative positions of the two branches of the Legislature. If the upper branches of the Legislature in Victoria and New South Wales had not, through the medium of an honourable and honest Press, the opportunities of placing before the public in a fair way what they did, would they have had any justice done to them in the present crises? If their acts and conduct were distorted and perverted in the manner that the *Rockhampton Bulletin* had lately misrepresented the Legislative Council of this colony, would they have been likely to have had any consideration shown to them in the final court of appeal, similar to that invoked in Victoria recently? He apprehended not. As long as the Press did not see fit to accord to the Council a fair representation of their actions and discussions, or if the conduct of honourable members in their Chamber was likely to be distorted and perverted, as had been done, he thought they would not be doing unjustly to themselves by taking the course that had been pointed out by the honourable Mr. Walsh. However, the present was not the most appropriate time to come to a decision upon that question. The best way would be for the House to give an expression of opinion upon a proper motion; and, until then, he would reserve any further observations he might have to make. He would conclude, by expressing the hope that, at all events, there would be no repetition in the Press of the slanders that had been alluded to.

The PRESIDENT: Before putting the question, I wish to state to honourable gentlemen that, in accordance with a promise I made on a previous occasion, to inquire into the issue of the *Hansard* weekly, from the printing office, to this Chamber, I find that we are very much in the hands of the Government Printer,



and that, from all the information I can obtain, we cannot, under present circumstances, have it published earlier than Tuesday, which is the day on which *Hansard* is usually issued to this Chamber. With reference to what has been said upon the work done for this Chamber, and the increase of that work by the proposed daily *Hansard*, I think it would be only fair for me to read a note which I received from the Shorthand Writer of this Council, upon that head. I made inquiries from him on the subject, and he wrote me the following report:—

Legislative Council,  
Shorthand Writer's Department,  
27th June, 1879.

The Honourable the President of the Legislative Council.

SIR—I have the honour to state that, in answer to inquiry at the Government Printing Office, last evening, information was given to me that the Legislative Assembly *Hansard* comprised, to the end of last week, the unprecedented amount of 500 (five hundred) pages, in the permanent book form.

There are seven competent reporters engaged in the gallery of the Legislative Assembly, together with four cadets on official pay. These last should be equal to one reporter, in their united capacity to assist the staff in transcription.

The Legislative Council *Hansard*, under one man to report and supervise the whole debates, makes 77 (seventy-seven) pages to the end of last week.

The proportion of work will be seen as follows:—

Assembly <i>Hansard</i> ...	500 pages
Say 7 reporters, each ...	71 "
Council <i>Hansard</i> —	
1 reporter ...	77 "

This is a corresponding state of things to that which existed in a previous session, when it was publicly stated that the Reporter for the Council "had not a tithe of the work" to do that the Assembly Reporters did.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
LAURENCE J. BYRNE.

I think it is only my duty to read this, because it was the result of inquiries I made arising out of a promise which I proffered to this House.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he was desirous of moving the adjournment of the House himself.

Mr. WALSH: He felt bound, in courtesy to the honourable gentleman, to withdraw the motion; only he did not want to do so at once, waiting for honourable members to speak. The honourable gentleman could not go on until the motion was withdrawn.

After a pause,

Mr. WALSH resumed. It would, he said, be improper for him to attempt to criticise, if he felt disposed to do so, any quotations

the President had made;—he would rather have a little more information on the subject of the letter to the President, and not allow it to go forth to guide the House as to the fact or impression that *Hansard* could not be brought out before Tuesday. He, also, had some information which he could not quote; but he thought that probably, if a hint or two were given, it might be done much quicker than it seemed to be. If the House sat only for two hours and a-half, to-day, and they were given to understand that *Hansard* could not possibly be got out—

Mr. SANDEMAN rose to say that, though he did not wish to interfere with the discussion of a question at the proper time, yet the honourable member was hardly entitled to reply on the motion for adjournment, now. If the question raised by him was put in the form that the honourable Mr. Walsh had suggested, by a distinct substantive motion, then the House would have an opportunity of discussing it. He put it to the honourable gentleman that he should not discuss it now.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The PRESIDENT: I think it would be only fair, after what I have said about the *Hansard*, that any information the honourable gentleman has to give to the House, should be laid before them. The House are desirous to get it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. WALSH expressed his astonishment that a veteran of the Parliament like the honourable Mr. Sandeman had interrupted him, on the ground that a member who moved the adjournment of the House had no right to reply. It was the strongest point that a member had, that, after provoking a discussion for the purpose of obtaining information, he might offer further information in which honourable members were behind-hand.

Mr. SANDEMAN: He had understood that the honourable gentleman had withdrawn his motion.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable gentleman had not, at the time, withdrawn his motion.

Mr. SANDEMAN submitted that the honourable gentleman should not reflect upon him.

Mr. WALSH: Well; the honourable gentleman did not make himself clear, and it was not his (Mr. Walsh's) fault, if he did not understand him. He was not reflecting on the honourable gentleman, but rather uttering a panegyric upon him as a veteran of Parliament. He said he would withdraw his motion after he had said what he wanted to say. There was no necessity for the honourable gentleman's interruption, or for his feeling aggrieved. It was somewhat strange to him (Mr. Walsh), and, probably the House would not object to his calling

attention to it, that if honourable members sat, to-day, two or three hours, the public—he would put themselves aside altogether—was not to have the opportunity of discovering officially what was said in the Chamber until next Tuesday or Wednesday; and that the Council should be treated very differently from the way in which the other branch of the Parliament was treated by the Printing Department, as had been referred to. Now, he did not hesitate to say that if the Government Printer was brought before a Select Committee of the House, he would say it could be done, and, more than that, he would gladly do it. Under what circumstances he had been induced to say that he could not do it before Tuesday, he (Mr Walsh) could not understand. It was the duty of the Council, if there were difficulties, to get over them—to remove them; and they wanted to do so, in order to enlighten the country, and that their proceedings should not be anticipated by unjust criticism in the Press.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. WALSH: He must say that he felt the reply given by the Postmaster-General to the remarks he had made were a credit to him; that was, the honourable gentleman did not attempt to justify the journal of which he was the proprietor—he did not attempt to hold that its action was beneficial or that the proceedings of the Council should be criticised before they were known. He thought the Postmaster-General met the unexpected remarks made by himself (Mr. Walsh) as well as could be expected. And there was a good deal of force in what the honourable gentleman said, that the public longed a great deal more for the knowledge of the proceedings of the other Chamber of Legislature than of the proceedings of the Council. But the Council had a great deal to blame themselves for on that account—for their opinions not going forth to the country. It had too long been allowed for the Council to become, what appeared to be, quite subordinate—not a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature—in the government of the country; though that, to some extent, was the practice and usage, and had justified the Press in the way in which it treated the Council. He did not think it was necessary to take up the time of the House, further. He hoped that this debate would, at any rate, have its effect; that it would, as he stated before, induce honourable members to endeavour to see that justice was done to the Council; and that honourable members would endeavour to see that they were not condemned before they were heard, so that the public generally, and the reading public in particular, should have the opportunity of knowing what really had occurred in the House instead of having other people's opinions from a very muddy source

of suppressed information. With the consent of the House he begged to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That being all the business the House had to dispose of, under other circumstances, he should ask honourable members to adjourn until next week; but, as there was a probability that there would be an important measure before the Council to-morrow, he thought it desirable that they should attend.

MR. MURRAY-PRIOR said, the Postmaster-General would see that the Standing Orders were under suspension, now. Though the honourable gentleman did say that it was only for one Bill, still it had not been removed.

MR. MEIN: It was only for a specific Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: The Standing Orders were suspended only for the passage of one Bill through its remaining stages in one day. That settled the question.

The House adjourned.

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