

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 6 JULY 1881**

---

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 6 July, 1881.

Adjournment.—Formal Motions.—Hour of Meeting.—  
Formal Motions.—The Mail Steamer “Chyebassa.”—  
Address in Reply—resumption of debate.—Adjourn-  
ment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at half-past  
3 o'clock.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he wished to call attention to some statements in *Hansard* made last evening by the Hon. Mr. Walsh, and he should conclude with a motion. He was present when the hon. member was addressing the House, and heard him make allusions to the “Government organ,” but he was not then aware that the allusion was to the *Courier*. He was sorry that this House should be made the arena of passages between himself and the Hon. Mr. Walsh, but he wished to take this opportunity, at the beginning of the session, of making an explanation, because he considered it desirable that his position should be thoroughly understood. In the first place, he denied that the *Courier* was in any sense the organ of the present Government. It was perfectly independent of the Government, and wholly and entirely under his own control. The terms on which he took charge of the *Courier*, which were suggested by himself and to which the proprietors at once agreed, were briefly these: that it “should be conducted on liberal and progressive principles, and maintained absolutely independent of any party, sect, or clique; the editorial

articles to be characterised by a uniformly moderate, and, so far as practicable, judicial tone; a generous construction to be placed whenever possible on the motives and actions of public men." He was afraid that the concluding sentence in the agreement would not be very acceptable to the Hon. Mr. Walsh.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Will the hon. member read it again?

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he would place the paper on the table of the House if the hon. gentleman desired it.

The HON. W. H. WALSH warned the hon. member that if he did so it would become an official document.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he was quite agreeable. It was only an extract, and if the Hon. Mr. Walsh or any other hon. gentleman wished to see the original he was prepared to show it. Although he had severed his connection with the party since he had lost the honour of appearing in that House, he had by no means quarrelled with them, but still entertained respect for them, which he felt sure they reciprocated. He had no intention of following the hon. gentleman's example and becoming a political Ishmaelite. That he said most distinctly. He spoke strongly because a letter had been published stating that the *Courier* was in the hands and in the pay of the Government. The Hon. Mr. Walsh knew that this statement was perfectly untrue.

The HON. W. H. WALSH rose to order. The hon. member was bringing an action in the Supreme Court over these very words, or something to that effect.

The PRESIDENT: What is the point of order?

The HON. W. H. WALSH said the hon. member was prejudicing a case now before the Supreme Court. A more unjustifiable proceeding he had never heard of. He trusted a sense of their own dignity, as well as a sense of justice, would induce hon. members to protect themselves from such statements as were now being made. That was his point of order. The hon. gentleman was doing that which he dare not do outside the House. The hon. member knew at this very time that he had been lately summoned before the court for prejudicing a case. It would be much more manly for the hon. member, who was only making these statements to the country through *Hansard*, to make them outside, and not take advantage of the privileges of this House, if they were privileges, which he questioned.

The PRESIDENT said that so much was done within the walls of Parliament that would not be done outside, that this question seemed to him not to be out of order.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he was quite prepared to put the hon. gentleman's mind at ease with regard to the proceeding which he considered *sub judice*. He knew it would be a relief to him to know that he had decided to abandon the legal proceedings referred to, or he would not have come forward and made these statements public. All he desired, as the correspondence between himself and the *Telegraph* would prove, was to unearth the man, if man he could be called, who would say in the Press what he would not say to one's face. On the first day of the session he had determined to make one explanation, and only one. Whatever the Hon. Mr. Walsh said would not hurt him. Mr. Walsh and himself were too well known for any slander he (Mr. Walsh) could utter to injure him. He believed in a man speaking openly what he had to say, and not screening himself

behind an anonymous signature. As he had said before, the *Courier* was entirely in his hands, and entirely under his control. He was not now and never had been under any pecuniary obligation whatever to the present Government. As a colleague he worked faithfully with them, and he was sure they were equally faithful to him; and although circumstances had compelled him to sever his connection—an agreeable connection—with them, he was not by any means to be ranked amongst their enemies, or as a political Ishmaelite. In conducting the *Courier* he had endeavoured to advocate liberal principles, and maintain it independent of party, sect, or creed. One more word, and he was done. The Hon. Mr. Walsh was a gentleman he had known a long time. They had their political differences, but until a few weeks ago he believed friendly feelings existed between them. So far as he himself was concerned, he never carried political feeling outside the House. It was with the greatest surprise then that he heard that he had been attacked slanderously by the Hon. Mr. Walsh in the public Press. He was quite willing if the hon. gentleman would get up and disclaim the authorship of that letter, which cast a slanderous imputation upon him—

The HON. W. H. WALSH: What was it?

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT: It is stated that the *Courier*, while in his hands, was in the pay of the present Government; that it was ready—he did not know the exact words, as he had not the letter with him, but that the *Courier* in his hands was ready—to support any rascality, any impropriety, any fraudulent proceeding, that the Government might enter upon.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Nonsense.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he was perfectly satisfied that that was a fair construction of the tenor of that letter. If the Hon. Mr. Walsh said he did not write it, or that he wrote it under excitement, and that he did not believe what he wrote, then of course he (Mr. Buzacott) would accept his disclaimer, and there would not be any more ill-feeling between them; but he warned the hon. gentleman if he thought to put him down in that House or to drive him out of the *Courier*, or injure him in any possible way, he would find it one of the hardest things he had ever undertaken to do. He (Mr. Buzacott) would always try to keep on his way inoffensively and injure no one. He had regarded him (Mr. Walsh) for the last twenty years in the light of a personal friend, and expected that he would follow the same course with regard to him. He apologised to the House for taking up so much time with a matter of this sort, but he could only say that whatever Mr. Walsh might say of him hereafter he would not defend himself from any personal imputation. He should, of course, discuss all public matters with him, and probably should often differ from him, but any personal imputation made by the hon. member from that day forward he should decline to notice, but treat with the contempt it deserved. He moved the adjournment of the House.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he was really very sorry that his hon. friend—if he might be permitted to call him such—had raised this discussion, this afternoon, and taken up so much of the time of the House on a matter that he did not think concerned it at all, especially as he knew the hon. President did not wish the sitting to be prolonged to a great extent. But really this gross and unjustifiable attack which had been made upon him was certainly quite unexampled, he believed, not only in that Chamber, but even in the other. He appealed to hon. gentlemen whether he had said anything uncalled for with reference to what he had called the "Government organ." He was perfectly justified in what he

said, and it was no more than he should have to say probably on any everyday sitting during this session. If the hon. member thought he was going to deter him from doing his duty in that House by getting up and making those extraordinary statements—rash statements—probably at the dictation of a certain individual—he believed he knew the individual who was trying to set at variance all classes in the community—

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT rose to a point of order. He denied that any person outside the House had even hinted to him what it was desirable to say that afternoon. He had done it simply and solely on his own account.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he repeated what he had said. Perhaps the hon. gentleman did not know that he was being moved, as he had been lately, to a spirit of antagonism to himself. He appealed again to hon. members to know whether he said anything yesterday that was unparliamentary, in his reference to what he called the "Government organ." In making the statement he did not mention the hon. member's name, or even look at him, and he repeated that it was a "Government organ." He could refer to file after file, month after month, in which a more slavish deference to the wishes—the expressed wishes of the Government—no paper had ever displayed; but he should keep more closely to the question. He wanted to know what he said yesterday that could be found fault with. There was sitting opposite to him hon. gentlemen who had said a thousand times more, and a thousand times plainer, things about that very rag. He did not care who attacked it; but was he to be called to order on the second day of the session, simply because he referred to a paper which was, perhaps, doing its duty to the country as a Government organ? What was meant by "Government organ?" He did not say it was in the pay of the Government: the hon. gentleman was moved to make that statement by his strong feelings. He (Mr. Walsh) did not say so. He would not, but he would read the letter which the hon. gentleman himself had quoted incorrectly that afternoon. He should give it such publicity as it had never had before, by having it published in *Hansard*, and let hon. members see if there was anything at all improper to be found in it. He maintained that there was nothing in the remarks he had made yesterday to justify the colour the hon. gentleman put upon them to-day. He did not either deny or acknowledge that he was the author of the letter. He remembered that on one occasion the hon. member himself counselled him not to give up his name when he published a letter over which an action was threatened; but, now the hon. gentleman was in the employ of the *Brisbane Courier*, he was sent down apparently to make this explanation about that letter—for that seemed to be the head and front of it—he had not the courage to go into the Supreme Court and vindicate his character. He would read the letter, and might tell hon. gentlemen that at the time it was published he happened to be about 150 miles away. It was in the *Telegraph* of May 27, 1881:—

"A PROTEST.

"To the Editor.—Sir,—The remarks in this morning's *Courier*, about the prospects of the coming session, are enough to exasperate a saint. Can this importation from Rockhampton not see that the Brisbane people are neither slaves nor squatting Jingoos? The 'official utterances,' which he palms upon his readers as veritable 'We's,' is, after all, a game played out. The public do not believe that so and so is, &c. The people no longer believe that the *Courier* newspaper has their interests at heart, or even faithfully represents current events of national import. On the contrary, the people think that the *Courier* newspaper is in the pay and hands of the present Government."

There the word "pay" was used, he would admit; evidently the writer must have thought so.

"Hence the public conclude that the leading metropolitan journal is in a most abject state."

He would like to take the sense of the people of the country as to that fact—whether they would consider that the *Courier* of that date was not in a most abject state.

"What has poor Queensland done that she should be thus devoured by unmerciful adversaries, and more unmerciful *quasi* friends? Is there a job—dredge building, steel rails speculating, &c.—that the *Courier* is not to the fore at once to defend, and mislead us about? The rights of Parliament are trodden upon; the revenue is diverted—the official reports about it are not true; the people are cheated, bamboozled, and a few are notoriously propitiated—but the *Courier* is there, always ready, always at disposal to deceive and betray the colony 'according to instruction.' I think, sir, the attack this morning upon the patience and credulity of the people will meet with your warm and indignant notice.—Yours, &c.,

"JUNIUS.

"Brisbane, May 26."

He would ask again, was there anything in that letter to justify the interpretation put upon it by the hon. gentleman? He would say there was not any more than in the words he uttered yesterday, which, he repeated, were such as he should, no doubt, often have to repeat this session, and not be called to order. He was sorry to say he could not compliment *Hansard's* report of yesterday of what he said in the House, but still he was not going to question anything that *Hansard* had said of him. He protested against this session being diverted from its proper duties by the hon. gentleman getting up to explain his position on the *Courier*, which nobody wanted to know, and his being there was a fact which a great many people in the colony regretted, he was sure, as soon as they read the paper in the morning. He protested against the hon. gentleman coming there to publish to the world, by way of making an attack upon him, all his private business with the proprietors of the *Courier*. He (Mr. Walsh) was sorry that he had taken up so much of the time of the House; only for that he would read a few extracts from the *Courier* to show that he was perfectly justified, and should be perfectly justified, in styling the paper a Government organ. After all, what was a Government organ? They never read a debate in the House of Commons but what there was a reference to the Government organ—to what the Government organ said or did. They never read a critique in the English papers but what they saw a reference to some Government organ. All Governments professedly had organs. But, more than that, he had heard one of the highest men who had ever been in this country announce to his Ministers that no Government could expect to last long if it had not an organ to represent their views and defend them. He was not going to gratify the hon. member by acknowledging that he was the author of that letter, but he regretted that the hon. gentleman had not courage enough to carry the matter into a court of law.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (the Hon. B. D. Morehead) said he had no desire to prolong the debate upon a discussion which must be unpleasant to everyone concerned. He only rose to say—he did not know whether he would satisfy the Hon. Mr. Walsh by what he did say, but he believed it would be believed by others, if not by him—that the Government had nothing whatever to do with the *Courier*. He was not at all aware that it was a Government organ; in fact, the hon. gentleman had heard him call it a very rag.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Worse than that.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he was not as chameleon-like as some hon. members, and did not so readily change his opinion.

The HON. C. S. MEIN thought that discussions of this sort were very much to be regretted. He was surprised that the Hon. Mr. Buzacott, who had had some experience in similar discussions, which he had deprecated, should have been the first offender this session. He did not think the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Walsh last night were intended to be in any way offensive to the hon. gentleman, or there was anything in them to which he could have taken any personal exception. But instead of merely complaining of the reference to the *Courier*, the hon. gentleman seemed to direct the whole force of his remarks to some observations that had been made concerning him, or which he believed to refer to him in his business capacity, some months or weeks ago in a newspaper of the town. Now, if every hon. member who felt himself aggrieved in that way should take an opportunity of bringing the matter before the House and have his grievance heard, their discussions would be interminable. He did not think these discussions ought to be introduced, and it was highly undesirable that advantage should be taken by any member of the House to ventilate an agreement subsisting between his employers and himself. It was, no doubt, a matter of very great interest to Mr. Buzacott to be conversant with the nature of the agreement between himself and the proprietors of the *Courier*, but he did not think a single hon. member of the House cared a fig about it. He did not consider the words "Government organ" offensive at all. It was a common expression intended to have the meaning that the journal was in the confidence of the body whose name was associated with it, and made use of its confidence by giving the public information upon certain matters. Unless the hon. gentleman was differently constituted from others, he (Mr. Mein) did not see how it would be possible for him, in the short space of time which had elapsed since he had been most intimately associated with, and occupied a prominent position as a member of the Government, to have anything but an extremely friendly feeling towards them, and it would be impossible for him, unless he occupied a very peculiar position as editor of that paper, not to sympathise with the Government, and do all he could to further their objects. His separation from them was of his own motion, and he (Mr. Mein) could not see that it was wrong on his part or derogatory to his character in the slightest degree to have it said of him that he had frequently approved of their actions, and given expression to his sentiments in the columns of the journal over which he presided. He had to repeat his regret that the discussion had arisen, and hoped that it would be the last of such discussions they would hear.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said that, in asking permission to withdraw the motion, he claimed the indulgence of the House to make a few remarks. It was said that the House had nothing to do with this matter he had brought up; but he thought the House had to do with it. The *Courier* was yesterday denominated "the Government organ," and he thought he was perfectly right in meeting that statement with a denial. The Hon. Mr. Mein thought he ought not to have brought this matter before the House, but he looked at the matter from a legal standpoint. He, no doubt, would have preferred to see the case—

The HON. C. S. MEIN said the hon. member was out of order in making remarks of a personal character. He was drifting into very disagreeable observations which he (Mr. Mein), as he was not the best-tempered man in the world, might feel inclined very decidedly to resent.

The HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said it had been said in the House that he was withdrawing from

the action referred to because he dare not go into it or dare not face it. That was true in a certain sense. It was in this way: Of the lawyers whom he had engaged one advised him one way and one another, and when he found his lawyers' advice could not be depended upon he very naturally distrusted his own opinion. That was the simple reason he declined to go on with the action. He had no wish to prolong the discussion, and he thought he could appeal to the members of the House to say whether he had been in the habit of wasting the time of the House with personal matters. He thought it was about the first occasion during the time he had had the honour of a place in the House that he had ever brought forward a personal matter, and it would probably be the last. He thought the explanation they had had would do good; at any rate, he did not think he had anything to regret in having brought the matter forward. He begged to withdraw the motion.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

#### FORMAL MOTIONS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that, with the permission of the House, he would amend the first resolution standing in his name by substituting the name of Mr. Walsh for that of Mr. Mein in the resolution. This was done at Mr. Mein's request, and he presumed the House would not object.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, it was resolved—

1. That the President, Mr. Walsh, and Mr. Morehead be appointed members of the Joint Library Committee.

2. That the President, Mr. Heussler, and Dr. O'Doherty be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the Management of the Refreshment Rooms.

3. That the President, Mr. Gregory, and Mr. Turner be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the Management and Superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings.

4. That the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by message, requesting that they will be pleased to nominate a like number of members from their body, with a view to give effect to the 8th Joint Standing Order.

The following motion was also agreed to:—

By the POSTMASTER-GENERAL—

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present Session consist of the following members—namely, the President, Mr. Hart, Mr. Mein, Mr. Buzacott, and the Mover—with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and with authority to confer on subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Assembly.

#### HOURLY OF MEETING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That, unless otherwise ordered, this House will meet for the despatch of business at half-past 3 o'clock p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday in each week.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said that the question of the time at which the House should meet was one which had been variously dealt with in different sessions. In the early part of last session, if he recollected rightly, it was decided that the meeting of the House should be at half-past 3, which really meant 4, and great inconvenience was often experienced in consequence of the lateness of the hour. When there was only a small amount of business to transact, it was just as much as they were able to do to dispose of it before the adjournment for dinner; and they all knew what a great dislike hon. gentlemen had, unless there was really important business before the House, to be called together after dinner. Under these circumstances he thought that, although they might inconvenience a few hon. gentlemen who had business in town by taking them from their offices half-an-hour sooner than they would otherwise like to leave, it would

be much fairer upon those members—of whom there were a good many—who had to come considerable distances. He believed it would also expedite business; and would therefore test the feeling of the House by moving—

That the hour for meeting be 3 o'clock, instead of half-past 3.

The HON. C. S. MEIN said he must join issue very decidedly upon the statement of the Hon. Mr. Gregory that considerable inconvenience was found last session by meeting at the hour proposed in the resolution. He did not believe—and he was a very regular attendant—that on even one occasion any inconvenience was felt; and the desire for having an earlier sitting first emanated with those hon. gentlemen who were very lax in their attention to the duties of the House. Most of them came up only when it suited their own convenience, and when they happened to be in the House they thought it rather unpleasant that they should have to wait over 6 o'clock. It would be a great convenience for hon. gentlemen who were employed in business pursuits in the town to meet at the later hour. They met in this colony at a much earlier hour than in the other colonies. In New South Wales, Victoria, and he believed in South Australia, the meetings took place at 4 o'clock. If half-an-hour extra were necessary, he was sure that hon. gentlemen would be inclined to stay on after 6 o'clock, or, if necessary, to come back after tea. The bulk of the business was transacted before 6 o'clock, even when they commenced at 4, and, when the business was of sufficient importance to occupy more than a two-hours sitting, considerable time was occupied after the adjournment for dinner. He felt quite sure that no practical inconvenience would be inflicted upon those gentlemen who wished to get home and have their tea; and a great deal of inconvenience and hardship would be imposed upon professional gentlemen and those following active pursuits in this city if they had to attend at half-past 3 o'clock. He hoped that the experiment tried during last session would be continued during this. He certainly would vote for the resolution.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he certainly would vote for his resolution; but at the same time he was to a certain extent in the hands of the House. While he would have to vote for the resolution, he was rather struck at some remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, which rather appeared to indicate that after dinner hon. members might not be able to transact business. He did not know whether that was the meaning the hon. member intended to convey: but, at any rate, what he said would bear that construction. Most of the work of the House had hitherto been done in the afternoon, and he would vote for the resolution as it stood. He was, however, in the hands of the House, and would be quite happy to fall in with the views of hon. members if they decided to meet before 4 o'clock.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said he had nothing more to say, except that he had moved this amendment at the request of a good many hon. members, and was willing to take the expression of the House upon it.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

The House divided :—

#### CONTENTS, 10.

The Hons. B. D. Morehead, W. Graham, W. H. Walsh, C. H. Buzacott, T. Rome, J. Taylor, W. Pettigrew, C. S. Mein, G. Edmundstone, and J. C. Heussler.

#### NON-CONTENTS, 5.

The Hons. W. D. Box, F. H. Hart, F. T. Gregory, J. C. Foote, and T. L. Murray-Prior.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

### FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following motions were agreed to :—

By the HON. C. S. MEIN—

1. That there be laid upon the table of this House, copies of all Correspondence between the Honourable the President and the Government respecting the appointment of the Clerk of the Legislative Council.

2. That there be laid upon the table of this House, copies of all Correspondence between the Government and Messrs. Thornton and Hobbs respecting the positions lately held by them as members of the Legislative Council.

### THE MAIL STEAMER "CHYEBASSA."

The HON. W. H. WALSH said the remarks he intended to make he thought better to put in the form of a question to the Postmaster-General. He (Mr. Walsh) yesterday referred to this steamer having been refused pratique at Mackay, but was told by the Postmaster-General that she had received it at Mackay. The public had received little or no information, but in one of the morning papers he found the following :—

"The R.M.S. 'Chyebassa' was quarantined here in consequence of two cases of fever which developed themselves among the Lascars between Cooktown and Townsville. On the arrival of the vessel here the health officer was not allowed to board her, and great disappointment was felt at the Bishop and other passengers being unable to land. On arrival at Mackay the 'Chyebassa' was released from quarantine, and the Townsville passengers are now returning."

He would like to know whether the Government had received information that there was no necessity for quarantine at Townsville, and also whether special instructions had been sent from Brisbane to the authorities at Mackay to give pratique.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL would answer the last question of the hon. gentleman first. No special instructions were given to the health officer at Mackay to give pratique to this vessel. No instructions whatever had been given to give pratique to any vessel. As a matter of fact, he had seen a telegram from Dr. Salmond, health officer at Rockhampton, which said that he examined the passengers and crew, and had found that only two of the crew were suffering from a slight attack of intermittent fever. He trusted that would allay the fears of the hon. gentleman.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said it was not his fears that required allaying. He was speaking on behalf of the public. It would be well if the hon. gentleman said whether the health officer at Mackay had acted entirely upon his own authority, or whether he was directed in any way from Brisbane.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had not the least doubt that the health officer at Mackay had had special instructions, and the health officer there was one of the ablest in the service of the colony. He had not the least doubt that he had received instructions.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: To give pratique?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Certainly not. Instructions to board the vessel and see whether she should be quarantined or not.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said that though the debate on the Address in Reply was adjourned on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Mein, as that hon. gentleman had informed him that he did not wish to take up the position he was entitled to in opening the debate to-day, he therefore rose to make a few remarks. In the first place he would remark that though Queen's Speeches were seldom intended to convey, or

disclose very much the policy of the Government, on the present occasion the Ministry had given a fair insight into their views and the policy they intended to pursue. He might at once state that, as a whole, he concurred with the Address, though there were some points to which he took exception. The hon. gentlemen who had preceded him had gone over so much ground, and so ably, that he would not detain the House by mere repetition, in possibly not equally well-selected terms, and he would therefore begin at once with the 7th paragraph, which referred to railways and public works. He wished to refer more particularly, in the first instance, to what was termed the transcontinental railway. Last session he expressed his opinion as contrary to that which he had previously held, and stated that the construction of railways on the land-grant system might be carried out advantageously. He continued to hold that opinion; but the advantage all depended on the form in which the system was carried out, and as they would have an opportunity of discussing the particulars and specialities agreed upon between the Government and those who would carry out the work, it was no use detaining the House on that subject now. However, in reference to that particular proposal, he trusted that the Government would provide the House with a little fuller information with regard to the proposed terminus, for he felt very much in the dark, having only had access to the plans in possession of hon. gentlemen with regard to Point Parker, which he presumed was meant to be Port Parker eventually, and he found very many persons outside the House equally unenlightened on the subject. He therefore trusted the Government would see fit to give some further information before the question came on for consideration. The plans at present did not indicate a port at all to his mind—certainly not for large ocean-going steamers; and while he felt sure that the Government would not do anything in the matter hastily or rashly, or without sufficient knowledge of the capabilities of the terminus, still the public were not in possession of that information. With regard to the other railways referred to in the Address, he was glad to see that the Government contemplated continuing to give facilities for the occupation of the country by means of the extension of railways within reasonable bounds, and without involving the colony in debt by borrowing too largely and constructing too hastily. On a recent occasion the Minister for Works, in his public capacity, informed a deputation at Warwick that he strongly approved of the proposed inauguration of two branch railways there. He had the opportunity of accompanying the deputation in the inspection of the proposed routes, and thought that those lines, and similar ones, would certainly afford great facilities at no distant date. The lines he referred to were the Highfields and Killarney lines. In reference to extending railways, there was another very important question as to whether they would be carried out by land grants or otherwise. Branch lines certainly could not be carried out by land grants simply because the land was already taken up. He sincerely trusted, however, that when the money was not already voted, and it should become necessary to go into the market for loans to meet the expenditure on railways, that the plan which he had more than once strenuously advocated would be adopted—that the loans should be obtained on the long annuity principle, instead of imposing a debt on the colony to be paid in full on the termination of the debentures. By adopting that principle the colony would be placed in a better position than by borrowing and eventually having to pay back

the loan. He would leave any further remarks on the subject till the subject came before the House in a definite form. With reference to the report of the Royal Commission sent home to inquire into the matters connected with the steel rails and the action of the Government in reference thereto, he need not do more than say that, having availed himself of the opportunity yesterday and to-day of reading the report, he was quite sure that the summing up in the last paragraph but one—paragraph 41—was fully borne out by the evidence; not only by the statement of the report, but by the evidence itself. He had not read the evidence all through; but on close inspection it would be found to fully justify the conclusions arrived at in the report. In paragraph 10 reference was made to the great demand for land in various parts of the colony. An hon. member yesterday, speaking to the question of the closure of selections in certain areas in the North, said it was unfair, after having the land open for a considerable time, all at once to withdraw it from selection. The remark was made by the Hon. Mr. Walsh, who seemed to think because one horse had been stolen they were not to shut the stable door to prevent other horses being stolen. He (Mr. Gregory) thought the Ministry had adopted a very wise course in putting a stop to the wholesale selection of the country until they could frame such rules as would allow the country to be taken up on reasonable terms, instead of being swallowed up by mere speculators. The only other paragraph he could not help making a brief allusion to was with reference to the expressed intention of introducing a Bill to place the Upper House on an electoral basis. That was not a new subject at all, a measure referring to the same question having been before the House on a former occasion, and more than once during the term of years he had been in the House the matter had been referred to. Of course, without seeing the measure, it would be a waste of time to go into the question to any great extent, but he would make this remark—that the experience of the other colonies did not lead them to look at all favourably in the direction of the constitution in existence there. The Upper House, to his mind, had quite sufficient powers and prerogatives as it was at present constituted, and he could see no other result from placing it on an elective basis than that of augmenting its power. Constitutionally they possessed powers which it had not been the practice to enforce when the will of the elective chamber had been very frequently reiterated, or very strongly so, on any particular point; and members had hesitated to resist beyond a given point the wishes of the people as expressed by their representatives. But they must not forget that in reality they were the nominees of the people. The ministers who were elected by the people, and who governed in the other branch of the Legislature, had practically the power of making appointments to that House, and therefore the leader of the other House really had a very great deal to do with selecting the members who took their seats in the Council. At the same time, they were not immediately responsible to any particular electorate and might come to a decision calmly and dispassionately, and no influence could be brought to bear upon them to make them act otherwise than according to their own conviction. From that standpoint he should be sorry to see them to some extent under the influence of those who placed them in the House, in which case they certainly would not have that freedom of action which they now possessed. The great functions of that branch of the Legislature were really not so much direct legislation as ample revision of measures prepared elsewhere. Of course, measures might be matured in that

House and sent to the other for their consideration, but still, as a deliberative body, its functions were more those of careful revision and guarding against hasty and rash legislation and giving time for its modification. As he supposed their utterances were read by some of the legislators elsewhere he would like to add a word of caution—not to members of the Upper House—and that was that he felt quite sure that many members of that Chamber would feel that, if they once became an elective Chamber, their powers in every sense would be equal to those of the other branch, and they would feel that they had a right to interfere, definitely and positively, and on equal terms in all questions of taxation and money. They would thus be released from that check which was now upon them, and would not hesitate to disapprove of any legislation and signifying their disapproval by vetoing the measure. He regretted to find one or two omissions in the Speech, but which he trusted before the session was over would be supplied. One was the necessity for some really important amendments in the Divisional Boards Act, which, though on the whole very successful, was not working with perfect satisfaction without such amendments, which were of such a nature that they could be made by means of a short Bill, without in any way mutilating or interfering with the Act, which, as far as his experience went, they had reason to be very well pleased with. There were some minor questions omitted, which no doubt were left by Ministers for private members to introduce, and consequently he could hardly say that they were defects in the Ministerial programme as set forth in the Address—he referred more particularly to some amendments in the Bathurst Burr and Thistle Act. He had great pleasure in supporting the Address generally, and at the same time he trusted it would be passed to-night. His reason for saying so was that the only question raised yesterday which might occasion any demur was that of dealing with the question on short notice; but as that objection had been thoroughly removed, there was no question at issue now that could cause any objection in the minds of hon. gentlemen to adopting the Address in Reply.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he felt that he could not allow that occasion to pass without a saying a few words. Previous speakers had dealt with most of the particulars, and he would not refer to any length to any particular clause. The hon. gentleman, in moving the Address, had uttered a great many of his (Mr. Murray-Prior's) feelings in saying that most of the paragraphs would require the greatest attention and caution, while not committing himself to any particular item. But there was one part of the Address which he must speak of, and that was where the Government proposed to introduce a Bill early in the session to provide for the reconstruction of the Upper House on an elective basis. He was very much astonished to see this. It appeared however to have been foreshadowed the previous year by the Postmaster-General, by the attempt to restrict the constitution of that House, and, as it seemed to him, by a side-wind to do away with the 9th clause of the Constitution Act, or if not to do away with it, to modify it to a very large extent. So long as they had that clause, which required two-thirds of the members to alter any item in the Constitution, he thought they were pretty safe, and he sincerely trusted that hon. members would be very careful in interfering in any way with the Constitution. For his own part, he believed they had the best possible Constitution that they could have, and the colony had been congratulated on the Constitution which existed in that House. He did not think there had been a call outside for a very considerable period for an elective

Upper Chamber, and he was therefore never more surprised than he was to see mention made of that Bill. He had also noticed one or two departures from the usual custom in that House, and it appeared to him that those departures had been going on from time to time. They were not very much in themselves, but still, as an old member, he must say he liked to see as much as possible the old forms carried out. The departures were perhaps owing to so great an infusion of blood from another place, and he thought it was hardly seemly for the Government to nominate gentlemen to that House who were rejected as candidates for another place. This struck him especially when the hon. President read the letter from the Government informing them that one hon. gentleman had resigned his seat, and a very short time afterwards another letter informing them that that hon. gentleman had again been appointed to that Council. He did not think it added much to the dignity of the Council that any member of it should resign his seat for the purpose of contesting an election, and at once be restored to the Chamber. He thought it was calculated to do them a great deal of harm in the opinion of colonists at large, and he was very sorry that the Government had taken that action. In speaking of that matter, also, he thought that when vacancies occurred there were hon. members enough in that House to take the leadership of the House. He was not objecting to the hon. gentleman who was at present the leader of the House individually, for perhaps they might go far and not find a more able leader; but he did think that it would be better that hon. gentlemen who were acquainted with all the forms of the House, and who had been in the House for a long time, should hold that position. That was what struck him very forcibly. They had in the case of several changes had strangers, or gentlemen who were almost strangers, introduced into the House, and he thought the Hon. the Postmaster-General should have adopted the usual course of giving some explanation why he had been introduced, and of the intentions of the Government. The hon. gentleman could of course do as he liked in that matter. He (Mr. Prior) could not say that he entirely agreed with what was in that Address; but at the same time, if an amendment were proposed, he would be very sorry to vote in any way against it, and he had very much doubt whether any amendment would be moved. He had omitted one thing. After reading the report of the Commission he could not understand how any sensible person could fail to see that the chief public man of this colony was fully exonerated from every charge that had been made against him. He thought it was evident that those charges were without foundation, and hoped that full apology would be made by those who had advanced them.

The Hon. W. D. BOX said he would like to make a few remarks upon the Address, which was on the whole very satisfactory to him. He could not agree with that part of it which stated—

“Our agricultural and pastoral interests have recovered from the effects of the late disastrous droughts.”

As far as his knowledge led him, the agricultural interest in some portions of the colony was suffering from very serious drought. There were several other matters he would like to allude to. He could not agree with the statement that the mail service would prove the quickest and best adapted to the colony generally. The Government had practically inflicted a fine upon all letters sent by other routes, some of which were despatched by people who did not know the jealousies and difficulties existing in their mail



route; and, no doubt, there were some people at home did not know exactly where Queensland was. They knew it was in Australia, but it was very difficult to teach residents in England the geography of Australia. To his mind it was very hard that letters which were simply addressed to "Brisbane, Queensland," should be charged 6d. or 9d., and it was to be hoped that before the session was over the charges would be somewhat altered. As a mail service, he did not think it deserved the name; but, as a service for bringing merchandise to the colony, it was admirable. He was very glad to see that the Government were prepared to promote immigration, and he gathered from advertisements in the Press generally that they intended to promote immigration of a most valuable kind. That was assisted immigration. To his mind it was a kind of immigration which they should never hesitate to encourage. When an immigrant came to the country, if he was the right kind of man, he improved his position. Assisted immigrants found people ready to advise and assist them, and they found also a home; and if they left the colony it was to emigrate again to other colonies. He had read with interest the report of the Royal Commission. He believed that the present Premier might have made an error of judgment, but the imputations levelled against him of dishonesty as a politician and as a man were to his mind entirely disproved; therefore, he was very glad that he had that opportunity of stating his opinion on reading the report of the Commission. In the paragraph specially addressed to the members of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor told them that the balance in the Consolidated Revenue Account had returned to the right side without increasing the burdens of the people. There was, to his mind, a great mistake there. It was perfectly true that, according to the returns, they had the balance of the Consolidated Revenue turned to the right side, but it appeared to him that by the rates levied by the divisional board taxation had been considerably increased, while the expenditure of the Government had decreased. The taxation of the country had not been diminished one single penny as he had been able to make out. The *ad valorem* and excise remained exactly the same; in fact, the excise duties had been increased, so that he thought His Excellency was a little in error in stating that the burdens of the people had not been increased. He thought the Government should try to get some more money. Our debentures were now worth £103 in London, and he trusted the Government would lose no time in getting money and continuing their public works, though there was no intimation in the Speech of their intention to do so. He was glad to find that there was a distinct promise in the Speech that a Bill would be brought in to provide for the destruction of marsupials. The Bill last year was lost by accident, but he trusted it would be one of the first measures to be introduced here. A Bill was to be introduced at an early date to provide for the re-construction of the Upper House upon an elective basis. He must believe it, but he would not have done so had he seen it anywhere else than in the Governor's Speech. In his travels through the other colonies he had heard the constitution of Queensland praised because of its nominee Upper House. In his opinion a nominee House would not resist the wishes of the people, if those wishes were plainly shown through one, two, or three sessions; and the deadlock which had occurred in Victoria would never have occurred here with a nominee House. He could not approve of another action of the Government. He was astonished to see the Hon. Mr. Taylor back again in this House; he was not sorry to see him, but he thought the Government had

not acted wisely in so soon restoring him to his former position in this House: it was a very bad precedent. He supported the adoption of the Address in Reply.

The Hon. W. PETTIGREW wished to make a few remarks on one matter. In the Speech last year there was a clause referring to the Bills which it was proposed to bring forward, but he observed that one of those Bills was omitted from this Speech. In the clause to which he referred it was stated that a Bill would be brought in to provide for the reclamation of State forests and the conservation of timber. That Bill was brought before the other House, and, he presumed, was read a first time, but that was as far as he saw anything of it. This year the Government had, for some reason or other, not thought proper to put it into the list of measures proposed to be brought in. Why they had not done so he failed to understand. For many years past he had been advocating the conservation of our timbers. The destruction that was going on was something enormous. Three years ago he visited a district about eighty miles to the north of this, in the neighbourhood of the Blackall Range, at the head of the Mary, the Stanley, and other rivers, and he was informed on the best authority that there was then 10,000 logs of cedar lying on the ground. Since that time some had been taken down the Mary River, but on the rivers on this side of the range very little had come away. Some of that timber at that time had been down five or six years; that made it about eight years ago since it was cut down; but some of it had been down longer than that. Portions of the timber he considered useless for cutting; no doubt a large portion of it had gone to destruction. Further north, between Cardwell and Cooktown, there was another cedar country, and there large quantities of timber had been cut down and exported, but much had been cut down but not exported, and it was thus lost. He had been told that this lost timber represented something like £100,000, and the whole of that, or very nearly, was lost to Queensland. Not one-half the logs that were cut down would be removed, and he thought that was a most serious injury to the country. The Government should bring in a Bill to regulate these State forests, so as to conserve the timber. He gave them credit for what they had done in having put 2s. per 100 feet on as duty; but, as hon. members had stated on previous occasions, it should have been 6s. or 8s. instead of 2s. Had it been 6s. or 8s., the revenue derived from it could have been spent in the cultivation of cedar, beech, and other trees. He really thought that the Bill which the Government promised last year should now be brought in, and that it should be made into an Act. The Government did not require an Act to make reserves. They had power to do that at the present time; they could make as many reserves as they liked, and that was what he had asked them to do on the Blackall Range. Since he was there, three years ago, twenty miles of country had been denuded, and he said deliberately that two-thirds of the trees cut down never would be removed. If £100,000 represented the value of the timber cut down, then there was £66,000 absolutely lost to the country. That was something worse than the steel rails job. A great deal had been made out of that, but there had not been a sentence about the loss to the country by the destruction of cedar that was going on. He maintained that the cedar lost at the Blackall Range would last Brisbane for the next twenty years. The Government therefore should take some action, and do something to protect the timber from being destroyed. As the repre-

sentative of the timber interest he had done what he could, but he could not make the Government take any action. He had represented the matter to various Governments from time to time. Some years ago a commission was appointed to inquire into the question, but the Government then in power did nothing. Mr. Douglas' Government promised to bring in a Bill, but did not do so. Last year the present Government brought in a Bill, and thus fulfilled their promise, but there the Bill remained. Now the Government did not go that length; perhaps they intended to bring in a Bill and carry it through without making a promise. If they did so, he should be most happy to support them.

Question—That the Address, as read by the Clerk, be adopted—put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Address, as agreed to, be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the President, the mover and seconder, and such other members as might choose to attend, at half-past 10 o'clock to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House adjourned at a quarter past 5 o'clock, until Wednesday, the 20th July, at half-past 3 o'clock.

---