

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**TUESDAY, 6 JULY 1880**

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1880.

QUEENSLAND.



# DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

DURING THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF THE COLONY  
OF QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE SIXTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FORTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER  
MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1880.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, 6 July, 1880.*

Meeting of Parliament.—Acting-Governor's Opening  
Speech.—New Standing Order.—Point of Order.—  
Address in Reply.

### MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House met shortly before noon.

The CLERK OF PARLIAMENTS read a proclamation bearing date 27th May, 1880, calling hon. members together for the despatch of business this day.

Also, a letter from the President of the Legislative Council, requesting him to inform the House that he was unable to attend in his place as President, having been called upon to administer the Government in the absence of Sir Arthur Kennedy.

### ACTING-GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

At noon, His Excellency the Acting-Governor—the Hon. Joshua Peter Bell—came in state to the Parliamentary Buildings, and was received at the main entrance by hon. members of the Legislative Council and conducted to the dais in the Upper Chamber.

The House being seated, a message was sent to the Legislative Assembly to the effect that His Excellency desired the presence of Mr. Speaker and hon. members in the Council Chamber; and, the Assembly being in the place reserved for them below the bar,

His EXCELLENCY read his Opening Speech as follows:—

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

“It gives me much pleasure to meet you, and seek your counsel in maturing the legislative measures demanded by the circumstances of the 1880—B

colony. I regret that unavoidable circumstances have prevented your assembling until an unusually late period of the year; but I believe that you will deem the material public advantage resulting from the delay full compensation for the inconvenience it has occasioned.

“By the Divisional Boards Act of last year, the provisions of which have now been applied to all parts of the colony, an important and beneficial change in its government has been initiated with encouraging prospects. The readiness with which the people in nearly every part of the colony have undertaken the charge of their own affairs affords gratifying proof that the colonists of Queensland are not wanting in that intelligent self-reliance and public spirit which everywhere characterise British communities. A considerable time must necessarily elapse before all the difficulties attendant upon the introduction of the new system are surmounted and the full benefits derivable from its operation are realised; but my advisers entertain no doubt of its ultimate success. The questions involved in the satisfactory definition and effective maintenance of the principal roads of the colony have proved somewhat embarrassing to the Government, but a Bill will be submitted for your consideration which they trust provides for a satisfactory adjustment.

“Among other measures passed by Parliament last year, the Electoral Rolls Act and the Licensing Boards Act have also been brought into operation, and have already proved of much public advantage.

“In response to the invitations issued for tenders for the continuance of the Torres Straits

Mail service, several offers were received in October last; but, all involving a subsidy largely in excess of the amount paid under the present contract, none of them was deemed eligible by my Government. Besides, it was impossible to overlook the fact that a branch mail service between Singapore and Queensland did not secure to the colony the advantages of direct through steam communication with England, the absence of which at the present time is most prejudicially affecting the commerce of the colony. Advantage was therefore taken of the presence of the Premier in England to invite offers for the establishment of a first-class through service, providing for the more speedy transit of both mails and immigrants through the Suez Canal and Torres Straits. No eligible tender in reply to the advertisement issued was received; but the Premier was subsequently enabled to make an advantageous contract, a copy of which will be laid before you, and which my advisers confidently submit for your ratification.

"Under the authority conferred by the Loan Act of 1879, the Queensland National Bank invited tenders in London, in April last, for two million pounds worth of the colony's debentures. On the 8th of April a sum amounting to nearly three times that asked was offered, and at prices which, under all the circumstances, must be deemed satisfactory, and which compare favourably with the recent loans negotiated by the older Australian Colonies.

"The possibility of straining the credit of the colony by appeals to the English money market for fresh loans to complete necessary public works induced my Ministers to regard favourably the carrying out of a system of railway lines by private enterprise, stimulated by generous land grants.

"They accordingly determined to ascertain whether and on what terms the attention of British capitalists could be attracted to railway construction in Queensland. I am happy to inform you that during his recent stay in England the Premier received proposals from influential gentlemen there for connecting the eastern seaboard of the colony with the Gulf of Carpentaria by means of a through railway, starting from the termini of the trunk lines at present under construction by the Government. These proposals will shortly be laid before you, and a Bill will be introduced during the present session giving authority to the Government, under certain specified conditions, and with the requisite safeguards, to enter into a contract with responsible persons for the carrying out of this undertaking within a reasonable time.

"Notwithstanding the depressed value of agricultural and pastoral produce, as well as live stock, the demand for land continues to be maintained. As compared with the preceding twelve months there was a falling off in the area selected during the year 1879; but during the past six months the selections again show a considerable increase. There is every reason to believe that the settlement of the country is steadily progressing. The suitability of the Northern coastlands

for the cultivation of sugar is attracting the attention of capitalists in the Southern colonies; while the recent discoveries of tin upon the Tate, Herbert, and Barron Rivers will, it is hoped, lead to the extension of an important mining industry in that part of the colony.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—

"The Estimates for the Financial Year 1880-1 have been prepared on the most economical scale compatible with administrative efficiency, and will shortly be laid before you.

"I regret that the prevailing depression which so signally disappointed the revenue anticipations of the previous year has not less prejudicially affected the financial period just closed. Happily, there are at length indications that the turning-point has been passed; yet my Ministers, who had hoped to tide over the depression without additional taxation, now consider it necessary, in prudence, to adopt legislative as well as administrative measures for equalising revenue and expenditure. The general application of Local Government can give little immediate relief to the Treasury, as the ever-increasing demands for road and bridge expenditure will still be met by heavy, although *pro rata*, drafts upon Consolidated Revenue. You will therefore be invited to sanction proposals for augmenting the public income with the least possible inconvenience to the taxpayer; but I trust that returning prosperity, and a prudent administration of the finances, will render any permanent addition to the public burdens unnecessary.

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

"The successful placing of the loan enables my Ministers to carry on without interruption various useful public works for which provision was made by Parliament last year. The several railway lines in the coast districts are approaching completion; it may therefore be hoped that the heavy expenditure incurred upon them will soon become at least partially reproductive. The contracts recently made for the continuance of the main lines into the western interior prove that important economies have been lately effected in our system of railway construction, and that the reduced estimate made by Ministers last year of the cost of future extensions will not be exceeded. The work of harbour improvement will be greatly accelerated when the dredges now building become available, and my Ministers are determined to relax no effort in their endeavour to meet the growing requirements of the shipping trade of the colony in this particular.

"Works for the water supply of the principal towns of the colony, and other undertakings of a purely local character, having been carried out or authorised by means of considerable sums of borrowed money, legislation has become imperative to provide for the accruing interest, and the ultimate repayment of the principal moneys so expended. A Bill to provide for the Construction of Local Works on Loan will therefore be found among the measures submitted for your consideration.

"Bills will also be laid before you, for the following purposes, namely,—To provide for the Construction and Management of Works for the Storage and Distribution of Water; to regulate the Introduction and Treatment of Pacific Island Labourers; to provide for the Regulation and Inspection of Mines; to prevent the Influx of Foreign and other Criminals; to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to Distillation; to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to the Insane; to provide for the Proclamation of State Forests and the Conservation of Timber; to provide for the sale of Food and Drugs in a Pure State; to amend the Marriage Laws; to provide for the issue of Post Cards and Postal Notes; and other Bills of importance.

"In submitting these measures for your consideration, and in endeavouring to pass them into law, I confidently anticipate that my advisers will secure your valuable assistance; and I trust that the wise legislation of the session now opened will be conducive in a marked degree to the progress and well-being of the colony."

His Excellency and suite then left, and the Assembly being also withdrawn, the sitting was suspended until half-past 3 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (the Hon. D. F. Roberts), in the absence of the President, took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

#### NEW STANDING ORDER.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the Standing Order passed by the House on the 24th September last had been approved by His Excellency the Governor on the 2nd October.

#### POINT OF ORDER.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (the Hon. C. H. Buzacott) was laying papers on the table, when

The Hon. W. H. WALSH rose to a point of order, and asked whether such a proceeding was formal, as the House was at present constituted. He apprehended that the House was not properly constituted, and he was at a loss to know what there was to necessitate any departure from the practice of Parliament in their proceedings, as was being done by the Hon. Postmaster-General in bringing forward a motion.

The CHAIRMAN said he could assure the hon. gentleman that he was not aware that any motion was being made by the Hon. the Postmaster-General.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had inadvertently departed from the usual practice, although he did not believe he had been guilty of any breach of order. He would, however, meet the difficulty by presenting a Bill *pro forma*. He moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Law relating to the Occupation of Public Reserves.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL was proceeding to lay papers on the table, when

The Hon. W. H. WALSH rose to a point of order. He submitted that the whole proceedings were informal, and that the fact of the Chairman of Committees being in the chair was also informal. It was absolutely required by the Standing Orders that, in the absence of the President, the Chairman of Committees must take the chair, but there must be a formal motion

to that effect. Without the Government deigning to tell the House that the President was absent, or giving any explanation of the causes which led to the Chairman of Committees being in the chair, they were pushing on the business of the House. He considered there was a want of attention on the part of the Hon. Postmaster-General to what was due to the House before the Chairman was introduced to the House as their acting President. That they should rush into work with no acting President formally installed was altogether contrary to parliamentary practice.

The CHAIRMAN said it might save discussion if he reminded the House they had this morning been informed that the President would not be in attendance in consequence of his being called upon to act as Administrator of the Government. Under clause 6 of their Standing Orders he had taken the Chair—for that day at least—so that the Hon. Postmaster-General was in order.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that in consequence of the absence of the President it became necessary for them to make provision for a temporary successor to that gentleman. Under the 6th Standing Order which had been referred to, in the unavoidable absence of the President the Chairman of Committees took the chair for that day only, and in the event of the President's absence continuing for more than one day he might, if the House should think fit to so order, take the chair in like manner on any subsequent day during such absence. The 7th Standing Order provided that if the House did not approve of the Chairman of Committees presiding during the continued absence of the President, another member might then be appointed. The next Standing Order provided for the election of a Chairman of Committees when the Chairman of Committees had been ordered to preside. The 9th Standing Order provided that whenever the President, the Chairman of Committees, and presiding Chairman were absent, a member be elected to act as presiding Chairman for that day only. It would appear at first that, if they should not appoint a presiding chairman to act from day to day, the House would be at perfect liberty to appoint one to-morrow; but he thought there was some doubt about that, according to the 9th Standing Order, to which he had referred. The Chairman of Committees was, however, present, and, therefore, that Standing Order was not intended to meet the circumstances in which the House found itself at the present time. That circumstance appeared to have influenced the House on former occasions, as in the year 1871, on the first day of the sitting of the House, the then Postmaster-General moved that the Chairman of Committees, in the absence of the Hon. President to act as Governor of the colony, do take the chair from day to day. As the Standing Orders did not appear to provide for the contingency of the House being without a chairman continually appointed, and as they had a precedent for electing a chairman to act as chairman during the continued absence of the President, he believed it would be admitted by hon. gentlemen that it would be better that he should give the House an opportunity of deciding who should occupy the chair during the President's absence, especially as there was that evening as large a House as they were likely to have for some time. He would therefore move—

That during the absence of the Hon. President from the sittings of this House whilst acting as Governor of the Colony, the Hon. D. F. Roberts do take the chair from day to day.

The Hon. C. S. MEIN considered that the question was one which should not be brought

forward and decided with too great rapidity. The appointment of a Chairman for any continued period was one which concerned that House very much, and he, for one, was of opinion that it should be left to the due consideration of hon. gentlemen before deciding who should be placed in that important position. Although other circumstances being equal, it was very probable that the choice would fall upon the Chairman of Committees, yet it was possible—in fact, he had heard something to that effect—that some other hon. gentlemen were willing to be elected. He should be glad if the Hon. Postmaster-General would amend his motion to this effect: that the Chairman of Committees take the chair to-morrow, and thus leave the House to consider what should be done. There was another matter he would mention in reference to the wording of the motion, namely, that the President was not acting as Governor of the Colony but only as Administrator of the Government. It was not, perhaps, a matter of great importance, but it would be better to follow the language of the Standing Order, which merely referred to the absence of the President, and to frame the resolution in general terms. By adopting his suggestion no harm could be done, as it was within the scope of their Standing Orders to move that the Chairman of Committees take the chair to-morrow; and a motion could then be made that the Chairman of Committees continue to preside as Chairman during the absence of the President.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said that it had fallen to his lot in previous years to bring forward a resolution of a similar kind to that moved by the Hon. Postmaster-General. It struck him that the proposition was thoroughly feasible that the Chairman of Committees be moved to the chair for that day only, with the view of giving hon. members more time to consider what should be done.

The CHAIRMAN said that if there were any opposition to the motion it could not be put.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he should be happy to accept the suggestion of the hon. member, if it were not that by doing so they would be creating a precedent. Both in 1863 and in 1871 the necessary provision for the occupancy of the chair during the absence of the President was made on the first day of the assembling of the House. Not one sound reason had been given for delay. There was a large attendance of members; the question was not intricate; and the Chairman of Committees, who had occupied that position ever since the House was first constituted, was well known to every hon. member, and had repeatedly been called upon to occupy the position of Acting-President. He failed to see why another day should be wasted in discussing the question. Of course, if any member opposed the motion he should have to withdraw it; but he trusted that that would not be done. It was desirable that the question should be settled one way or the other, and it might as well be done without further delay, so that the business of the country could be proceeded with at once.

The Hon. Mr. WALSH said there was no doubt hon. members would be glad to see the Chairman of Committees appointed as Acting-President, but the question for discussion was whether the House would consent to the Postmaster-General conducting the business of the House in an informal manner. The hon. gentleman himself admitted that his motion was informal, and yet he urged them to accept it. With the best wishes and intentions towards the Chairman of Committees, he must insist that due formality in the conduct of the business of the House was of greater importance than the passing of such a motion as the one proposed. It

was a very bad beginning of the session, but he had no doubt it was the way in which the Government intended to conduct their business. He therefore wished hon. members to take objection at the very outset to such high-handed proceedings, and trusted that they would insist upon the forms of the House being carried out in their strict integrity.

The Hon. Mr. PETTIGREW said that, as the motion was practically contrary to the provisions of the 43rd Standing Order, he should oppose it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that, as the motion was opposed, he was, of course, bound to withdraw it. He would now move that, in accordance with Standing Order 140, the Standing Orders be suspended in order that a member may be appointed to act as Chairman during the absence of the President. This was, in the words of the Standing Order, a case of urgent and pressing necessity. He would once more remind the House that he was following out precisely what had been done on every previous occasion when the House had had to fill a vacancy of this description. Hon. members opposite seemed desirous to create a new precedent.

The Hon. Mr. MEIN said he objected to those reflections on hon. gentlemen opposite.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he made no reflections upon anyone; but to adopt the suggestion of the hon. member would be a departure from the usual practice of the House. So far as he could discover there was no precedent for such a postponement, and, on the ground that the case was one of urgent and pressing necessity, he would ask the House to consent to the suspension of the Standing Orders for the purpose of proceeding with the election of a Chairman during the absence of the President.

The Hon. Mr. WALSH said the question had already been decided, and could not therefore be reopened, the House having determined that it was necessary to give notice of such a motion.

The Hon. Mr. MEIN said the House was drifting into a state of contention which they might possibly have to deplore. The Postmaster-General was beginning to resort to his tactics of last session, of throwing imputations on the other side whenever he had got himself into a difficulty. This matter could be dealt with in the simplest possible manner. Of his own motion, and without consulting anyone, he had suggested to the Postmaster-General that, as it was a very important matter who should preside over the deliberations of the House for a presumably long period, it should not be dealt with in a hurried manner, especially as they were able to come to as satisfactory a conclusion to-morrow as to-day. This they were enabled to do by the Standing Orders; and there was certainly no urgent or pressing necessity for the motion being put. Standing Order No. 6 provided that the Chairman should take the chair for to-day, and he could be ordered in like manner to take the chair on any subsequent day. In consequence of the President's absence, that had been done to-day, and it could be done by resolution again to-morrow without notice of motion, or, if hon. members wished otherwise, they could appoint someone else to take the chair during the absence of the President. To avoid doubt on this subject, he suggested they should pass a resolution, this afternoon, that the Chairman should take the chair to-morrow. That was quite within the scope of their authority. That being so, the present proposition was completely out of order. The House had always been extremely jealous about the suspension of its Standing Orders, and they had a right to assume that those Orders

would be adhered to as strictly as possible. It was an obligation upon them to resist the unnecessary suspension of the Standing Orders. He had his own feelings with regard to the appointment of a Chairman—very strong feelings. He was extremely anxious that they should have a Chairman sound and impartial in judgment, and calculated to fill the position with dignity to himself and honour to the chair. Those were matters which required consideration. The House was perfectly in the dark until this afternoon as to what the movements of the Postmaster-General would be, and the only argument he had advanced for coming to a decision this afternoon was, that on two former occasions the Chairman of Committees was, off-hand, appointed to preside during the continued absence of the President. But on those occasions it was not anticipated that the absence of the President would be anything like as long as it would be now. It was very probable that on the present occasion the President would not be able to take his place amongst them during the whole of the session, and that fact obliged them to be particularly careful to make a good selection. He would not say how he should give his vote, but the question was one on which they could hardly come to a conclusion to-day. No harm could be done by postponing the decision of the question until to-morrow afternoon.

The HON. MR. IVORY said no reason had been assigned for not coming to a decision at once. To do so would facilitate business considerably, and there was probably a larger attendance of members now than there would be to-morrow afternoon. If they referred to the journals of the House, they would find that in 1868, and also in 1871, a similar course was pursued to that which the Postmaster-General had now adopted. The first motion having been opposed and withdrawn, he saw no other plan of proceeding than the suspension of the Standing Orders. If they did not appoint an Acting-President to-day, who was to be the Chairman when the House met to-morrow? It would be extremely inadvisable to meet the House with the Clerk of the Parliaments in the chair, especially in the event of divisions being taken. There was evidently some difference of opinion as to who should be appointed Acting-President, and it would be better, therefore, to proceed with the election at once and have done with it.

The HON. MR. GREGORY also urged that the question should be disposed of to-day, as there was probably a larger attendance of members now than there would be to-morrow. There were at least four or five hon. gentlemen who had come down specially for the opening of Parliament, and with a view of taking part in the election, to-day, of the Acting-President. Such being the case, the common-sense view to take, if it could be done without violating any of the rules of the House, would be to come to a decision at once. He should support the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

The HON. K. I. O'DOHERTY said that, not having been present when the discussion began, he had not heard any of the reasons which might have been advanced in favour of the postponement of the question; but it seemed to him that it was a question which ought to be settled at once. There might possibly be some reasons of gravity to justify a postponement, but, despite what the Hon. Mr. Mein had said, he hoped the voice of the House would be in favour of the motion, and that the Chairman of Committees would be appointed to take the place of the President during his absence. He believed that that gentleman would in every possible way do honour to the position and give satisfaction to the House and the country. If there were good reasons for the

postponement apart from the personal question of the fitness of the Chairman of Committees, it would perhaps be as well to allow the question to stand over till to-morrow, but he trusted that whenever the decision was arrived at the House would be unanimously in favour of the elevation to the post of the Chairman of Committees.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that if he felt convinced that the majority of hon. members wished the matter to be postponed, he should be only too happy to accede to it; but he had reason to believe that the feeling was entirely the other way. The Hon. Mr. Mein complained that this was a surprise; but even if that were so, he would ask hon. members how the position would be improved by the postponement? They had not heard that any other hon. member would be proposed to occupy the chair. If anything of that sort was intended the hon. gentleman ought to announce the fact, because unless the House was informed on that point the motion to be made to-morrow would be equally a surprise. They would want to know the qualifications of the hon. member's candidate, and they would consequently not be able to come to a decision to-morrow any more than to-day. As to the absence of the Governor from the colony, he would inform hon. members that he saw Sir Arthur Kennedy on his departure from Queensland, and he assured him that they might depend upon his being in Queensland again within five months from the date of his departure. That five months would expire in about six weeks from to-day, and if Sir Arthur Kennedy returned by the date on which he assured him (Mr. Buzacott) that he intended to return, the President would resume his place long before the session closed. The matter had been pretty fully discussed, and he hoped the House would now come to a division upon it.

The HON. MR. WALSH said he felt himself in a somewhat guilty position, his name having been mentioned as a possible candidate for the chair. It was therefore with diffidence that he now rose to address the House. He would assure hon. members that he was not a candidate for the position; but he was a great claimant that the business of the House should be conducted according to its proper forms. He felt that the Postmaster-General was inaugurating the session in a very bad way by trying to induce hon. members to set aside those forms, and to carry an informal motion. On that ground he protested against the motion, and he trusted that the Acting-President, as custodian of the forms of order of the House, would prevent the Government from putting him informally into a position which he would no doubt fill with dignity. He was not opposed to the appointment of the Chairman of Committees, but he objected to his being placed there ignominiously by an informal motion, made at the instigation of the Government. As to the arguments that had been used in support of the motion, they were not worthy of reply.

The HON. MR. PETTIGREW said that, in accordance with Standing Order No. 140, which provided that notice should be given of a resolution to suspend the Standing Orders, the motion could not be put, and even then it could only be put in cases of urgent and pressing necessity. No such case had been shown in the present instance, nor had any notice of motion been given.

The HON. MR. MEIN said he did not wish to prolong the debate unnecessarily, but would ask the ruling of the Chairman as to whether there was an urgent and pressing necessity to warrant the suspension of the Standing Orders?

The CHAIRMAN said, that according to the Standing Order No. 141, the point raised would be answered by the majority of the House.

The HON. MR. MEIN said that the question as to the urgency and pressing necessity of the case was one for the Chairman, and not for the House, to determine. Before the motion could be put the absolute necessity for it must be shown, and it must be shown that they had no other means of obtaining the object aimed at except by the suspension of the Standing Orders. He must protest most strongly against the suspension of the Standing Orders, unless there was an urgent and pressing necessity, and he had already pointed out to the House that the Standing Orders enabled them to provide themselves with a chairman in every possible contingency. He had suggested that a resolution should be passed this evening, that the Chairman do take the chair to-morrow, and if there was a majority in favour of the appointment of the hon. gentleman to fill the office from day to day, it could be done formally to-morrow. In asking them to suspend the Standing Orders, the Postmaster-General was doing what, to his mind, seemed illegal. He would urge upon hon. members to respect their Standing Orders.

The HON. MR. MACDOUGALL said that no sufficient reason had been shown for the postponement. Every hon. member knew that this appointment was to be made to-day or to-morrow, and he could not see how anything would be gained by postponing the question till to-morrow. He had a very great objection to the suspension of the Standing Orders, and he did not know whether he should be inclined to support any motion to that effect. He trusted, therefore, that the opposition would be withdrawn, so that the appointment might be settled at once.

The HON. MR. MURRAY-PRIOR said, that as a number of hon. members had come here to-day with the express intention of taking part in the appointment of the Acting-President, he did not see what advantage would be gained by not coming to the question at once. The majority of hon. members had no doubt already made up their minds on the subject, and, no doubt, they would like to see the thing settled. He trusted the Standing Orders would not be suspended, and, rather than see such suspension take place, he would prefer losing a day. He trusted that the Hon. Mr. Pettigrew would withdraw his opposition to the motion first proposed by the Postmaster-General.

The HON. MR. PETTIGREW said if that would tend to smooth matters, he was perfectly agreeable to withdraw his opposition.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said on that understanding he would withdraw the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders. He regretted to have had to make such a motion on the first day of the session.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL then moved that during the absence of the President from the sittings of the House while acting as Administrator of the Government of the Colony, the Hon. D. F. Roberts, Chairman of Committees, be Chairman of the House from day to day.

Question put, and the House divided—

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The Postmaster-General, Messrs. Ivory, O'Doherty, Taylor, Hart, Macdougall, Heussler, Edmondstone, Swan, Foote, Turner, Cowlishaw, and Walsh.

NON-CONTENTS, 5.

Messrs. Pettigrew, Murray-Prior, Gregory, Hope, and Mein.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

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

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider of and prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency; such Committee to consist of the Hon. F. T. Gregory, the Hon. F. J. Ivory, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

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

The HON. F. J. IVORY brought up the report of the Committee, and moved that it be read by the Clerk at the table.

Question put and passed.

Whereupon,

The CLERK read as follows:—

“To His Excellency the Honourable JOSHUA PETER BELL, President of the Legislative Council of the Colony of Queensland, and Administrator of the Government thereof.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Council of Queensland in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty towards the Person and Government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present Session.

“We congratulate Your Excellency on your having assumed the position of Administrator of the Government of the colony.

“We shall give our patient and serious consideration to the various measures to which Your Excellency has referred; and we beg to assure Your Excellency that it will be our earnest endeavour to co-operative with Her Majesty's representative and the other branch of the Legislature in passing of laws calculated to promote the public welfare and the advancement of the colony.”

The HON. F. J. IVORY rose to speak—

The HON. W. H. WALSH called attention to the fact that there was not a quorum present.

Quorum formed.

The HON. F. J. IVORY said that he had much pleasure in proposing that the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech should be adopted, and he was sure that anyone who had heard the Speech delivered by His Excellency that day must have been much gratified with its contents. He did not intend to go through the whole of the Speech, but would refer to some paragraphs which must commend themselves greatly to the country, and give it great pleasure. With regard to the Divisional Boards Act everyone must be particularly glad to find that the Act had been adopted so uniformly and with so little trouble throughout the colony. Whilst the measure was passing through both Houses one was led to suppose that a great deal of difficulty would arise in inaugurating it; it must therefore be as gratifying to the Government as it was to him that so little trouble had been experienced in getting it adopted. No doubt, as the paragraph in the

Speech said, there were some matters connected with the carrying out of the system which would cause some little difficulties; but he had not the slightest doubt that they would be satisfactorily overcome with very little trouble, and that the measure, which was vehemently opposed during the time of its passing, would prove one of the greatest boons that had been conferred upon Queensland. It could not be questioned that up to the time of the passing of the various Acts the Government were troubled in a most intolerable degree by the claims of the various communities with regard to the making of roads and bridges, and that it had really become a political question with many members; in fact, their support depended upon their ability to get works done in their electorates—a state of things very detrimental to the proper conduct of legislation. He was glad that this difficulty had been done away with. It had been stated by some parties, and in the public prints, that the Government had agreed, or led the people to suppose, that they would take under their charge the public roads; but it must be patent to any person possessing any clearness of intellect that, had the Government allowed themselves to be led away in the manner proposed, and had they consented to define and take charge of main roads, the whole question would have been opened afresh; every electorate would be clamouring to have “main roads” defined in it, and the Act, in place of being a benefit, would have been a dead letter. As to the paragraph referring to the Electoral Rolls and Licensing Boards Acts, there would be no two opinions with regard to the advantage which had accrued to the colony by the passing of those two measures. Facilities had been afforded such as were not available before to persons to register themselves as electors, and a saving of expense had also been effected by taking the collection of the rolls out of the hands of the police, and making people desirous of exercising the franchise go to the trouble of seeing that their names were enrolled. With reference to the Licensing Boards Act, the manner in which justices, who never sat on other occasions, assembled at the time of the annual or quarterly licensing meetings for the express purpose of voting whether certain houses should be licensed, was simply objectionable, and he was glad to see that this Act had abolished such a gross scandal, and sincerely hoped that the working of the law would continue to be efficient. As to the matter of the new mail service mentioned in the next paragraph, he must say that possibly the sum mentioned in the papers as the cost was large; he believed that such a service, if it could be established at not too great expense, would be of vast benefit to the commercial interests of the colony, for there could be no doubt that at the present moment, through trade being carried on to such a large extent by steam vessels, there had been a tendency to divert the trade of the colony from a direct one to one through the other colonies: to permit such a thing could not be beneficial to the colony. He held that it would be highly advantageous to Queensland should they be able to establish a direct line with the mother country, and he looked upon the proposed service not merely as a postal one, but as one which would bring the northern ports into direct communication with the mother country, and help to prevent their trade being diverted ultimately and entirely through the other colonies, as there was now every appearance. Of course, in dealing with this subject it would be a question of pounds, shillings, and pence—whether the colony could afford the subsidy or not—and until he heard further particulars he could not say that he should give the proposal his unqualified support.

With reference to the present Torres Straits service, it could not be disputed that it had benefited the colony to a large extent, having been the means of opening up a trade where previously none existed. Twenty or twenty-five years ago this route, now traversed by innumerable steam vessels, was absolutely unknown; but now a large trade was being done with China. There was direct communication with Singapore and Japan, and with the northern ports at which the steamers called, and the more they developed trade in that direction the more the colony at large would be benefited. As to the floating of the loan, there could be no doubt whatever in most people's minds that it was negotiated successfully. Looking at the amount tendered for over and above the sum required, and that the loan was placed with trepidation upon the London market, it must be very gratifying to the inhabitants to see how it was received on the London market, and what a good price was obtained. The Government had no reason to be ashamed of the price they had received, and the negotiation of the loan had, he believed, been of material benefit to the colony. Coming to the next paragraph, which stated that—“The possibility of straining the credit of the colony by appeals to the English money market for fresh loans to complete necessary public works had induced Ministers to regard favourably the carrying out of a system of railway lines by private enterprise, stimulated by generous land grants,”—most people would agree with him that they had to a considerable extent strained their borrowing powers, and had, in fact, gone to the length of their tether. He was glad to find that the Government had made up their minds to try to construct railways—which seemed to be absolutely necessary to the development of the colony—on the land-grant system; by doing so they should be importing fresh capital, instead of sinking capital already in the colony, in what must be for a considerable time unremunerative works. In regard to this matter and the loan a false view had been taken of the action of the Government, who, it had been said, were turning their backs upon their former policy. He was in the Lower Chamber when a motion was introduced by Mr. McIlwraith for a loan of three millions, and on that occasion Mr. McIlwraith stated it was not to carry on the “neck-or-nothing policy” of the then Government, but to finish the works authorised, and to let the colony quietly down, as it were, from the “neck-or-nothing” course it was then pursuing. Mr. McIlwraith stated that the colony having been tied to a certain course of action by the proceedings of the Thorn Ministry was bound to carry the works to their legitimate conclusion, and that for that purpose the three millions were required. He was glad to see that the present Ministry were now carrying out the policy which was propounded by their leader when in Opposition, instead of turning their backs upon it as had been alleged. They were now finding that the time had arrived when they could see daylight through the gloom which had been overshadowing the colony, and they proposed a course of action which, he believed, would be approved by the whole colony. They had inaugurated self-government and placed upon the different districts in the colony the duty of constructing their own roads, and he saw no reason now why a certain amount of the burden of building railways to benefit certain portions of the colony should not—supposing the land was alienated—fall upon the districts which would be benefited; as to railways to the far west, they should not be constructed unless by private enterprise, to be paid through the medium of the lands of the colony.

They had tried other courses; they had tried the Railway Reserves Act, and with what effect? They found that railways were being constructed, but that no money was coming in from the railway reserves, and that policy was found to be a failure. Another hurtful part of the Railway Reserves Act was, that for the purpose of raising money to construct certain railways land was forced into the colonial market by auction which was not desired to be purchased by people inhabiting the colony, and they were compelled to sink money, which would have been fructifying in other ways, in land which had not, he ventured to say, yielded any return whatever for the investment; so that he maintained that the policy pursued by the present Government was a far better policy than any pursued hitherto, and he hoped it would prove of advantage to the colony. He was gratified to find that the Premier, during his visit to England, had found that there were capitalists at home who were prepared to construct railways in consideration of receiving payment in land. It must be evident to everyone that if capital was brought into the colony in that way it must be made use of. A company such as that proposed would not make a railway through the interior—which he might say contained some of the finest land in the colony, which at the present moment was to a certain extent unavailable—without attempting to utilise it. It would be obviously to their benefit to plant population there, and to bring trade upon the line which they would construct. The colony would not be called upon to burden itself with a frightful load of debt. They had plenty of land, and would not miss any quantity that it might be found necessary to give to these companies: the benefit to the colony would be far greater than the value of any land that might be given to them. He believed that a great deal of the trouble experienced in the various colonies had arisen from fostering what he might term "earth hunger." There was an immense amount of capital that would have been directed in different channels, and benefited the colonies to a far larger extent than it had done, had it not been for the facilities that were held out for the acquisition of land. He did not believe in holding those great facilities for the acquisition of land. He remembered being in Maryborough when the first Act for planting population on the land, which was the clap-net cry at that time, was passed, and the general complaint then was that there was no money whatever in circulation, everyone having invested what they possessed in land. He was quite sure that many of them wished they had their money back again. The land had been a white elephant to them; and so it had been all along until people began to see the folly of sinking money in vast tracts of land. He therefore did not feel the gratification that seemed to be expressed in the Speech with regard to sales of land. Of course as a matter of revenue it might be very gratifying to the Government that they had been able to sell that land, but at the same time he believed that the money might have been far better spent. The Speech went on to say:—"The Estimates for the financial year 1880-1 have been prepared on the most economical scale compatible with administrative efficiency." That must be gratifying to every member of the community. Of course, he was unable to say that they had been so prepared until they were before the House; but having seen what the Government had striven to do in the past, he hoped that the Estimates would prove their anxiety to deal well with the colony in the future. He hoped, also, that, in whatever way they raised the revenue which appeared to be considered necessary to be raised, it would be equally distributed amongst

all classes of the community—that no one class should be allowed to get off scot free. If the pastoral lessees were contributing too small an extent to the revenue, by all means let them pay more. He was no advocate for their having extra facilities held out to them for conveying their produce to market and not paying a proportionate share of the burden thereby heaped upon the colony. He was glad to see that the Treasurer had such hopes of returning prosperity that "a prudent administration of the finances will render any permanent addition to the public burdens unnecessary." He trusted that would be proved. He believed they had passed the turning point, and were now gradually getting into the running for a prosperous haven. They had been in the stormy sea of adversity long enough, and everyone in the colony must be looking forward with great hope to the dawning of the day of prosperity which was before them. He was glad that the railway lines under construction in the coast districts were approaching completion, and only hoped they would be found to diminish the burdens on the people. One or two of them, that were left by the previous Government for the present Government to construct, would, he was afraid, for a long time prove a burden to the colony. He need not instance them; they were known to most of them. With regard to the contracts recently taken for the construction of extensions he was very much gratified, indeed, at the smallness of them; and if they were only carried out at anything near the contract price, they should be able, when prosperous times returned, to construct—in fact, to turn our roads into railroads. He hoped the proposition made by the Minister for Works in the other Chamber last year, to construct cheap lines of railway upon our public roads, would be carried into effect. Engineering was now progressing to such an extent that he believed that would ultimately be the case—that in place of roads, which involved immense expenditure and could not be kept properly in repair, they would have these cheap railways, which would prove highly beneficial to the colony and at the same time more economical. At the present time roads were constructed and the people made use of them without contributing anything to their maintenance; but under this system they would be compelled to use the railways and to contribute to their maintenance. Water supply was a very necessary matter to attend to. Even in the suburbs of Brisbane, at this moment, there was a great want of water; and he could well understand that, in a hot climate like this, it was of vital importance that centres of populations should be thoroughly well supplied with good and pure water. He was therefore glad to see that a measure would be introduced dealing with that matter. The Bill to amend and consolidate the law relating to the insane he believed would be found to be a measure calculated to benefit not only the community at large, but also the unfortunate occupants of our asylums. He quite approved of the Bill to prevent the influx of foreign and other criminals. What the Bill to amend and consolidate the laws relating to distillation would be he did not know; but of course it would be matter for consideration. Considering the light that had been let in in various quarters upon the horrid system practised of adulterating food and drink, the sooner a good workable Bill was passed that would put a stop to such adulterations the better it would be for the colony, and he hoped to see such a stringent measure brought in that the sale of adulterated and deleterious food, whether solid or liquid, would be prevented. He had now gone pretty well through the Speech, and thought it would meet with the general approval

of the inhabitants of the colony ; and he hoped that the Address which he had just moved would be passed without any amendment.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said surely the Government could find a seconder to the Address. It was generally the practice for the Government to tell off one of their supporters to second the Address ; but they appeared not to have done so on this occasion. He would also remark that there was not a quorum present.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said, that in consequence of unavoidable circumstances, the hon. gentleman who was to have seconded the Address was absent, and he therefore rose to do so.

The HON. W. H. WALSH called attention to the state of the House :

And there not being a quorum present, the House was adjourned until the usual hour tomorrow.

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