

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 5 JULY 1881

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1881.

QUEENSLAND.



DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

DURING THE

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

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE FIFTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FORTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER
MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1881.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 5 July, 1881.

Meeting of Parliament.—The Governor's Opening Speech.—Resignations.—New Members.—Clerk of the Legislative Council.—Question of Privilege.—Bill *pro forma*.—Address in Reply.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House met shortly before noon.

The CLERK OF PARLIAMENTS read a proclamation bearing date the 23rd May, 1881, calling hon. members together for the despatch of business this day.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

At noon, His Excellency the Governor—Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy, K.C. M.G., C.B.—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,—

“After an interval of two years, necessitated by my visit to Europe during last session, I have much pleasure in again meeting Parliament to ask your assistance and advice.

“In the earlier months of the present year I visited the most important districts in the northern portion of the colony. It gave me great pleasure

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to observe the unmistakable signs of advancement and prosperity among the people, and witness the feelings of loyalty which were everywhere manifested towards our Most Gracious Sovereign.

“After the severe trials which the colony has for three successive years undergone, it is pleasing to me to be able to congratulate you on the numerous evidences which present themselves of its being once again on the flood of prosperous times. Our agricultural and pastoral interests have recovered from the effects of the late disastrous droughts, while our mining industries everywhere show such signs of vitality as warrant me in expecting a continued and enlarged influx of both capital and population to the colony.

“A Conference of Representatives of the various Australasian Colonies was held in Sydney in January last, at which the Honourable the Colonial Secretary and the Honourable the Postmaster-General took part on behalf of Queensland. The several matters agreed on will, during the session, be submitted by my Ministers for your consideration.

“The British-India Steam Navigation Company commenced the new Mail Service in February last. By the terms of their contract the company were allowed to tranship mails and cargo at Colombo during the first twelve months. Of this privilege, however, they did not avail themselves, but ran through-steamers from the start. The means of direct trade between the different portions of the colony and the mother-country thus afforded has already made itself felt, and when the arrangements now being made by my Government are completed I have every

reason to believe that not only will the Mail Service prove the quickest and best adapted to the colony generally, but that the direct and expeditious means of trading thereby afforded will reduce the cost of our imports, increase the value of our exports, and greatly extend our opportunities of developing the varied resources of the country.

"I am happy to be able to inform you that the increased prosperity of the times, and the consequent demand for labour, have justified my Ministers in taking steps to promote immigration on a larger scale. For this purpose, the facilities offered by the mail steamers will be made available at once.

"A preliminary agreement has been made between my Government and a company to construct on the principle of land grants a railway connecting Point Parker with the railway systems on the eastern seaboard. My Ministers hope that arrangements will be so far matured as to enable them to pass a Bill on the subject through Parliament this session. Negotiations have been opened with other gentlemen for the construction on the same principle of a line connecting an extension of the Western Railway with the New South Wales border and the eastern border of South Australia. No time will be lost in making definite arrangements, which will be duly submitted to you.

"The Commission appointed to take evidence in England, and to report on the allegations contained in Mr. Hemmant's Petition, and all matters connected therewith, have taken evidence and forwarded it with their report to me. These will be laid before you without delay.

"The various Public Works of the colony are being pushed on with vigour. It is satisfactory to find that, in spite of the large demand for labour caused by the improved position of most colonial industries, the cost of our railways is being kept within the amount anticipated.

"The demand for land is increasing throughout the colony. In almost every district settlement is advancing. The exchanged lands on the Darling Downs have been largely selected by *bond fide* cultivators at prices which will amply repay the country for the cession of the lands which have been given in exchange.

"In the Northern districts a large area has been selected for sugar cultivation. A considerable proportion of this area, my advisers consider, has been acquired by the selectors at an upset price which encourages undue speculation and with the object of disposing of the land to others rather than of working it themselves. This condition of things has induced the Government to withdraw from selection all the lands in the districts north of Rockhampton, in order that they may be classified, re-valued, and again made available for selection at a price which, while calculated to check the speculator, will be no obstacle to the actual settler.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The Estimates of the present financial year will be soon laid before you. They have been

framed with a view to the strictest economy consistent with the efficiency of the various services.

"I am gratified to find that while the expenditure of the last year has not exceeded the anticipations of my advisers, the revenue has shown unmistakable signs of improvement, and the balance in the Consolidated Revenue Account has returned to the right side without increasing the burdens of the people.

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

"The credit of the colony in the Home money market has during the year gradually but materially improved. Our debentures sold in March, last year, at £90 10s. 11d., and are quoted now on the Stock Exchange at £103. Much of this improvement is due to the plethora of money seeking investment in the world, and to the increasing faith in the nature and value of colonial securities generally; but it is a further subject of congratulation that Queensland credit to-day stands higher relatively to other colonies than it has ever stood before. To this fact my Ministers have given due consideration, and find in it a sure proof that English investors fully recognise the determination of the colony to prosecute their large railway undertakings by other means than by a direct appeal to the loan market.

"The transfer of the bulk of the carrying trade between the colony and foreign countries, from sailing ships to steamers, which is now inevitable, demands your earnest consideration; and proposals will be submitted to you for adequate provision in our Harbours, and works connected therewith, to meet this altered state of things.

"Amongst other matters of importance, the following Bills will be laid before you :—

"To Regulate the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-mer Fisheries.

"To Consolidate and Amend the Law relating to Shipping.

"To Consolidate and Amend the Laws relating to the Distillation of Spirits and Brewing of Beer.

"To Provide for the Construction, Maintenance, and Management of Works for the Storage and Distribution of Water.

"To Provide for the Regulation and Inspection of Mines and Collieries.

"To Consolidate and Amend the Law relating to the Water Police.

"To Provide against the Influx of Foreign and other Criminals.

"To Amend the Mercantile Act of 1867, in relation to Warehouse Keepers' Certificates.

"To Consolidate and Amend the Laws relating to the Sale of Fermented and Spirituous Liquors by Retail.

"To Amend and Consolidate the Laws relating to the Insane.

"To Provide for the Destruction of Marsupials.

"To Provide for the Execution in Queensland of Warrants issued in other Colonies.

"To Provide for an Australasian Court of Appeal.

"To Increase the Remedies of Creditors against persons in other Australasian Colonies, and to enable judgments of the Courts of those Colonies being enforced in Queensland.

"A Bill will also be introduced at an early date to Provide for the Reconstruction of the Upper House upon an Elective Basis.

"These will all, I have no doubt, receive your most earnest attention; and I trust that, under Divine Providence, your labours during the coming session will conduce to the good government and material prosperity 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 PRESIDENT (the Hon. J. P. Bell) took the Chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

RESIGNATIONS.

The PRESIDENT read letters from Government House, stating that during the recess His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to accept the resignation of the Hon. James Taylor and the Hon. Francis Jeffrey Ivory of their seats in the Legislative Council.

NEW MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT further announced that His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to advise the Executive Council to summon Boyd Dunlop Morehead, Esq., to the Legislative Council, and that His Excellency had administered the oath of allegiance; also that His Excellency had been pleased to summon James Taylor, Esq., Thomas Rome, Esq., and Peter Macpherson, Esq., to the Council.

The Hon. James Taylor and the Hon. Thomas Rome were then introduced, and, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took their seats.

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The PRESIDENT announced that His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, had been pleased to appoint Henry Wyatt Radford, Esq., to the office of Clerk of the Legislative Council, rendered vacant by the death of the late Henry Bates Fitz, Esq. The usual oaths were administered.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR desired to call the attention of the President to the fact that hitherto the Clerk of the Council had been styled the Clerk of Parliaments. Any alteration in that custom would, in his opinion, be a great breach of privilege.

The PRESIDENT said the hon. gentleman would find on reference to Standing Order 159, that "the Clerk of the Legislative Council shall be the Clerk of Parliaments." There was, therefore, no irregularity in the use of the expression "Clerk of the Legislative Council" in the document.

BILL PRO FORMA.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (the Hon. B. D. Morehead), in pursuance of time-honoured practice, presented a Bill to amend the law relating to toll-bars, which was read the first time *pro forma*.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The 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 and prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor; such Committee to consist of the Hon. J. Taylor, the Hon. T. Rome, and the Mover.

Question put and passed.

The Committee having retired,

The PRESIDENT said he supposed it was understood the Council did not object to the reduction of the number of members on the Committee from four to three.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH asked the President was he sure the Council could allow the reduction?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, if there is no objection.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH said the Standing Order said "four," and they would require a new Standing Order before they could alter that number.

The Hon. C. S. MEIN said he wished to point out that Standing Order 97 stated that the Select Committee should consist of not less than four or more than six members, without special leave of the Council. He concluded that they must consider leave had been obtained, from the manner in which the question was put; and as one gentleman who was to have been on the committee was absent, they might let the question drop.

The PRESIDENT said that unless special objection was taken he considered the motion in order.

The Select Committee then returned, and brought up the following Address in Reply, which was read by the Clerk:—

"To His Excellency Sir ARTHUR EDWARD KENNEDY, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Council, in Parliament assembled, desire to assure Your Excellency of our continued loyalty and affection towards the Person and Government of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and we thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have opened the session.

"We congratulate Your Excellency on your having returned to the colony in renewed health and strength.

"We shall give our careful and serious consideration to the various measures submitted by Your Excellency; and we trust that our labours may result in promoting the advancement and prosperity of the colony."

The Hon. J. TAYLOR moved that the Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, as prepared by the Committee, be now adopted. He said he had been in

Parliament a great many years, and this was the first time he had been asked to move an Address in Reply. On the present occasion he did so with considerable pleasure. He supposed he had been chosen because he was the junior member of the House. He did not suppose that any Address of a Governor ever required so little comment as this Address did. He would go through it paragraph by paragraph, and explain so far as it appeared to him the meaning of each. There was no doubt it was a most difficult thing to draw up addresses of this description; but it had to be done, and a good many hints ought to be taken from them. The first paragraph stated—

“After an interval of two years, necessitated by my visit to Europe during last session. I have much pleasure in again meeting Parliament to ask your assistance and advice.”

They all knew His Excellency had been away on a visit, and were all pleased to see him return as robust and happy as ever. For himself, he was much pleased at His Excellency's return, though nothing had suffered during his absence: he had been so ably represented. The second paragraph stated—

“In the earlier months of the present year I visited the most important districts in the northern portion of the colony. It gave me great pleasure to observe the unmistakable signs of advancement and prosperity among the people, and witness the feelings of loyalty which were everywhere manifested towards our Most Gracious Sovereign.”

No doubt it did give His Excellency great pleasure to see the northern districts so prosperous. The North had made great progress, and the South had better take care or the North would soon not belong to the South. That was his opinion, and it had been growing stronger every day. The third paragraph stated—

“After the severe trials which the colony has for three successive years undergone, it is pleasing to me to be able to congratulate you on the numerous evidences which present themselves of its being once again on the flood of prosperous times. Our agricultural and pastoral interests have recovered from the effects of the late disastrous droughts, while our mining industries everywhere show such signs of vitality as warrant me in expecting a continued and enlarged influx of both capital and population to the colony.”

They certainly had passed through a severe drought, and the agricultural districts had suffered greatly, but he trusted the kindness of Providence would overcome all that. There was no doubt the agricultural and pastoral interests were recovering, and as for the mining interest, he believed it would exceed any interest in the colony. The fourth paragraph said—

“A Conference of Representatives of the various Australasian colonies was held in Sydney in January last, at which the Hon. the Colonial Secretary and the Hon. the Postmaster-General took part on behalf of Queensland. The several matters agreed on will, during the session, be submitted by my Ministers for your consideration.”

On that he could make no remark, because he did not know what had been done. He felt sure, however, that when the measures referred to were sent to that House, hon. gentlemen would give them careful consideration before either adopting or rejecting them. The fifth paragraph stated—

“The British-India Steam Navigation Company commenced the new Mail Service in February last. By the terms of their contract the company were allowed to tranship mails and cargo at Colombo during the first twelve months. Of this privilege, however, they did not avail themselves, but ran through-steamers from the start. The means of direct trade between the different portions of the colony and the mother-country thus afforded has already made itself felt, and when the arrangements now being made by my Government are completed, I have every reason to believe that not only will the Mail Service prove the quickest and best adapted to the colony generally, but that the direct and expeditious

means of trading thereby afforded will reduce the cost of our imports, increase the value of our exports, and greatly extend our opportunities of developing the varied resources of the country.”

He supposed that in moving the Address in Reply he could give his own opinion on these matters without offence to anyone. He was greatly opposed to this shipping contract at first, but, like many others who were also opposed to it, he now was strongly in favour of this new steam company. They might not get letters quite so quickly, but the difference would not be felt by nine men in every thousand. He did not see why, for the sake of a few Brisbane merchants, they should impose extra cost on the colony. He felt sure the new service would give full satisfaction. £50,000 or £60,000 was a large sum of money to pay. For his own part, if he could do as he liked, he would have no subsidies paid; but, being obliged to follow the rule of other people, he took the next best thing, and he considered this was the next best thing. He considered the new service would be of great benefit to the people of the colony. The sixth paragraph stated—

“I am happy to be able to inform you that the increased prosperity of the times, and the consequent demand for labour, have justified my Ministers in taking steps to promote immigration on a larger scale. For this purpose, the facilities offered by the mail steamers will be made available at once.”

At the present time there was not much cry for labour—the colony could supply what was required—but when the new railways came to be constructed he supposed there would be an extra demand. He trusted men would be brought out who would make their home here, and not go off to the other colonies. Queensland did not want to supply the other colonies with immigrants, as Sir John Robertson and others said it did. The way to keep the men here was to pay them good wages. The seventh paragraph said—

“A preliminary agreement has been made between my Government and a company to construct on the principle of land grants a railway connecting Point Parker with the railway systems on the eastern seaboard. My Ministers hope that arrangements will be so far matured as to enable them to pass a Bill on the subject through Parliament this session. Negotiations have been opened with other gentlemen for the construction on the same principle of a line connecting an extension of the Western Railway with the New South Wales Border and the Eastern Border of South Australia. No time will be lost in making definite arrangements, which will be duly submitted to you.”

This was very well as far as it went, but that House must take extreme care what Bill they passed. For his own part he would look very closely at any measure sent up, and if it were fair and impartial he would vote for it; but, if not, he would vote against it. The eighth paragraph stated—

“The Commission appointed to take evidence in England, and to report on the allegations contained in Mr. Hemmant's Petition, and all matters connected therewith, have taken evidence and forwarded it with their Report to me. These will be laid before you without delay.”

No one was more anxious than himself to read the report. He would like every man in the colony to read it, and see who was guilty and who was not guilty. For himself he would say—though, perhaps, he might give offence to someone—that he had known one member of the Ministry for forty years, who would not associate with any Premier who had committed fraud. No one could hold his finger up against that gentleman, and he was satisfied from his knowledge of him that he would come out of this matter with glorious colours. He hoped so for his own sake, and for the sake of the colony. These sort of things did vast injury, and if the charges were not proved he would call them diabolical, and if

they were, let the man go and hang his head for ever. The ninth paragraph stated—

"The various public works of the colony are being pushed on with vigour. It is satisfactory to find that, in spite of the large demand for labour caused by the improved position of most colonial industries, the cost of our railways is being kept within the amount anticipated."

He thought this most satisfactory. He was perfectly astounded at the prices that had been paid for constructing railways and roads. All over the colony it was the same. For the past fifteen years the colony had been most outrageously robbed on the railway contracts. Similar work was done now for one-half, if not one-third, the price paid formerly. He was glad to see the eyes of the present Government had been opened to this matter. The tenth paragraph stated—

"The demand for land is increasing throughout the colony. In almost every district settlement is advancing. The exchanged lands on the Darling Downs have been largely selected by *bond fide* cultivators at prices which will amply repay the country for the cession of the lands which have been given in exchange."

He could vouch for this himself. A great deal had been said about selling land at £3, £4, and £5 an acre; but, at the last selection of land held at Allora, the prices exceeded the upset by a long way, showing that the Minister who had had the courage to put a price on land had a good idea what was a proper rate. The Speech then went on—

"In the Northern Districts a large area has been selected for sugar cultivation. A considerable proportion of this area, my advisers consider, has been acquired by the selectors at an upset price which encourages undue speculation and with the object of disposing of the land to others rather than of working it themselves. This condition of things has induced the Government to withdraw from selection all the lands in the districts north of Rockhampton, in order that they may be classified, re-valued, and again made available for selection at a price which, while calculated to check the speculator, will be no obstacle to the actual settler."

Now, this was nothing but a fraud on the colony. Whatever Ministry brought in the Bill allowing those beautiful sugar lands to go at 2s. 6d. per acre did what seemed to him something ridiculous, and he was glad that some steps had been taken in the matter. He knew of an instance in which a friend of his gave £2 10s. per acre for land, and shortly afterwards was offered £10 an acre for it. He was glad that these regulations were going to be altered, as the speculation in these lands was something enormous.

The Hon. C. S. MEIN: Speculation is going on in pastoral lands.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: But the speculation in these lands far exceeded that.

"The Estimates of the financial year will be soon laid before you. They have been framed with a view to the strictest economy, consistent with the efficiency of the various services."

Now, he had always noticed that, whenever the colony got into monetary difficulties, as soon as the present Colonial Secretary came into office those difficulties disappeared. Why this was so he did not know; but it could be proved by going back fifteen or twenty years.

"I am gratified to find that, while the expenditure of the last year has not exceeded the anticipations of my advisers, the revenue has shown unmistakable signs of improvement, and the balance in the Consolidated Revenue Account has returned to the right side without increasing the burdens of the people."

That was a very pleasant paragraph. It showed that there was no intention to impose further taxation, or increase the rents of lands. Great blame had been laid on the Minister of Lands for selling land; but he (Mr. Taylor) did not see why land should not be sold as well as anything else. If a private individual got into

financial difficulties, he would sell part of his estate to pay his debts; and why should not the Government do the same? He considered the Government had a perfect right to do so.

"The credit of the colony in the home market has during the year gradually but materially improved. Our debentures sold in March last year at £90 10s. 10d., and are now quoted on the Stock Exchange at £103.

He could speak feelingly on this point. He had £20,000 worth of debentures which he held in trust, and he sold them at £90, whereas he could now have got £103. He had thus lost money, and the Government had done the same; but he did not see why they should be blamed. He would like to see the other million put on the market at once, even if they got no interest for it. They did not know what might take place; a war might break out and then they might not be able to get £103. He was surprised that Mr. McIlwraith had not put a loan on the market; there was no law to prevent it, and it would have given the colony a name in the world. The Speech said that—

"The transfer of the bulk of the carrying trade between the colony and foreign colonies from sailing ships to steamers, which is now inevitable, demands your earnest consideration; and proposals will be submitted to you for adequate provision in our harbours, and works connected therewith, to meet this altered state of things."

That paragraph required to be very carefully read. He hoped the hon. gentlemen opposite would not think, because he was moving the Address in Reply, that he intended to support everything the Government proposed, because he was not going to do so: he was going to watch everything very carefully, and especially the matter he had just referred to. With regard to the proposed Bill to provide for the reconstruction of the Upper House on an elective basis, he had no doubt it would be taken into full consideration. There had been fights in the other colonies on this question. Sir Henry Parkes did not believe in an elective Upper House, but the great Mr. Berry did. He (Mr. Taylor) did not see that such a House would do any good; he thought they had got on very well so far. He again moved the adoption of the Address.

The Hon. T. ROME had great pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Address in Reply. After the able speech of the mover, there was very little for him (Mr. Rome) to say; but there were one or two points upon which he should like to speak. A matter which deserved special consideration was that of the contract with the British-India Steam Navigation Company. It had been pretty well canvassed, and opinions expressed both for and against it; but he thought, so far as it had been tried, they had every reason to be fully satisfied with it. It was not a question of mere mail service, but of carriage between Sydney and Brisbane. It was quite time Queensland took her proper stand; hitherto she had been looked upon as a portion of New South Wales—there was actually no quotation at home for Queensland wool—and it was quite time she had a direct line of shipping. As railways increased immigration would increase, and it was very desirable that they should get a better class of immigrants than hitherto they had had. The Speech alluded to the proposed extension of the Western Railway on the system of land grants. That principle was affirmed last session by both Houses, and he was fully in accord with it. Of course, as the mover of the Address had said, the matter would be brought before the House, and would then have to be very carefully watched to see that the country got a fair *quid pro quo*. The question involved in Mr. Hemmant's petition would also have to be carefully

considered by both Houses. It was premature just now to give an opinion, but he was sure that, for the credit of the colony, every man desired to see the matter cleared up. Very serious charges had been made, and when the report of the Commission had been considered, then it would be time to give an opinion on the question. If the Government were wrong, let them be "slated" by all manner of means; but if the charges were not proved, then he considered that those who brought them ought to make a humble apology to Parliament.

"The various public works of the colony are being pushed on with vigour."

That was very satisfactory. He thought they ought to watch what the divisional boards had done. It seemed to him that most of them were working satisfactorily. It was possible that in some outside districts there might be some little trouble; but near Brisbane the bye-roads had been much improved.

"The demand for land is increasing throughout the colony."

He was not altogether sure that "earth-hunger" was a desirable thing. He was glad to find that the present Government were putting a check on undue speculation in land, and he thought their action in this respect would bear comparison with any previous Administration. The House was told that the financial position of the country was in a satisfactory state; and it undoubtedly was very gratifying to find that Queensland debentures stood so well in the English money market. This might be partly ascribed to the plethora of money, but it also showed the confidence that British capitalists had in the present Administration, and in the system that was being pursued with regard to public works. Instead of going into the English money market for loans, it was proposed to apply the receipts from waste lands to public works. For the carrying trade, harbour works would have to be constructed, and they, no doubt, would receive attention. It was proposed to bring in various measures of more or less interest to the country, but he would not touch upon them now. He might, however, allude to that which was to provide for the reconstruction of the Upper House on an elective basis. That would not be an experiment, because there was the experience of the other colonies to go by; but he had not the least doubt that the Bill would receive the consideration to which it was entitled. In conclusion, he would say that he was in perfect accord with this Address. He thought it was an extremely liberal one. He noticed that there was no attempt at anything like class legislation. The Government appeared to recognise Queensland as a whole, and to try to do its best for the entire colony. He had much pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Address.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH thought he would not be out of place if he first said that he was sure they were all glad to see the President back again, especially after the report which had been circulated that he had not been well. Then his next duty was to compliment a new member of this House upon the way in which he had addressed it. Without attempting to flatter him at all, he (Mr. Walsh) was bound to record his conviction that, though the hon. member who had seconded the Address had tried to do a little too much, he had done it in such an agreeable way that it made hon. members glad to see him sitting amongst them. He (Mr. Walsh) had read the Speech with some little attention, and he could not endorse the compliments that had been applied to it, nor did he agree with one half there was in it. The third paragraph spoke of the pastoral and agricultural interests having

recovered, and of there being evidences that the colony was "once again on the flood of prosperous times." The mover of the Address had agreed with this paragraph, but he (Mr. Walsh) begged to differ from it. He did not think these were flourishing times either for the agricultural or pastoral interests. The mining interest might be flourishing, but he defied anyone to prove that the other interests were in that state. He had not heard one farmer speak of the agricultural interest as flourishing. The next paragraph to which he would refer was that with regard to the British-India Steam Navigation Company service. The hon. gentleman who moved the Address said he had become a convert to the necessity and value of that service; but he (Mr. Walsh) would state his reasons why he was not yet a convert to it. He thought it had a wrong name, and that the sooner that name was removed the better. To say that the service had given general satisfaction was absurd, even with regard to the carrying service. Look at the announcement in the Government organ that morning, stating that the "Chyebassa" had left Townsville without allowing passengers to land or have intercourse with the town. Was that the way in which the service was to be carried out? He had not the least doubt that the whole truth had not appeared in the paper, and he should not be astonished to hear of the vessel being quarantined here. It was a very ominous report that had been made in the paper. It was not such as to give any great hope that the service would be valuable for carrying immigrants. He was also not satisfied with the reference in the Speech to the lands in the districts to the north of Rockhampton. Large quantities of land having been acquired by speculators, the Government proposed to make it fourfold more valuable by withdrawing all the small areas, actually raising the price from 5s. to most probably 20s. If that was the way in which the Government were going to put a check on speculation, he was afraid it would not be very successful. For twenty years he had been in favour of the alienation of the land as fast as possible, in order to encourage capital, but he objected to the different way in which the Government were now treating the lands; he objected to fish being made of one and flesh of the other. Of course he would be told by his hon. friend the Postmaster-General that the pastoral lands which were being alienated wholesale were only fit for pastoral purposes: but there were portions quite fit for agriculture. He would be just as pleased if they had only given 5s. an acre for them. He could congratulate the Government upon their effecting a different policy with the lands of the North to that which they were carrying out down here. It was fifteen years ago since he protested against those Northern lands being locked up, and he did not hesitate to say that if they had been thrown open fifteen years ago, they would have been thickly populated—not by speculators, but by capitalists. It was only capital that could develop those lands, and not a thousand or ten thousand poor men with no money in their pockets. Any man who knew those lands, and the cost of bringing them under tillage, must know that it was almost impossible for men of small means to work them at all. To make them available, capital must be introduced at the very beginning, and that would not be done in the way the Government seemed to have adopted as regarded that portion of the colony. If speculators themselves had suggested a policy for their own good, they could not have suggested a better one than that which the Government were now carrying out in the northern agricultural, but tropical, producing lands. There was another very serious matter to the colony, and that was

the credit which the Government had taken respecting the credit of the colony in the home market at the end of last year. Our debentures sold in March last at £90 10s. 11d., and were now quoted at £103. To his thinking, as a commercial man of limited capacity, the very fact of their being at £103 now, when so much was forced upon the market twelve months ago, was the greatest condemnation they could pass on the Government. There was no doubt that the Government lost a great deal to the colony by forcing on the loan at that time. If they had floated one million then and the other now, we should be getting £103 for our debentures, and strangers would not have had the opportunity of making 10 or 12 per cent. out of the colony in twelve months. A judicious government would not have forced so much of that loan on the market at the same time, and therefore this paragraph was more likely to lead to animadversion than to be considered to the credit of the Government of the day. The other matter of great importance was that which referred to the altering of the constitution of the country and of that House. That was a matter upon which he would not now give an opinion. Years ago he had expressed a wish to see it altered, but it came with a most remarkable grace from a Government composed of gentlemen who had never announced themselves before the world as democrats. He had heard the Hon. Postmaster-General in the other Chamber attribute all the misfortunes of Port Phillip to the fact of there being an elective Upper House. That used to be the warning held up to them, and it appeared to him almost a joke coming from a Government composed of the present gentlemen, that they should make such a proposal as this to the country, when almost the whole colony had arrived at the conviction that all the misfortune in Victoria was to be attributed to an elective Upper House. There were not ten men in the colony who had ever said that it was necessary or called out for it, and the Press had been silent on the subject; nor had there ever been a political demonstration in favour of it. For his own part he had ever had regard to the fact that he thought an elective Upper House would be an improvement on the present. However, he presumed that his hon. friend, the Postmaster-General, did not intend this debate to come to a conclusion to-night. He presumed that the Government would refuse to receive such an Address as this in their favour until hon. members of that House had had time to read not only the report but the evidence connected with the Steel Rails Inquiry. He was quite sure that the Government themselves were most anxious that no decision should be given in their favour until it could be given by hon. members who were satisfied that the Government could be acquitted from the charges that had been made against them, and he should be sorry for the character of that House were members to rush into giving a vote of this kind in ignorance of the result of that Commission. He should say no more, except that he trusted the Ministry would come well out of it. Nobody would be more satisfied than he; but at present it behoved the Government, before they sought support in either Chamber, to give hon. members an opportunity of acting from knowledge and upon their own matured convictions.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that, fortunately for himself, he had been used to the oratory of the hon. gentleman, whom he assumed to be the leader of the Opposition, in another Chamber; but he would point out to hon. members that that last suggestion, which appeared to have emanated from the hon. gentleman, was made by him (Mr. Morehead), and he was deter-

mined that that position should be set forth fully and fairly in the records of *Hansard*. He suggested to the hon. member, in the library to-day, that it would be advisable, as it was rumoured that the other Chamber intended to adjourn until the report could be considered, that they should do the same, and asked him—as he understood that Mr. Mein could not be present—whether he, as leader, was prepared to do so on behalf of the section of the House opposed to the present Administration. The answer he got from the hon. member was, “I am going to speak; you can do as you like.”

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I distinctly told the hon. gentleman that I should suggest it to himself.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said his memory was not fickle, and he did not hear it. He might mention, further, that he repeated the conversation to a member of the Government almost immediately after, and he could bear him out. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member, he did not think it fair for him or any other member—fair to the Government, or fair to the journal he referred to—that he should assert that the *Courier* was a Government organ; He denied it; the representatives of the *Courier* would deny that it was a Government organ; and the hon. member was perfectly aware that the Government had nothing to do with it. The hon. member then went on to say that he denied a “flood of prosperity had set in,” and that he knew of several agriculturists who were doing very badly. He (the Postmaster-General) would be the last to deny that such a state of affairs existed in perhaps very many instances, but he maintained that the statement made in the Speech was absolutely and substantially correct, and everything indicated that they were on “the flood of prosperity.” All our great industries were flourishing—agricultural, pastoral, and mining—and therefore the Government were perfectly justified in using the phrase they had done. The hon. member then had a fling at the pastoral industry; he (the Postmaster-General) did not know why, but he did. He said that no doubt they had been patted on the back by the existing Administration. Then he went on to attack the British-India Company, and said that it was worked on a “system of muddling and meddling,” and that it was neither one thing nor the other; and used some expressions concerning it which were not absolutely correct.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I connected it with the postal service.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that within a very few weeks the hon. gentleman would change his opinion as regarded the postal service. He believed that within a month or two letters would be delivered in Brisbane as rapidly as they would be by any of the Southern routes. Arrangements were now in progress that would lead to that being done; but he held that they had something further to consider than even Brisbane. Even if they had to wait a day or two longer for their mails, they had to consider the great postal benefits which the northern portion of the colony received from that service. The hon. gentleman went on to talk about the new mail vessel—the “Chyebassa.” He told them that she was importing some frightful disease which was to desolate our cities, towns, and provinces; but he could ease the hon. member's mind by telling him that the vessel had received pratique at Mackay, and that there was no disease on board of an infectious nature. Then he went on to find fault with the Government, and drew a comparison between the different action they had taken in dealing with sugar land and pastoral land in the North. The hon.

gentleman always had his own opinion, and said that he had always been in favour of alienation of Crown land by sale. He (the Postmaster-General) had been on a visit to Mackay and the surrounding districts with the Minister for Lands, and the swindles—as he might well call them—that were going on in the way of taking up land were so palpable that no honest Administration would allow it to continue. Neither Mr. Perkins nor himself had been in Mackay or its neighbourhood for many years, and they were unanimous in their opinion on the subject. That was why the sugar lands were withdrawn for the present from selection; they were withdrawn merely for the purpose of re-valuing and re-classifying them. A great deal had been said and written, and would be said and written, about the pastoral lands which had been given away, and he for one was not afraid to meet and face the question, and he would attack the position in two different directions, and say without fear or hesitation that he was of opinion that the very Peak Downs lands and the land around Springsure which were sold at 10s. an acre, would, if not so sold, have been utterly destroyed, and would have been of no value to the public estate—and that was because the marsupials had got such a hold of them that unless made freehold they must have been utterly destroyed; and he would leave it to anyone who had been there to say whether they would not bear him out in the assertion he had made. Not only had they done well in getting 10s. an acre for those lands, but it would have been a good thing for the State if, failing to get 10s. an acre, these lands were given away in order that they might be protected from the marsupials. In many cases these lands had been surrounded by marsupial-proof fences at the expense of the tenants. When the lands were offered by auction there was nothing to prevent anyone from buying them if he chose, but the facts were as he had stated. The hon. gentleman doubted his statement that there were no lands sacrificed which might be thrown open for selection. He could point out thousands of acres which had been thrown open for selection, and had not been taken up—land far better than the Peak Downs, both geographically and *per se*. The hon. gentleman then went on to say that they took great credit for present price of debentures, and said what an enormous mistake the Government had made in not holding back their loan until they could get £103. He left it to any hon. gentleman to say whether there was any sense in that. Surely the hon. gentleman did not imagine that the Government could foresee everything. They knew that at present what was properly described in the Speech as “plethora of money” was not anticipated by the most skilful financiers. Hon. gentlemen were no doubt aware that some of the finance companies here were at present over-burdened with money which they had borrowed at home at 5 per cent., and which they could hardly lend on the same terms within the colony. Those were facts which must be patent to everybody, and therefore the hon. gentleman’s sneer—for he presumed he might call it a sneer—at the Government for not holding on until they got £103 seemed to him absurd. The hon. gentleman wound up his remarks by stating that he was always in favour, or had been previously in favour, of an elective Upper House, and pointed out amongst many other things that he (the Postmaster-General) individually had always pointed to Victoria as an instance of the evils that resulted from elective Upper Houses. He was not aware that he had ever done so; on the contrary, he contended that the conservative nature of the Upper House in Victoria, the conservative tendency created by the fact of their being elected on a higher fran-

chise than the Lower House, had been the saving of Victoria. He did not intend to enlarge upon this matter until the Bill was brought before the House; but he would say in conclusion, with reference to the last remarks of the Hon. Mr. Walsh, that he, representing the Government, was quite prepared to accede to whatever adjournment hon. gentlemen thought necessary for the purpose of fully perusing the bulky papers put before them, that upon full consideration they might decide to uphold or condemn the Government, when it would be for them to consider what they would do. He was quite prepared to meet the requirements of any, or of every, member of the House, and give every time necessary to peruse the documents. He was sure they would agree with the Hon. Mr. Walsh that these documents should be read, studied, and thoroughly gone into before they adopted the Address which had been moved and seconded by the hon. gentlemen who had previously spoken.

The Hon. C. S. MEIN moved that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday week.

The Hon. C. H. BUZACOTT said he really did not see the object to be gained by adjourning the debate. The Speech which was before them this afternoon simply said that “The Commission appointed to take evidence in England, and to report on the allegations contained in Mr. Hemmant’s petition, and all matters connected therewith, have taken evidence and forwarded it with their Report to me. These will be laid before you without delay.” If they had not had that report before them this afternoon, he presumed they would proceed with the debate upon the Address in the ordinary way. If the House, after perusing the Report of the Royal Commission and the evidence attached to it, came to the conclusion that the Government was undeserving of the confidence of the House, of course it could take such action as it might think desirable; but he did not think there was a precedent for holding over the debate upon the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech because of some information which would be forthcoming at some future time. He thought the Speech before them, and the Address to His Excellency, were entitled to immediate consideration and discussion. If they approved of it they would simply adopt the Address submitted, and if not, there could be an amendment moved on it; and it appeared to him that the amendment moved on the motion of the Postmaster-General this afternoon, by the Hon. Mr. Mein, was really a most important one. He was aware that the hon. gentleman had said he was willing to agree to it. If he himself moved that the debate be adjourned he could have seen some reason in it, but when an hon. gentleman on the opposite side of the House made the motion it was quite a different thing. He was desirous of seeing the business of the House proceeded with without unnecessary delay, and they could just as well debate all the matters contained in the Speech before them this evening as they could after the adjournment proposed by the Hon. Mr. Mein. So far as he was concerned, he regarded speeches of this sort as merely formal; but unless there was some immediate object to be attained, unless the majority of the House was dissatisfied with the Speech and wished to reject it, he did not see why it should be held over. Let them at once deal with the Speech and get on with the business of the session. He was quite prepared to have the debate adjourned to any reasonable day, but he did not see the object of going home at half-past 5 o’clock and adjourning the debate until to-morrow week. He should not occupy the time of the House, because he had no doubt all the subjects referred to in the Speech would come before the House during the session, and

would then be discussed in a fuller manner than they could be at the present time. He hoped that, unless a really substantial reason was assigned for the adjournment, the House would not consent to it, but would proceed with the debate.

The HON. C. S. MEIN said that at an earlier part of the day he did not contemplate being present this afternoon, nor would he have been present but for unforeseen circumstances. He had no desire, until he had heard the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Walsh and the invitation made by the Postmaster-General, to move the adjournment of the debate at all. He thought the suggestion was a good one, especially in view of the importance the Postmaster-General had placed upon it. The whole of the community was deeply interested in the result of the inquiry in London, with regard to the allegations against the Premier of the colony and his colleagues. He understood that the other branch of the Legislature had considered the matter of sufficient importance to suspend further deliberation on it until Tuesday next, in order that hon. members there might have an opportunity of considering not only the report but the evidence, and be then in a position to pass an opinion upon the result of the inquiry. They had no business of vital importance to transact between this and Wednesday week, and he did not think any material delay would take place if they adjourned to that time. In the Address presented to them they had an invitation to express an opinion upon the subject to which he referred. Their attention was attracted to this Commission and the report of the commissioners upon the subject referred to; and they, as well as every other portion of the community, were deeply interested in the purity of the administration of the affairs of the country. It had been ascertained that there had been impurity of some sort in the administration of affairs, and until they knew the result of the inquiry into that question it would not be wise to express an opinion upon it which might be favourable or unfavourable to the administration. He could only recommend the sentiment of the Hon. Mr. Walsh, and he (Mr. Mein) and, he believed, every member of the community, would be extremely delighted if the evidence clearly exonerated every member of the Administration from blame in those matters. He would repeat that he should not have moved the adjournment of the debate had it not been at the almost express invitation of the Postmaster-General—certainly, the utterance of his desire that they should adjourn.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he should have been wanting in his duty, as the representative of the Government, if, on being asked by any hon. member for time to read over and thoroughly consider the report and evidence with reference to the steel rails question, he had failed to accede to a motion for adjournment for a time for that purpose.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said he agreed with the Hon. Mr. Buzacott that the proposed adjournment was perfectly unnecessary. He did not see the slightest connection between the steel rails report and the subject before them. It was certainly alluded to in the Speech, but no opinion was expressed upon it. It was of course necessary that the purity of the Government, and all that sort of thing, should be looked after; but the subject before them at present was the consideration of the Governor's Speech, in which the steel rails inquiry was only incidentally mentioned. As hon. members had come down to transact public business, they ought to keep as close up to it as possible. An adjournment till to-morrow would be a fair thing enough, and he failed to see the slightest reason for adjourning till next Wednesday.

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The HON. F. T. GREGORY said there seemed to be a little misconception as to the motion. As he understood it, the motion was simply for an adjournment of the debate on the Address, and not an adjournment of the House; consequently, the House would have to meet again to-morrow and the day after, unless otherwise ordered. Under those circumstances, a better plan would be to move the adjournment of the debate till to-morrow, when it would be again adjourned, if necessary. He should be quite prepared to-morrow to say what little he had to say in connection with the Address in Reply, but he agreed with the view of the Postmaster-General that he had no desire to force on the debate, but would give any reasonable time the House might ask for. Such being the case, he would move an amendment that the debate upon the Address in Reply be adjourned till to-morrow.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he understood that the Postmaster-General had simply expressed his willingness not to oppose any motion for adjournment, and nothing more. For his own part, he could not see what the report of the Commission had to do with the Speech. It would be time enough to talk about the report of that Commission when they had read the evidence and formed an opinion upon it. The only paragraph in the Speech alluding to the report was one which simply stated that the report and the evidence would shortly be laid before Parliament. Surely that could not be objected to. It would not have been right for the Government to have omitted all reference to it in the Speech, seeing that it was a matter of such great importance. He did not see why they should not go on with the debate on the Address in Reply to-morrow, and either adopt or reject it.

Amendment put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 6 o'clock, till next day.