

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 20 AUGUST 1879

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 20 August, 1879.

Assent to Bill.—Life Insurance Bill.—Telegraph Rates.—
The Dry Dock.—Representation of the Colony at
the Sydney Exhibition.—Conduct of Business.

ASSENT TO BILL.

A message from the Governor was received, informing the House that His Excellency had assented to the Tooth Estate Enabling Bill.

LIFE INSURANCE BILL.

A message from the Legislative Assembly was received, transmitting a "Bill to Encourage and Protect Life Insurances and other like Provident Arrangements," for the concurrence of the Council.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time and ordered to be printed, the honourable gentleman stating that he introduced it by request, in the absence of the honourable

member who had undertaken the conduct of the measure through the House. The second reading he asked to be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow. He did not suppose the House would be ready to take the Bill into consideration to-morrow; but he did not like to assume the responsibility of postponing it in the absence of the honourable member who had charge of it.

Mr. Box said he trusted that the Postmaster-General would not ask the House to go on with the second reading to-morrow. The question involved was a very important one. He understood that many alterations had been made in the Bill by the Legislative Assembly, and honourable members wanted time to consider them. If he found he was supported, and the honourable gentleman persisted in his motion, he should divide the House against him.

Mr. HART concurred with the honourable Mr. Box. The Bill, since it was introduced in the Legislative Assembly and first placed in the hands of honourable gentlemen, had undergone such alteration that it was now very unlike the original draft. It was a very important measure, and would require some time for its proper consideration by honourable gentlemen, who desired to look into it. He trusted that the request of the honourable Mr. Box would be complied with, and that the Bill would be postponed until next week. It was only a reasonable request.

Mr. WALSH: If the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would occupy his seat, the discussion would probably go on. Perhaps he had better move the adjournment of the House.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, who was below the bar, returned to his seat.

Mr. WALSH: If the business was to be interrupted in this way, the House could not proceed. The honourable gentleman had certainly introduced the Bill in the most extraordinary way. The Governor's message had interrupted the motion for the first reading—though he (Mr. Walsh) had really thought that the Postmaster-General had moved in an informal manner that the Bill which His Excellency had assented to should be read a first time—and he was rather taken by surprise, or he might have moved an amendment. The Postmaster-General addressed the Chamber on the introduction of the Bill, and then left the Chamber. That was an informality, or a strange way of doing business, which required the notice of honourable members. He (Mr. Walsh) believed that the Life Insurance Bill, like others which had come before the Council, had been introduced in the other Chamber informally; yet, by some peculiar process which was now animating that Chamber, it had been got through. That was another reason why the Council should hesitate, and take full time for con-

sideration. He thought he should be able to prove his statement. The honourable gentleman, by some mysterious power, seemingly had charge of the Bill, which did not belong to the Government. There was no reason why it should be read a second time to-morrow; and the Postmaster-General would, he (Mr. Walsh) trusted, accede to the suggestion of the honourable Mr. Box and the honourable Mr. Hart, and not attempt to go on with it further until next week.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL would repeat what he said before, that he had not the slightest intention of assenting to the second reading to-morrow. He only introduced the Bill, having been requested to do so by the author of it in the other House, and merely moved that the second reading be ordered for to-morrow, *pro forma*. If the honourable gentleman who took it up at that time wished to go to the second reading, he (the Postmaster-General) should certainly offer opposition to that course; because he thought the House were fully entitled to time for considering it before the second reading. The measure was a very important one. If honourable gentlemen preferred that he should amend his motion to appoint the second reading for Wednesday next, instead of to-morrow, with the permission of the House, he should be very glad to make that alteration.

Mr. WALSH: Hear, hear.

Question put and passed, and the second reading of the Bill was made an order for Wednesday next.

TELEGRAPH RATES.

Mr. WALSH asked the Postmaster-General—

Touching the present Telegraph Rates—is he contemplating any advance in the present charges, or have the Government determined to make such?—If so, to what extent?—And to what part of the territory are such increases to be applied?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL answered—

No advance in Telegraphic Charges is contemplated at present.

Mr. WALSH said he would, to-morrow, ask the honourable gentleman whether the Council contemplated any increased charges for the future. It was currently reported that they did.

THE DRY DOCK.

Mr. WALSH asked the Postmaster-General—

When he intends to produce the full Report, ordered by this House respecting the Dry Dock at Brisbane?—and will such Report include the terms of contract, plans, and specifications regarding the same?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL answered—

The return laid on the Table on the 3rd July last appears to be strictly in accordance with the Order of the House, except that the information was brought down to a later date in the return than was asked for by the honourable mover.

Mr. WALSH: There was one part of the question that he had put which the honourable gentleman did not reply to. He might be allowed to ask him again—

Will such report include the terms of contract, plans, and specifications regarding the same?

Perhaps if the Postmaster-General would give an answer to that, it would prevent the necessity for a protracted motion on the subject.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: If he was in order, he was quite willing to state that his answer involved the entire question—that the full return had been presented;—and, of course, he did not contemplate producing any other, unless it was called for. A full return, in accordance with the order of the House, had been presented.

Mr. WALSH rose—

The PRESIDENT: I must remind the honourable gentleman that, unless he has the permission of the House, he cannot again address the Council: he has already spoken.

Mr. WALSH: He was going to give notice of a motion for to-morrow—That there be laid on the table of the House a copy of the contract, with the plans and specification, entered into by the Government with Overend and Co., for the construction of the Dry Dock at Brisbane.

REPRESENTATION OF THE COLONY AT THE SYDNEY EXHIBITION.

Mr. WALSH said that when he gave notice of the motion standing in his name third on the paper, to-day, he was not aware that there had been a notification in the *Gazette* that four gentlemen had been appointed by the Government to represent Queensland at the great Exhibition in Sydney. He was labouring under the impression that only one gentleman was supposed to represent this colony, and that he had been appointed by a kind of semi-official institution here called the National Association. He was aware that the Government seemed to have taken that gentleman under their wing; and, whoever appointed him, that they apparently were intending—officially, to some extent—to recognize him and probably to pay his expenses while sporting himself in the other colony. That was the impression he laboured under. But, having ascertained, since, that there were three others—or, three gentlemen—associated with Mr. Gresley Lukin in the duty; and not having

all the information before him to offer to the Chamber which he thought should be before honourable gentlemen, for the full consideration of the matter—for instance, not having arrived at or obtained any information of that new light which had been thrown upon the matter, that the Commission were, or that Executive Commissioner was, to be a cost to the country—he thought he should only be doing his duty to the Council and to the country by postponing or withdrawing his motion, at any rate, for a time, until he got certain facts showing what would be the expense of the Commission. Having ascertained that, if the Government were determined to recognise fully by an expenditure the necessity of this colony being properly represented in Sydney, then the Council would be in a better position to determine if the Government had taken suitable means to see Queensland properly represented. With this feeling, he begged to withdraw the motion:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the intended Great Exhibition at Sydney is a matter of much importance to the colony of Queensland.

That it will be consonant with the wishes of the colonists generally that this colony be suitably represented thereat.

Withdrawn accordingly.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

Amongst formal and routine matters, were the postponement of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL's notice for the presentation of a Lunacy Bill, and the introduction by Dr. O'DOHERTY, of a Bill to Amend the Health Act of 1874, which was advanced through its preliminary stages.

The House adjourned at 4 p.m.