

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 17 December, 1884.

Personal Explanation.—Crown Lands Bill—proposed conference.—Question.—Defence Bill.—Sandgate Railway Extension.—Members Expenses Bill—second reading.—Officials in Parliament Bill—second reading.—Bundaberg Gas and Coke Company Bill—second reading.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY said: Hon. gentlemen,—I rise to move the adjournment of the House. I regret that to-day I again should have to take this course in order to refer to a matter personal to myself, but I trust the House will excuse me when I state the facts. It has come to my knowledge that during the rather heated little discussion that occurred in the House recently between myself and the hon. Postmaster-General, a remark which I made on that occasion has been very greatly misunderstood. The remark I made was that I ventured to question the good taste of the hon. the Postmaster-General in referring to my connection with a certain company existing in this colony in such terms as to bring before the attention of the House the relation in which I stood to that company. I spoke of him then as the solicitor of the company, and on that ground I questioned the good taste with which he introduced his remarks in reference to it. It has come to my knowledge that an impression has got abroad that in making that statement I referred to the Hon. Mr. Mein as my solicitor, and that I charged him with a breach of professional trust in bringing the matter before the House, occupying that capacity. But hon. gentlemen will understand the position when I explain that the Hon. Mr. Mein has never been my solicitor, but simply the solicitor of the company; and whatever the hon. gentleman has done, or whatever facts he has stated in connection with that company, are before the public in the Registrar's Office in the articles of association drawn up by him as solicitor of the company. Therefore there was really no secret whatever to be divulged by him, as every particle of business in connection with that company has been already published in the articles of association, and also in the reports of the company that have been published. I feel called upon, therefore, to set anybody in this Chamber or outside right in that matter. I deeply regret that I was ever called upon to make use of

the observation I did. I regret it mainly because I have reason to believe, since I made those remarks, that the observations which called them from me were actually not intended as any attack personal to myself. The Hon. Mr. Mein, and I daresay other hon. gentlemen in the House, know perfectly well that I have always been on terms of what I conceive to be very happy intimacy with him; and there is no hon. gentleman in the House, or in this colony, I may say, for whom, in his private or public or professional capacity, I entertain higher respect for than I have always entertained for the Hon. Mr. Mein. It is probably because of this that I felt all the more warmly what seemed to me to be the attack made upon me. I have reason to believe that I misunderstood the hon. gentleman, and I can only account for it from the fact that we are now sitting in the hot period of the year, and also from the fact, probably, that we are both Irishmen. The Hon. Mr. Mein has more than once told me that the Milesian strain cannot be traced back very far, but I think hon. members of this House will be aware that the Milesian strain in me predominates still. It is always there when it is wanted, and frequently when it is not wanted. As I said before, I deeply regret that any difference should have arisen between myself and the hon. the Postmaster-General, especially as it appears to have been a misunderstanding. I trust hon. members of this House will not be afflicted in future with any differences between the hon. gentleman and myself. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

The Hon. W. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I take advantage of the motion for adjournment to correct something that was omitted from my speech last night. It will be in the recollection of hon. members that I quoted certain extracts from a speech delivered by the Postmaster-General, then the Hon. Mr. Mein, in 1879; and it so happened that the most powerful extract has been left out. My only object in referring to the matter is that I wish to have that extract inserted in *Hansard*, as I look upon it as a most clear and able exposition of the rights of the Council, and an exposition that cannot be too widely known. I have no intention of raising a discussion, but will merely read the extract which has been omitted. It is this:—

"It was not a question of embarrassing the Government that they were now to decide, but whether the Council would assent to a proposition that would be binding on all Queensland legislative bodies in time to come. To assent to the proposition of the Assembly was as much as to admit that the Council had no right whatever to interfere, even in the minutest detail, with any bill that dealt in the remotest way with taxation or revenue. He was tired of talking on the subject. Since he became a member of the Council, he had been the exponent of the views of the Council on the subject. They were not like the House of Lords. They had a written Constitution which gave them their rights clearly and distinctly. There was no power in this colony similar to that which was inherent in the House of Lords. Before the Constitution Act came into force there was no power in the colony similar to the House of Lords, and the two Houses of Legislature that came into existence under the Constitution Act were altogether the creatures of that statute. The Council derived all their powers, all their privileges, from the Constitution, and nowhere else. To talk about taxation without representation was meaningless. Before the Constitution was conferred upon Queensland it was perfectly competent for the Imperial Legislature to enforce taxation on the Australasian Colonies, and the Imperial Government did impose taxation upon the colony of New South Wales, just the same as it did upon the colonies of America, although neither the New South Welshmen nor the Americans had any representative in the British Parliament. However, the Council were bound by the four corners of the Constitution Act. Whilst there was nothing in that Act which conferred on the Assembly any privileges analogous to the

privileges of the House of Commons, there was nothing in it that debarred the Council from taking any part in the shaping of measures for taxation or for the appropriation of revenue, except that they could not initiate Bills for such purposes. The Council acted co-ordinately with the Legislative Assembly to make laws for the peace, welfare, and good government of the colony in all cases whatsoever. The only bar—the only exception—to their action was that they could not initiate money Bills."

Question put and negatived.

CROWN LANDS BILL—PROPOSED CONFERENCE.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following message from the Legislative Assembly:—

"MR. PRESIDENT,

"The Legislative Assembly having considered the Legislative Council's message, of date 16th instant, intimating that they insist upon certain of their amendments made in the Crown Lands Bill, request a free conference with the Legislative Council, with a view of arriving at a mutual agreement with respect to the said amendments.

"The Legislative Assembly have appointed Mr. Griffith, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Miles, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Kellett, Mr. Kates, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Aland, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, Mr. Ferguson, and Mr. Poote to be the managers to represent them at the said conference.

"WILLIAM H. GROOM,
"Speaker.

"Legislative Assembly Chambers,
"December 17th, 1884."

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I beg to move that the President leave the chair, and the House be put into Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering this message.

After a pause,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—There seems to be some uncertainty as to the course to be adopted on this occasion. I have proposed that the House be put into Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the message, in accordance with what I conceive to be our usual practice in dealing with messages of the Legislative Assembly. When we receive a message from the Legislative Assembly with regard to Bills, we invariably discuss that message in committee; but perhaps it would be more convenient on this occasion, as it is a matter of considerable importance, that it should be dealt with by the House itself at once. If the House desire that that should be done I will propose a resolution bearing upon the subject. There has only been one instance in this colony, as far as I can discover, in which a free conference took place. That conference took place at the request of this Chamber—singularly enough—on a Land Bill. The Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior on that occasion proposed the conference, nominated the persons whom he proposed as managers, and sent a message to the Legislative Assembly asking their concurrence. The Legislative Assembly dealt with the message in the House, agreed to the conference, and the conference took place. As I take it, this House is prepared to fall in with the views of the Assembly with regard to the conference, in order to ascertain, if possible, whether we can come to an agreement on this very important question, and business probably will be expedited; and, as we may not be departing from precedent, I propose that this House agree to the proposal of the Legislative Assembly. With the permission of the House, I therefore withdraw the motion I have made, which, as a matter of fact, has not been put from the Chair.

The PRESIDENT: I have very great doubts whether I can put the motion. It is a matter of practice that has never come before me on any previous occasion, and I was not prepared for the

House being moved into Committee. I will point out that the 94th Standing Order says distinctly that—

“Unless otherwise directed, amendments made by the Assembly to public Bills shall not be considered in committee on the same day on which such amendments may be brought up to the Council.”

This is a message from the Legislative Assembly not bringing up amendments, but consequent on amendments made by the Assembly and by the Council in the Land Bill, and the better plan will be for the hon. member to withdraw his first motion, and move that the House agree to the proposed conference.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I move—

That this House agrees to the free conference requested by the Legislative Assembly in its message of this day's date on the subject of the Council amendments in the Crown Lands Bill disagreed to by the Assembly and insisted upon by the Council.

I have included my own name amongst the names I intend to submit to the House, in accordance with precedent. I observe that on a former occasion, when the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior moved for a conference, the Postmaster-General (the Hon. Mr. Thorn) was included in the number of managers. I have, therefore, adopted the names I understood were going to be proposed on the other side with the exception of one, for whom I have substituted my own; not that I care very much about being personally present, but I certainly would object, as the leader of this House, and claiming, as I do at the present time, to represent a large portion of the community, in my official capacity, to be excluded from being present at the deliberations of the conference. My individual vote cannot affect the opinions of the other five gentlemen named, and it would be certainly an act of courtesy to include me among the number. The twelve members selected from the Legislative Assembly include two gentlemen who sit in opposition to the Government, and who have been voting against the Government as a rule, on questions connected with the Bill. They have been selected as being gentlemen desirous to see an amicable adjustment of the difference which has arisen between the two Houses, and I claim to be in that category myself; and it is desirable, especially seeing the large support the views of the Government have received in the other Chamber, that one representing their views in this Chamber should be included on the list. Of course if the solid vote is available on this subject as well as on everything else I shall be excluded, but I shall not break my heart over it if I am. My presence there will not contribute very materially to an adjustment of the difficulty; but as long as I occupy the position of leader of this House I am entitled to courtesy, and consideration, and respectful treatment. It is on those considerations that I shall include my own name.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—Speaking to the question of practice, if it follows that we shall not do in committee certain things, we certainly cannot do, if contrary to the Standing Orders, the same things in a full House. That is an admitted fact. The President has shown that it is absolutely necessary, under the 64th clause of the Standing Orders, that when any Bill is returned to the House with amendments, such amendments are to be considered in committee; and consequent upon that the President further showed by the 94th clause that, unless otherwise directed, amendments made by the Assembly to public Bills “shall not be considered in committee on the same day on which such amendments may be brought up to the Council.” It is a question for us to consider whether we are

to set aside the obvious meaning of these two clauses, and consider the matter brought forward to be what I think the purport of these clauses is intended to prevent. If I may be allowed to tender my advice to hon. gentlemen, it is to strictly adhere to the Standing Orders in their integrity. They may delay for a moment business which hon. members are anxious to get through, but there can be no more solid satisfaction hereafter enjoyed than the recollection that on every occasion they carried out the business of the Council with a strict adherence to the rules and practice of the Upper Chamber.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Speaking to the question of practice, I would point out that the Standing Orders really do not bear on the question at all. No Bill has been returned to us. We have returned a Bill to the Legislative Assembly, which is now in their custody, and they have asked us to confer with them while the Bill is in their custody. After the Bill is returned to us, through the conference, we can deal with the message under the 64th and 65th Standing Orders. In this matter we must be guided by the rules of the Imperial Parliament, and they appear to show, as far as we can learn from the text-books and the journals of the House of Commons, that when one House requests a conference with the other, the other immediately considers the request of the other Chamber as a pure matter of courtesy if for no other reason, enters into the matter at once, and agrees to the conference. The 64th and 65th Standing Orders, have no direct bearing on the subject, and as the only practice adopted in the colony is to be found in the case to which I have referred, we are entirely within precedent. In that case the Legislative Assembly, on receipt of the message from the Council, passed a resolution in exactly the same form as the resolution I now propose.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: There is something peculiar—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has spoken.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I am speaking to a question of practice and privilege.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has no right to speak twice.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: We cannot both speak at the same time. In regard to questions of privilege and practice there is no rule as far as I am aware.

The PRESIDENT: There is no rule on the subject. The hon. member has spoken.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I am aware that I have spoken. Of course, if discussion on such a question is to be stopped, I must submit; but it is entirely a new procedure as far as my parliamentary experience goes.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Hon. gentlemen,—I think we are quite at liberty to go on with the discussion. The Postmaster-General can hardly think that, however opposed we may be to his views on the Land Bill, we are likely to treat him with discourtesy. I had prepared a motion in which I had included the names of six hon. members, leaving out the name of the Postmaster-General. The reason why I left out the hon. gentleman's name was based on the following passage from “May”—

“Each House appoints managers to represent it at the conference, and it is an ancient rule that the number of the Commons named for a conference are always double to those of the Lords.” It is not, however, the modern practice to specify the number of the managers for either House. The managers of the House which desires the conference are the members of the committee who drew up the reasons, to whom others are frequently added; and on the part of the other House,

they are usually selected from those members who have taken an active part in the discussion on the Bill, if present; or otherwise any members are named who happen to be in their places."

It is not customary or consistent with the principles which guide the appointment of a conference to name members as managers, unless their opinions coincide with the objects for which the conference is held.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The object of the conference is to bring about an amicable settlement of the difficulty.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I consider that by the passage I have quoted the hon. gentleman would be excluded, and only hon. gentlemen on this side enumerated as managers. I am sorry the hon. gentleman put his name down, for it places us on the horns of a dilemma. We do not like to do anything with which the hon. gentleman would be displeased: at the same time I for one would rather be without him on the conference, especially as in the Assembly all the members are chosen from the other side.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: All chosen from the other side in this respect: Two of them vote with the Opposition as a rule; but it is well known that they agree with the Bill as brought forward—that is to say, with the Premier and with the hon. gentleman, the Postmaster-General.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No. One of them wishes to see the Bill become law; but I do not know anything about the other.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Is it not reasonable to suppose that one was chosen for the same reason as the other? I am very sorry to have to move an amendment in this matter, but I cannot do otherwise.

The PRESIDENT: If the hon. member is going to move an amendment it will be on the next motion. This motion does not contain the names at all.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I beg to move—

That the free conference be held in Legislative Council Committee-room No. 1, at the hour 4.15 p.m. to-morrow, and that the managers thereof on behalf of the Council be the Hons. A. C. Gregory, F. H. Hart, W. Forrest, A. J. Thynne, T. L. Murray-Prior, and the Mover.

I may state that I shall throw the onus on the House of rejecting the list of managers, for the reasons I have already stated. I notice in the Legislative Assembly the appointment of two gentlemen who have been consistent opponents of the Government with regard to the Land Bill. One of them has been selected because he is desirous of seeing the Bill, in a reasonable shape according to his views, become the law of the land. I claim to be actuated by the same motives, and my object in wishing to attend the conference is to arrive at a mutual agreement with respect to the amendments in regard to which there has been a difficulty. The conference was initiated by a Government of which I am a member, so that I am in accord and sympathy with the object of the conference, and it is only reasonable that a person should be selected from one side who may be to a certain extent antagonistic to the majority of the Chamber, in order that his own side may know what is going on at the conference; otherwise there will be no means of those on my side of the House knowing what is done or how the proceedings of the conference are conducted. And seeing that the Assembly has included amongst its managers two gentlemen out of the

twelve, or one-sixth of the whole number, who are not supporters of the Government, it is not unreasonable or improper, but on the contrary, highly reasonable and proper and courteous, that one-sixth of the managers representing this Chamber should be one who has taken a most active part in the discussion of the measure on this side of the House.

The HON. W. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I hope I am in order in saying that I was in the other Chamber when the conference was moved for there last night.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman is inaccurate as usual. The conference was moved for this afternoon.

The HON. W. FORREST: At any rate the names were given last night; and the only member of the Opposition whose name was mentioned was Mr. Donaldson, and he was the only member thoroughly in accord with the Government on this measure.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

The HON. W. FORREST: And it was said that the usual practice when a conference was intended was to appoint only members in accord with the views of the Government—the views intended to be put forward.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

The HON. W. FORREST: On page 9 of *Hansard* it will be found the hon. Premier was asked a question, to which he gave this reply:—

"It is the usual practice for the managers of a conference to be members who will be supposed to advocate the views of the House they represent."

He then went on to give the names, and, after naming Mr. Donaldson, he said:—

"Mr. Donaldson is the only member from the other side of the House, but he is understood to be a member who desires to see the Bill become law."

Yesterday, in discussing the question of the constitutional privileges of this House, our Constitution Act was left out of the question altogether by the Postmaster-General, who never for one moment referred to it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Not true.

The HON. W. FORREST: And to-day, when we have no Standing Orders to guide us, and when our Standing Orders provide that under such conditions we follow the practice of the British Legislature, he entirely ignores the fact that "May" lays down distinctly the plan to be followed. For my own part I have no objection to the Postmaster-General being chosen; in fact, I suggested that he should be one of the managers, not knowing at the time that it would be contrary to the practice in England. I was ignorant of that until someone turned up the matter and showed me that I was making a suggestion that could not be carried out. We do not want to have at the conference a gentleman whose opinions do not want altering. The opinions of the Hon. Mr. Mein are the opinions of the Government, and he does not want to have his views altered. We want to take somebody to the conference, who possibly, upon listening to the arguments, may be induced to change his views. This House carried by a large majority motions that these amendments should be insisted upon. The Hon. Mr. Mein was opposed to these amendments, and I ask how will he carry out the views of this Chamber after having opposed them in the way he has done? I am very sorry the hon. gentleman has put us in this position, and I would be glad to see some way out of the difficulty.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am very sorry that the Hon. Mr. Mein has put me in a position in which I must do my duty. I came here prepared to

move the resolution, and the hon. gentleman, perhaps properly, in his place took the matter out of our hands. I should have moved other names, and it would then have been the duty of the hon. gentleman to stand up and move that his name should be inserted, if he thought he would be right in doing so, and it would have taken the onus off me. I am the last man to be discourteous to any gentleman. The only reason I have for objecting to the hon. gentleman is that supposing we go as managers for the Chamber headed by the Postmaster-General, as he is privileged to do—

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Certainly not.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I think so; the hon. gentleman is privileged to go in first as the representative of the Government in this Chamber.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No; the Hon. Mr. Gregory acted as spokesman manager on a former occasion, when the Postmaster-General was also present.

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: True; so he did, but then the Postmaster-General of that day was a very different gentleman to the Postmaster-General of the present day.

THE HON. J. TAYLOR: Name!

THE HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: There is no need for me to give the name. No great harm could be done by having the hon. gentleman who was then Postmaster-General at the conference. I think that if I should have the responsibility of conducting the managers from this Chamber, I should be very sorry indeed to see the Postmaster-General as my antagonist. I should feel myself very much out of the place I ought to take. I feel that as mover of the message yesterday it is my duty to take upon myself the post of senior manager; and hon. gentlemen can easily see what a dilemma it would place us in if the hon. gentleman was to manage from his own point of view. Those are my reasons for objecting to the hon. gentleman's motion, and it is not from any discourtesy to the hon. gentleman. Under the circumstances I can only move "That the name of the Hon. C. S. Mein be omitted from the motion with a view of inserting that of the Hon. W. F. Lambert."

THE HON. W. GRAHAM said: Hon. gentlemen,—I mean to support the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior, for the reason that I maintain that the men sent down from this House as managers are supposed to represent the majority in this House, and the ideas held by the majority in this House. If we send down the Postmaster-General we certainly will not be sending down a gentleman who represents the ideas of the majority in this House. The hon. gentleman has quoted two other cases in another place—Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Donaldson; but we know that those gentlemen although usually in opposition to the Government, on a great many questions on the Land Bill, at all events, are with the Government; and the Government in appointing them knew this very well, and knew that in all probability they would be useful members in arriving at some compromise. If the hon. gentleman had proposed a gentleman of wavering principles in the Chamber, who sometimes votes on one side and sometimes on the other, we might have accepted him.

THE HON. W. H. WALSH: Hear, hear!

THE HON. W. GRAHAM: But when the hon. gentleman himself, who has been the head and front of the offending in this House, so far as the Land Bill is concerned, and has used his

fullest efforts of eloquence and ability to carry every clause of it, except upon some very trifling points—when he proposes to make himself one of the managers from this House I cannot agree with him at all, and I do not believe his action is in accordance with parliamentary practice. As the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior has pointed out, it is distinctly stated in "May" that the persons to be appointed should be persons who have taken a prominent part in the discussion. It is true the hon. gentleman has taken a prominent part in the discussion here, but it has not been a prominent part in accordance with the ideas of the majority in this House, and that is what I understand is supposed to be represented at these conferences. I shall support the amendment.

THE HON. A. C. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—I think in this case the Postmaster-General has misapprehended the position of matters. I would not have objected to him in any way personally, but I do not think that his being at the conference would be attended with any satisfactory result. When we seek for information as to the constitution of a conference we find it is something in this way. The Legislative Assembly have, by a majority, affirmed a question, and the Legislative Council have, by a majority, negatived that question, and now a conference is sought with a view of arriving at some sort of agreement upon the points at issue. It would be utterly useless to select the managers for a conference in the same way as we are accustomed to select the members for a select committee to inquire into any questions—to select hon. members so as nearly as possible to balance the two sides. We then turn to what the best authorities recommended as the principle upon which the managers should be appointed, and we find that each House appoints managers to represent it at the conference. Then the question as to the number of managers to be appointed, and we find that they are to be selected from those members who have taken an active part in the discussion on the Bill, if they are present, or otherwise other members are appointed who happen to be in their place; and it is customary and consistent that members should not be appointed as managers unless their opinions coincide with the objects for which the conference is held.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Precisely so.

THE HON. A. C. GREGORY said: It is quite right, as the Postmaster-General has pointed out, that no member who is not anxious that a satisfactory conclusion should be arrived at should be present at the conference. Still that is not quite the object of the conference, but it is to get together the persons who have been strongest on either side in carrying the measure, or amendments through the House—to bring the extreme advocates of the different points at issue face to face in order that they may, if possible, compromise or adjust the differences existing between them. The conference is to save dealing with the question by sending messages backwards and forwards from House to House: they can be actually passed over the table at the conference, and business may be done in a few minutes in that way that would take days to transact by sending messages from one House to the other. By sending any hon. member from this Chamber who is in accord with the views expressed by the Assembly we would simply produce a species of negation. The hon. gentleman does not require to be convinced by any eloquence on the part of the managers from the Assembly; and therefore it follows that in the case of a conference only those who hold extreme opinions, and at variance

with those taken by the party carrying the measure through the other House, should be appointed as managers. On any other case I should be exceedingly happy to have the Postmaster-General with me in conducting any business between the two Houses, such as upon joint committees, and matters of that kind; but in this particular case I think it is quite contrary to the intentions and principles upon which the conference is framed. In voting against the Postmaster-General's name being allowed to stand as one of the managers from this Chamber, I do not take any personal objection to it; but I believe it would be a mistake for this House to place any member, who has been voting against the resolutions passed in this House, in the position of a manager at the conference from this House. What is wanted is that we should have persons holding extreme views upon the points at issue at the conference, and if they can be convinced by the arguments of managers from the other House, then there will not be the slightest difficulty in our coming to a conclusion. But if we send, as managers to the conference, gentlemen a considerable number of whom may have voted against the resolutions passed by this Chamber, they will, as a matter of course, agree with the managers from the other House; and when they come back, what will be the use of the agreement they have arrived at? It will simply be negatived. That shows the fallacy of including members who do not belong to the party who have carried the resolutions upon which an agreement is sought to be arrived at. In all ordinary cases this House should be represented by the Postmaster-General; but this is one of those extraordinary cases which are almost without precedent, and one which requires very careful looking into to see what is the condition of things. I know there is a little difficulty in the minds of many hon. gentlemen who have not perhaps read the authorities on the subject, as to what members are to do at the conference. I may state that the managers at the conference will have no vote, and for that reason there can be no objection to there being double the number of managers on behalf of the Assembly than there are on behalf of the Council. They simply have the power to offer suggestions upon certain points upon the amendments now under discussion between the two Houses. They will have to keep within the four corners of the amendments which have not been agreed to, and they cannot go beyond amending the amendments which have not been accepted. They cannot, I apprehend, introduce any new matter, or in any way alter anything that has been agreed to. What they have to do is simply to try whether, by mutual concession, they can bring the two parties—that is, the two extreme sides of the parties—to some mutual agreement. If the Postmaster-General will look at the matter in that way he will see that there is no personal objection to him, but really the desire is that he should not be placed in the awkward position of a Minister leading a House in which the majority of the members held very different opinions from what are held by the majority in the other House. I shall support the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior's amendment for the reasons I have stated.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—Just a word in reply. I—I think in common with a large majority of the people—fondly hoped that this proposed conference would bring about satisfactory results. But, if I may be guided by the utterances that have fallen from hon. gentlemen who wish to see the managers of the conference appointed on the basis represented by the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior, there is no chance of any such satisfactory results being brought about. The intentions

of those hon. gentlemen who have spoken on the other side simply amount to this: that no person who is not an irreconcilable should have a seat amongst the managers.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: Nothing of the kind!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I say that the contention of hon. gentlemen on the other side, if it means anything, amounts simply to this: That no person should have a seat on the board of managers who is not an irreconcilable,—who is not prepared to make no concession whatever.

The Hon. W. FORREST: Certainly not.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I say that is the only natural conclusion that can be drawn from their statements. It is proposed that the managers of the conference for this House should be composed of members who have been members of "the solid vote"; upon whom all argument and reason appear to have been quite thrown away; who came into this Chamber with amendments in their pockets which had been discussed and settled out of doors, and for which they voted solidly night after night. On many occasions they did not listen to arguments at all.

The Hon. J. F. McDOUGALL: Yes, they did.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: They did not. Many of them went out of the Chamber and left almost empty benches while the discussion was going on.

The Hon. W. FORREST: Certainly not.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I say yes. Last night was a notable instance of it. As soon as the clauses relating to the pastoral tenants had been disposed of, there were not more than four members in the Chamber, and only two on the other side.

The Hon. W. FORREST: One on your own side.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: There were three or four on my side, but that is immaterial. What I have stated is a fact, and it has been commented on. I claim to have as much interest in the settlement of this matter, and to be as desirous of bringing about an amicable adjustment of it as any man in the country, or as any member of this House. Of what have hon. gentlemen to be afraid if I attend the conference? I will simply be one amongst five irreconcilables. I can only say that my real desire to go down there arises from the idea that possibly I might be of assistance in bringing about a settlement. I know pretty well the feeling of the House; I know the feelings of many friends here; I think I know to a very great extent the feeling of the country upon the subject, and I claim to come within the description mentioned in "May"—that I am "a person having an opinion coinciding with the objects for which the conference is held." The objects for which the conference is to be held are, as I have stated, "with a view of arriving at a mutual agreement with respect to the said amendments." I wish to see a mutual agreement come to between the two Houses with respect to those amendments. I do not want anybody to sacrifice what may appear to be a matter of principle; but I say that there are points, even in these different issues, on which one House may give way, and others upon which the other House may give way; so that we may arrive at something like mutual concession. Because, after all, we are bound to make concessions occasionally in the conduct of parliamentary affairs. There may be differences of opinion on the same subject, but as long as there is no matter of principle involved, there must be

concessions made. Under these circumstances, I maintain that I should be allowed to take my share in the conference, but I shall leave it to the House to decide. As I have said, I will not break my heart if I am left out, but I shall consider it a most extraordinary proceeding, especially in view of the only precedent we have for our guidance, and of the course adopted by the Government in the selection of the majority of managers in this House from the Opposition.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Hon. gentlemen—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman has spoken.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: With the permission of the House, Mr. President, I may be allowed—

The PRESIDENT: It is very irregular. Especially after the mover of the motion has replied, it is exceedingly disorderly for an hon. member who has spoken before, to get up to again address the House. If it were permitted discussion would be endless.

The HON. G. KING: Hon. gentlemen,—The object of the conference is conciliation—to come to some satisfactory understanding upon those points with regard to which we differ from the Legislative Assembly. If the conference consist entirely of people of extreme opinions, and who will adhere to them, no satisfactory result will ever be attained, and the conference, after meeting, will be dissolved, and there will be no further progress made. I think the appointment of the Hon. Mr. Mein would be a great advantage in many respects. Although the majority of the House may hold one set of views I think that the minority ought to be represented likewise, and I shall be prepared to vote for the retention of the name of the Hon. Mr. Mein as one of the managers of the conference.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER said: Hon. gentlemen—I have no intention of giving a silent vote on this occasion. I shall vote for the original motion for the very reason that has been given by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down—Mr. King. If the intention is to bring about a reconciliation between the two Houses it is entirely useless to send the two extremes to meet.

The HON. W. GRAHAM: Extremes meet.

The HON. J. C. HEUSSLER: In this case they are opposites; they are parallel lines, and it is impossible for parallel lines to meet. My hon. friend, Mr. Murray-Prior, said that if the hon. the Postmaster-General is appointed he will still act as Postmaster-General; but I say that he will occupy an entirely different position. He has told us, and I thoroughly believe, that he is desirous that the Bill should pass; and consequently, as has been very appropriately remarked, he may be the means of bringing about a settlement between the two parties. I have had long experience in this House of my hon. friend, Mr. Mein, and he has the name of not being an extreme party man. Every one of us is convinced that he is not that, and consequently he may be the more likely to bring a reconciliation about. Therefore there is nothing more to say upon the subject. I shall vote for the original motion. I hope that hon. gentlemen will take into consideration the remarks of the Hon. Mr. King and myself, and, if possible, come to the same conclusion. For my own part, I am convinced that it will be a great advantage if the hon. the Postmaster-General is on the conference. And this conference, after all, will not be final. It will have no veto on the action of the House in any way; and consequently if hon. gentlemen are not satisfied with the result, they will

be able to go back to their old views and vote exactly as they have done already. Then the fate of the Bill will be quite different.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—I think the Hon. Mr. Heussler has shown great wit and judgment in associating himself with the Hon. Mr. King in regard to this matter—in fact, I am so much struck with the hon. gentleman's lecture or remarks to a body of gentlemen like those I see before me that I am a little bewildered, and I think that some little time should intervene before there is any further expression of opinion on the subject, so that we may collect our senses and understand what the hon. gentleman is talking about, what he desires to instruct us in—what he desires to instruct Englishmen in about their Constitution and constitutional practices. I therefore suggest that the debate be adjourned, so that we may recover our senses, and that the hon. member may explain himself.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: Hon. gentlemen—

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I moved the adjournment of the debate.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman suggested it; he did not move it.

Question put.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: Hon. gentlemen,—It struck me exactly as it struck the Hon. Mr. Walsh that invariably the Hon. Mr. Heussler follows in the wake of the Hon. Mr. King. He did the same thing a little while ago, and said, "I am sure, after what I have said, and the Hon. Mr. King has said, there is nothing more to be said." That is just his style, and he wants to lead the House into the same way on this occasion; but I think he will find that the House is not so easily led as all that. I am very sorry indeed that my hon. friend the Postmaster-General should have lost his temper in this debate.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Not at all.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: I never saw him display so much passion as he did this evening, and I am very sorry for it, because it is bad for the House, and bad for his health—in fact, I drew the attention of my hon. friend to it, and he said "Good gracious me!" That is the answer I got. If we look at the names of the managers of the conference appointed by the other House we will see that they have been most carefully selected. First of all there is Mr. Griffith, of course. Then there is Mr. Dutton; we know his opinion of the Bill—that he won't move a peg unless he is forced to. Mr. Miles—we know perfectly well his ideas and his stubborn nature. Then Mr. Jordan; we know very well that he will not move a peg unless he is told to do so. Mr. Kellett—I think we all know pretty well how he will act in the matter. Mr. Kates, the same. Mr. Donaldson is supposed to be an Oppositionist, but is greatly in favour of the Bill. Mr. Aland—he is a follower of Mr. Griffith to all intents and purposes, and will go whichever way he is told. Mr. Grimes—he is another; Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, another. Mr. Ferguson—I believe he votes sometimes with the Government. These two gentlemen—Mr. Donaldson and Mr. Ferguson—are supposed to be Opposition members; and then we come to Mr. Foote. We know that he will not move one iota unless he is ordered to do so. I think, looking at these names, it is quite right that we should be very careful what names we put on the list here, seeing that there are two to one. I feel aggrieved that the Hon. Mr. Mein should have put his own name on the list of proposed managers for this House, because I am certain that no hon. member means to be discourteous

to him in any possible way. There is no doubt that had the Hon. Mr. Griffith proposed the names of other hon. members in the other House, say the leaders of the Opposition, there would have been some sense in it. He would have shown a conciliatory spirit; but he has not done so; he has put on men all of extreme views with regard to the Bill, and as he has chosen men who are violent opponents of our amendments, I do not see that we can take any other course than that which is now proposed.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—The speech of the hon. the Postmaster-General almost made me feel—what I am sure other members of this House must have felt—that if he were allowed to be one of the managers of the proposed conference he would take with him a spirit of discord, impart it into the management, and nothing whatever could be done. We have accepted the management, and we are doing all we possibly can to make the Land Bill a good one for the country. The hon. gentleman has often imputed motives to hon. members on this side of the House; but all I can say is that I, for one, have no motives. I am of no political party, but as one of the oldest residents in this colony—as one of the oldest members of Parliament at present in either House—I do look to the welfare of the whole of this colony, and not to any particular portion of it; and also to the settlement of those who will be the backbone of the country hereafter—the farmers and selectors. I do wish that the hon. gentleman would stand up like a man.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I am as good a man as you are!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I do wish the hon. gentleman would stand up and give utterance to the sentiments which he really feels, and not lose his temper in the way he has done. I regret very much that I have had to take the action I have taken in this matter. The hon. gentleman must see that it has been necessary for me to do so. It has been one of the most unpleasant things that has happened to me for a long time. I have a liking for the hon. gentleman, and I regret very much the course which I have to take; but I do not wish to give any offence, and I trust the hon. gentleman will not take what I have done as an offence from me in any private way, because it is not so intended. But from the manner in which the hon. gentleman has spoken, and the temper he has shown, I feel perfectly satisfied that his name should be left out of the list of managers to represent this Chamber. I am certain that if he is appointed, the object for which the conference is to be appointed—namely, the bringing about of an agreement between the two Houses—will not be carried out; whereas, if we meet the other House we will be free to speak what we believe, to converse with one another, and to a certain extent to argue upon the points at issue between us. I trust that there will be no very great argument, but I say that, as members of this House, we must adhere to our principles. There has never been at any time in the history of Queensland an occasion upon which this Chamber has been placed in the position in which we now stand. We are here, and must assert our dignity; we must show that we have a right to do our duty, and that we intend to do it, whatever happens. If we do not do so, what trust can the country ever have in this Chamber? We had better be done away with altogether. I totally deny the imputations of the hon. the Postmaster-General. There may or may not be a conciliation

arrived at. If there is a course that we can take without running the risk of losing the respect of this House and of the country, I shall be one of the first to advocate it; but, on the other hand, if we have in any way to sacrifice the dignity of our position, I should be one of the foremost in insisting upon the amendments that we have made. I wish the hon. gentleman would withdraw his name, and not make members vote against their wishes with regard to it.

The HON. W. GRAHAM: Hon. gentlemen,—In speaking to the question of adjournment, I can only say that I, more strongly than before, consider it undesirable that the Postmaster-General should be one of the managers of the conference. Since I spoke last the decided temper he has shown renders him utterly unfit to be a manager of that conference, which he himself has called a meeting for the purpose of conciliation. He has gone out of his way to use unpleasant epithets with regard to hon. members of this House. He has called them irreconcilables; he had also called them a solid majority—which no doubt they are—so solid, that when they sat upon him, they probably flattened him out. The hon. gentleman spoke of members deserting these benches to attend to their own business; but I deny that any Bill has had better attention from members on both sides than the Land Bill. He looked on it as matter of reproach that members should talk over the Bill outside, and obtain all the information they could with a view to making use of it in discussing the Bill; and no doubt the hon. gentleman would have been delighted if they had only listened to what he said and found themselves unprepared to reply to his arguments. As to the benches being empty, the hon. gentleman need not have said anything about that. On more than one occasion, when there have been only two members on that side, I and other hon. gentlemen have withdrawn, not for the purpose of taking refreshments, but because the contrast was so great between the majority on this side and the minority on that.

Question—That this debate be now adjourned—put and negatived.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put, and the House divided:—

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Question resolved in the negative.

Question—That the name of the Hon. W. F. Lambert be inserted—put and passed.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the resolutions were ordered to be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly with message in the usual form.

QUESTION.

The HON. W. H. WALSH asked the Postmaster-General—

1. Are the Government aware that the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria have agreed to lower the rate of telegraph charges between their two colonies by 50 per cent. from the 1st January next?

2. Do the Government propose to make similar arrangements between this colony and those Southern ones?—If so, to what extent have negotiations between the respective colonies been carried out?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL replied—

1. Yes: the agreement was entered into at the Postal Conference which was held in Sydney in May, 1882.

2. No negotiations have taken place between the Governments of this and the southern colonies with respect to a reduction of the charges for intercolonial messages. This Government do not at present purpose to ask the Governments of those colonies to make arrangements for any such reduction, but the matter will be taken into consideration at an early date.

DEFENCE BILL.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the President left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider the Legislative Assembly's message of date 15th instant.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Committee agree to the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly in the Council's amendment. It probably made more clear what the clause introduced by the Hon. Mr. Thynne was intended to convey.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said he had no objection to the amendment, but he thought it a little bit of verbiage which the Assembly need not have put into the clause.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly on their amendment. The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, with a message in the terms of the report.

NORTH COAST RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The PRESIDENT read a message from the Legislative Assembly, forwarding for the approval of the Council, the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast Railway from 6 miles 66 chains 30 links, on the Sandgate Railway, to Caboolture, 24 miles 63 chains 70 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Monday, the 15th December, 1884.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: With the permission of the House—and I should like to be able to do it because it will facilitate business—I beg to move without notice—

1. That the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast Railway from 6 miles 66 chains 30 links, on the Sandgate Railway, to Caboolture, 24 miles 63 chains 70 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly be referred to a select committee, in pursuance of the 111th Standing Order.

2. That such committee consist of the following members, namely:—Mr. A. C. Gregory, Mr. A. J. Thynne, Mr. A. Raff, Mr. W. H. Walsh, and the Mover.

The PRESIDENT: The motion can only be put with the consent of the House.

Question put and passed.

MEMBERS EXPENSES BILL—SECOND READING.

On the Order of the Day being read for the second reading of this Bill,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am not quite sure what course ought to be pursued in this case. There was a proposition carried that this Bill be read a second time this day.

The PRESIDENT: That was yesterday.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Yesterday? I am not quite sure as to the practice. I do not know whether it ought not to be formally read a second time by the Clerk, as the debate was practically concluded by the decision that the Bill was to be read a second time. I do not say this with a view of avoiding

discussion, but in order that our proceedings should be regular. If the Bill is read formally a second time the discussion may take place on my motion that the committal of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for some future day. So that those gentlemen who had intended to speak on the second reading would have an opportunity of ventilating their views just the same as if the Bill was before us on the second reading. If they desire to shelve the consideration of it altogether they may do so just as effectually on that motion as on the motion for the second reading.

The PRESIDENT said: I may say that this matter has already been brought under my notice. The motion, when given to the Clerk, was to have made the second reading of the Bill an Order of the Day for that day six months. I must say that the Clerk is not to blame in any way in the matter, as, as he received the resolution from the Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior, it was that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months; and inadvertently the motion was passed that the Bill be read a second time that day week. There is no question whatever as to the practice. Similar cases have occurred in the House of Commons, and I can produce the authorities for hon. members if it is thought necessary. On one occasion something of the same sort took place there. There was a motion made that the Bill before the House should be read that day three months. It was never anticipated that Parliament would be in session that time. However, it so happened that Parliament was in session, and the question was mooted that the Bill should be read a second time, as the Postmaster-General had suggested in this case, as a formal motion. It was ruled that the greater time included the less, and the question was that it simply stood an Order of the Day for that day. The question now is that the Bill be read a second time.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said: Hon. gentlemen will remember that the Payment of Members Bill has come before this House on more than one occasion previous to this. This Bill is put in a different way, but I look upon it entirely as a Payment of Members Bill. The Bill for the payment of members was brought in in another place in 1882, and I for one was very pleased to see that that Bill was negatived on division by 28 to 21, plainly showing that the feeling of the representatives of the people had very much altered. It somehow has always been my part to move the second reading of these Payment of Member's Bills for this day six months. The fact is, that upon one occasion when I was in the Government, I was persuaded, wrongly I believe, that I should bring a Bill of this kind forward when it came with the message from His Excellency, and that if I did not do so, it would be unfair to the interests of the representatives of the people in the Legislative Assembly. I entirely differed from that, and I spoke against the Bill on the second reading. Every hon. gentleman, with one exception, in this Chamber spoke against the Bill; but, unfortunately for me, a gentleman whom I thought I could depend upon, called "Divide," and I had to divide upon my Bill. At that time, or shortly afterwards, when I had an opportunity, I rose in my place in the House and offered an explanation, and I then said that, should the Bill or any similar Bill at any future time come before us, I would vote against it. I now intend to fulfil my pledge, and I trust that hon. gentlemen will assist me in doing so. I have always been against payment of members, because I believe it to be one of the worst things that could happen to the country. It is very true, as the

Postmaster-General has stated, that payment of members is in vogue in other places; but very likely the same conditions do not exist there as exist here, and it might not have the baneful results in those places which I believe a Bill of this sort would have in this country. There has been no dearth of candidates to represent constituencies in this colony, and I do not see why we should alter the present law simply because members would like to have their expenses paid. I allow that in the country there may be some reason why certain expenses of members should be paid. It seems very hard that men should have to come from so far at their own expense, and spend so much time, and, if I could do it without going against my principles, I might concede that; but I feel certain that if once we agree to anything of the sort, and insert the thin end of the wedge in this case, so surely will we have regular payment of members; and I think it is far better for the country at large that the Bill should be shelved, and that members should not be paid any expenses, than that we should run the risk of establishing regular payment of members. I believe that members of Parliament should be able to pay their own expenses. Human nature was the same everywhere; and a needy man would do what a man who was not needy would scorn to do. There might be some noble characters—exceptions to this rule—but in this case the exceptions prove the rule. Another reason I have for objecting is, that a member of Parliament may become a Minister—a needy man, perhaps, with a large family, might become a Minister, and the emolument attached would be an inducement to him to remain a member of the Ministry when he ought really to resign. I believe the introduction of this system would bring up a number of political adventurers and stump-orators. I know the Postmaster-General takes the opposite view, but, as far as I know human nature, I believe that would be the case. I need not go any further; the few words I have spoken will show my views on the subject. I think the payment of members is wrong in principle and is bad in practice, and I therefore move the second reading of this Bill stand an Order of the Day for this day six months.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE: Hon. gentlemen,—I do not propose to go into the general question of the advisability or propriety of payment of members, but there is something to me very repugnant in the Bill now before us. Here we have gentlemen, members of Parliament, voting to pass a Bill to put money into their own pockets. I think that is an incorrect proceeding; and if we affirm it I think it will be to a certain extent an indecent proceeding. Whether it is desirable or not in the long run to have payment of members is a question upon both sides of which much might be said. But whatever might ultimately happen, I shall never give my consent to the passing of a Bill by which any one branch of the Legislature or Parliament proposes to put into their own pockets public moneys which might be required for very many more useful purposes.

The Hon. J. F. McDougall said: Hon. gentlemen,—I cannot allow this question to go without saying a few words upon it. I rise for the purpose of saying that I am entirely opposed to the principle of payment of members. The country has never suffered from any want of members in another place, and I believe the best men have been found. I think the honour of the position is quite sufficient; and if a man cannot afford to remain there without being paid, I say, let him retire, and I have not the least doubt others will be found willing to take his place. I

am entirely opposed to this, and I always have been, and I do not think it would be at all conducive to introducing a better class of men. On the contrary, I believe it would have a very different effect. I shall support the amendment.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—I cannot conceive how any man who loves his country better than himself can support a Bill of this kind. To me it carries with it its own ignominy, and its own punishment. To think that hon. members in another Chamber could be accused of delaying, lengthening, or suspending a session because it pecuniarily suits them so to do; to think that they should have undertaken duties, or been pleased for one moment to fight for and struggle for and undertake duties because they are connected with pecuniary considerations; to think, in fact, that Englishmen can be bribed and paid to come and do the duties peculiarly applicable to the representatives of the people of the colony—not the hirelings of the colony—to think that they can be brought to do that is utterly beyond my comprehension. This question of payment of members has been over and over again brought before the people of Queensland; and in every instance where it has been presented to the people of Queensland, I find it has only been when the representatives of the people have found themselves securely ensconced in Parliament, and in every instance, so far as my recollection goes, the people of the colony, as a whole, have violently resisted such a measure. No Parliament that I can remember has ever been returned, pledged to support, as a majority, the principle of payment of members. The present one has not been so returned, and it is useless to say it has. I can easily understand when hon. members are safely ensconced in Parliament, that they may feel how very nice and pleasant it would be for them to be paid by the State. It is perhaps an invidious and unpleasant point to take up, but I ask hon. gentlemen to cast their eyes back over the members of Parliament during the last fifteen or twenty years, whomsoever they might be, who received pay for their services, and who have been employed by parties on either side, for the Government or the Opposition—and I say, are those the kind of men we wish to see encouraged to appear in our Legislative Assembly? Will hon. members take that view of the question, and look back at those whom we have often despised and treated with contempt almost when we have met them; and I ask, do we wish to see the Parliament of Queensland flooded with men of that kind? I say we do not.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: But we are in danger of doing that if we make the position of a member of Parliament an office of State emolument. I say we will be inducing every ne'er-do-weel in a district, and every wood-and-water-joe in the towns to get up, who could by claptrap and stump-oratory command support; we will be inducing them, I say, to come in, and not only represent constituents no better than themselves, but they will have the destinies of this young and fine colony in their hands to do as they list, and their list will be to make it pay themselves. I cannot conceive any body of Englishmen inheriting all the institutions, feelings, and practices of glorious old England—I cannot believe that those men—transplanted to a country where their prospects are better, and where the emoluments of their own labour are much greater—can come down and ask Parliament to supplement their emoluments, and make them the recipients of a kind of public charity. There is another question we should take into considera-

tion. I believe it has never been proposed before in any Parliament that the persons introducing and carrying a Bill of this kind have demanded that it shall come into operation during their tenure of office. Every Bill of this kind that I remember has, at all events, had this kind of palliative or virtue implanted in it that it was to be for our successors in the succeeding Parliament. No such condition is provided for in this Bill. It is a brazen and personal effort and attempt by hon. gentlemen in another place to vote for themselves moneys which they are to receive for their services, and they have taken advantage of the peculiar political position and exigencies of the Ministry to do these things. I think this is a case in point in which this Chamber, at any rate, should show its manliness, its dignity, and its independence, by raising its voice and giving its vote against such a Bill. Then again there is the argument that it will not apply to this Chamber, and God forbid that it should.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The HON. W. H. WALSH: The argument has been used that this principle should not apply in this Chamber, because the members in it have a life-interest in the positions they occupy. If that is the only objection why members of this Chamber should not be paid, it could be overcome by limiting the operations of this Bill to a certain time—to one year, three years, or five years; but even that has not been done in the other Chamber. It will go on for all time, so that the objection which is raised against members of this Chamber being paid is defective. I suppose there is no use in trying to induce the Postmaster-General to abandon the Bill; but I trust there will be such a vote in this Chamber as will again, on behalf of the people of this colony, show, at any rate, that our representatives are not to be paid for and bought.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON: Hon. gentlemen,—I must say that the question dealt with by this Bill is one to which I have given some little consideration and thought. I was very much impressed indeed by the speech of the hon. the Postmaster-General in introducing it. My hon. friend Mr. Thynne has met the Bill with the assertion that the Legislative Assembly are voting money for themselves; but I fail to see how they could vote the money in any other way than by this Bill. Are the Legislative Assembly to go to the people on their bended knees with a petition and request them to give them £10,000? No! The Legislative Assembly are the custodians of the public purse, and so long as they keep their draft upon that public purse within moderate limits I do not see how the public can find fault with them. The allowances sought to be imposed by this Bill seem to me, hon. gentlemen, to be fair and reasonable. We, sitting in this Chamber, are not in a position to say exactly that they are unreasonable. What is our work, as regards the legislation of the colony, compared with the work of the Legislative Assembly? What is the work of any individual member of the Council in active work compared with the work of an active member of the Legislative Assembly?

The HON. W. H. WALSH: A great deal more.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON: It is not one tith.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Bunkum.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON: I think I have said sufficient, at all events, to answer that part of the argument. The Hon. Mr. Walsh said that they might prolong the session. I do not think that is a worthy remark for any hon. member to make. I do not think the members of

the Assembly would dream of doing such a thing in order to put money into their own pockets. I think too highly of them; and considering that the total amount they are to receive is put down at £200, I think that is a sufficient answer to the argument. I find, sir, that if I am wrong in the view I take, I err in very good company. The principle sought to be brought into law in this colony is the principle in force in all civilised States at the present day. One of the exceptions is England; but about 400 years ago the principle of the payment of members' expenses was in force there. It was in force, I have no doubt, in consequence of the badness of the roads and the difficulties of travelling in that time; but, by-and-by, as population and wealth increased, the representation of the country fell into the hands of a few, and ultimately it was done away with. We know that now the men who hold seats in the British House of Commons are amongst the wealthiest commoners of the land, and we know that, as a rule, the expense of attaining a seat in that House is often almost ruinous. That, I think, cannot be denied. Therefore no analogy can be drawn from England. The members of the English House of Commons require no payment; they are only too glad to get there without payment. What harm is there in the payment of members? The Hon. Mr. Murray-Prior said that any man ought to be only too happy to serve his country for the honour of it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: So he ought.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON: Then I would ask the hon. the President, sitting in his chair, whether he ought not to be satisfied to preside over the deliberations of this House without payment. Upon the same principle, why should he not? On the other hand, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly might as well be asked why he should not preside over its deliberations for the same reason.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: He would be very glad to.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON: I have listened to what I will not call arguments, but to what I will call declamation on this subject; but the result of my reading and consideration of it is that I shall vote for this measure. I do so fearlessly, because I have a perfect right to assert my opinion upon the question.

The HON. A. H. WILSON: Hon. gentlemen,—It was not my intention to speak to-night, but after the speech we have just heard from the Hon. Mr. Macpherson I think it is necessary that I should say something, because I intend to vote in a very different way from that hon. gentleman. There is a good deal to be said with regard to this Payment of Members Bill; there is something that I agree with, but there is a great deal that I do not agree with. Were this Bill brought in for the purpose of paying members coming from a distance—from the far North for instance—from Normanton downwards to Maryborough—members who have to leave their business and place other people in charge of it, who have to keep house there, and who must live here in hotels or clubs at considerable expense—I could see some reason and sense in it. If it were proposed simply to pay the expenses they are put to for horse or carriage hire or steamer fare, and a certain allowance for the time they are required to remain in Brisbane, there would not be so much objection; but it is a very different thing when it is proposed to pay members who reside in Brisbane, or the suburbs of Brisbane, who are really at no expense whatever, but who have a certain amount of pleasure in attending the House and a certain amount of honour that

attaches to the position. If they are in Brisbane it is an advertisement for them in their business. There is not the slightest doubt about that. The man who is a member of Parliament, if he is in business in Brisbane, is noted and known all over the colony as "Mr. So-and-so"; his name goes forth to the country, and it is a certain advertisement for him. And to say that that man should be paid the same as a man from Maryborough, Rockhampton, or elsewhere, who has to leave his business and keep two houses, is going a little too far. If provision were made simply for the payment of the expenses of members residing at a distance I should vote for it at once, but to include members living in Brisbane is something radically wrong, and I shall vote against it. I do not think it is right to include members living in Brisbane, who are put to no expense, and who gain all the benefits that accrue to the position of a member of Parliament, and there are many of them. The Hon. Mr. Macpherson has compared the work of members in the other Chamber with the work of hon. members here, but I do not see any difference at all. Members from a distance have to attend here at a certain time; they have to stay the same time in Brisbane, and devote the same time to the discharge of their duties in doing the best they can for the benefit of the country. With regard to what was done 400 years ago in England, I think we had better let that alone. I do not think my hon. friend Mr. Macpherson made much out of it. The hon. gentleman touched upon one point in which I think he went a little astray. He said, why should not our President discharge the duties of his office for the honour of the thing? But there is something more than that to be considered. Our President has an amount of work to do which few people are aware of, and which you want to be in the position to find it out. I am sure that the President would say that he has sufficient work to do to occupy him from 10 to 4 o'clock—the same as any bank clerk in town—for, at least, four or five days in the week. It is a very different position from that of hon. members who come down here and give their time from 4 o'clock to 8 a few nights in the week. I did not intend to speak at all, and should not have done so only there is something in the Bill that I do not like at all, and that is the payment of members all round. As I have said, I should vote for the payment of the expenses of members coming from a distance; but I decline to vote for the payment of members who live about Brisbane, who are put to no expense, but have all the pleasure and honour and perquisites attending the position of a member of Parliament.

The Hon. F. H. HART said: Hon. gentlemen,—I wish to say a few words, not many, on this subject. I have always consistently opposed this measure whenever it has come before the House since I have had the honour of a seat in it since 1872, and my opinion respecting it has not changed in the slightest degree. I shall therefore oppose it now. I listened attentively to the remarks of the hon. the Postmaster-General in introducing the measure, and I am sorry to say that I cannot agree with him that the system has worked well in the southern colonies. My experience of it is limited to visits down south—to Melbourne; and my observations of the working of the system there have been anything but satisfactory. I should be very sorry to see it introduced into Queensland. I entirely dissent from the remarks of the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty, and quite agree with those of the Hon. Mr. Walsh in hoping that the day is far distant when it will be attempted to pay members of this House. If such were done, we, being nominee members, would become State pensioners for

life. Rather than become a pensioner of the State in that way, I should resign my seat. With regard to the members of the Legislative Assembly, I, for one, think that those gentlemen should not be called upon to give their services to the public for nothing. But I object most strongly to the State paying for them. Let them be paid by their constituents, if they are worth payment, for there can be no better judges of what members are worth than their own constituents. If members are paid by their own constituents there will be some ground for the remarks made by the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty with regard to the will of the people and the voice of the country demanding payment of members. There can be no better test of the abilities of a member than his appreciation by his constituents; because if he is idle and good for nothing they will think little of him, whereas if he is a good member they will recognise his worth better than can be done by the colony as a whole. It is all very well to talk about the will of the people and the voice of the country; but those hon. members seem to overlook the fact that there is a large minority among the representatives of the people, and even men amongst the majority, who disapprove of payment of members. I repeat that I have always opposed payment of members, and I shall oppose it now.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: I do not wish to give a silent vote on this question. Even the Postmaster-General was not able, in introducing the Bill, to bring forward any fresh arguments on the subject; and though he is in the habit of accusing other people of inaccuracy, I believe that in his own speech on this question he was himself a little inaccurate. He said that the members of every Parliament on the continent of Europe were paid.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I said nothing of the sort.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: The hon. gentleman both said so and is reported to have said so in *Hansard*.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I must correct the hon. gentleman. I said I believed that in all the States of Europe except Great Britain, possessing free institutions, payment of members was the rule. I mentioned, as instances, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, and stated that in the German Empire, notwithstanding the powerful opposition of Prince Bismarck, payment of members had recently been made the law.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: I understood the hon. gentleman to refer to all the Parliaments of Europe; but Italy is one exception, and I believe it has not a bad Parliament either. The Hon. Mr. Macpherson has taken us back about 400 years, but he did not do it in a straightforward way, or else his information is not very accurate. Although members were paid then, it was not by the people but by the shires they represented. I was in great hopes that the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty would have been here to-night, because I should have liked to hear him again stating his reasons for not supporting this Bill. His reasons are, I believe, that the Bill makes no provision for the payment of the Council, but if he had been present and had brought forward a motion to include members of the Council, I have no hesitation in saying that he would not have got three members to vote with him. I am certain the Postmaster-General would not have so voted.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: You may be making a mistake there.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: I am sure he would not. Possibly some member on that side entirely deaf to argument might vote for the motion,

Possibly the Hon. Mr. Turner, who is a man of most irregular habits—so far as his attendance in this House is concerned—might come in, and not knowing the nature of the motion, vote for it by mistake; and possibly the Hon. Mr. Walsh, who has most sound and constitutional convictions, but who, as a rule, votes directly against them, might support the hon. member. Those are the only three members that would support such a motion. One of the arguments made use of in favour of payment of members is that constituencies will be able to return local members; but I think they can always find local members. The truth is that Brisbane lawyers, for their own purposes, wish to represent constituencies, and, as the Hon. Mr. Wilson said, it is a good advertisement for them. They go up, having a certain amount of political influence and also a good share of the "gift of the gab," and they put the local men out altogether. It is of very little use going into the arguments on this question, which have already been worn threadbare. I have always opposed payment of members, and I shall always continue to hold the same principles. If men cannot be found for the honour—because it is an honour—to represent the different places, then those places can be hardly worth representing.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Hon. gentlemen,—I shall vote against the Bill; and I would even go further, and say that no man has a right to be in either House unless he has an income sufficient to enable him to do so without requiring any payment for his services. It is impossible for a man to be perfectly straightforward and act in accordance with his honest convictions if he has to bow down to anyone in the House or out of it. It has been stated, both here and elsewhere, that we had no right to vote on the Land Bill, and that we voted for our own interests; but I should like to know what the members of the other House were doing when they voted for payment of members. That was a far more direct way of furthering their own interests than can be said of us in voting for the Land Bill, for the amendments we made may never become law, and if they do it will be a very long time before they benefit us. I do not see why we should be called "old women" and "fossils." We have shown this time, at any rate, that we hardly come under the denomination of "fossils," and I am glad that such a stand has been made on the Land Bill. If we are fossils we are not frightened by those who call us fossils; we are not to be bounced into accepting measures of which we do not approve. The Postmaster-General has several times made use of the term "solid vote" in reference to members on this side during the discussion on the Land Bill; in fact he has been out of temper all the time the Bill has been before us. I agree with what an hon. member said in regard to members who have to travel 500 or 600 miles being allowed something for expenses. I understand that all the members of the Assembly are allowed steamer fares between Brisbane and any other port in the colony once a year besides the privilege of travelling free on the railways at any time; and I do not see why the members of the Council should not be allowed the same advantages. I am rather sorry that the Bill has come on to-night, because the forces of the Postmaster-General are so very small that we shall beat him by a very large majority.

The Hon. W. D. BOX: Hon. gentlemen,—I intend to vote in favour of the postponement of the measure, though I do not object to the principle of payment of members. The idea that a man should be paid for the work he does must commend itself to all Englishmen; and if the Bill had provided that payment of

members should commence from the beginning of the next Parliament, I should probably have given it my support, but I cannot vote for a measure by which people are actually voting money into their own pockets. I believe that the voice of the people will yet demand payment of members, but for the reasons I have given I shall vote for the postponement of this Bill till this day six months.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY: Hon. gentlemen,—A good deal has been said about the difficulty of getting suitable men to represent the various constituencies unless they are paid; but the fact remains that the constituencies best represented are those whose members not only receive no payment, but spend considerable sums of money in order that they may secure their return to Parliament. But even supposing payment of members to be desirable, would it not be better that the constituencies wishing to have their members should pay them out of their own funds, than that the whole colony should be taxed for the purpose? The majority of members might be quite content to do the work without payment; and the proper way would be to ascertain what constituencies really wished to have their members paid. That could be best done, not by charging the expenses on the consolidated revenue, but on the divisional boards' and municipal councils' rates. They would then have an opportunity of expressing their opinion as to whether it is desirable to pay their members, and also what they consider their members are worth. At present they no doubt think that if they can get members paid out of the consolidated revenue the members will spend the money at the elections, quite forgetting the fact that the money must come out of their own pockets in the first instance—because it would not be a direct tax. If payment of members came into force according to the plan he proposed, those constituencies whose members performed their duties gratuitously would have a great advantage. And even supposing, for instance, that in a constituency there is a clever and popular man whom the people may be anxious to send to Parliament—even then they would not be more heavily taxed by paying his expenses out of the municipal rates than if they were paid out of the general revenue. I therefore think that if the Assembly are desirous of adopting a system of payment of members they should at some future time bring in a Bill providing that each municipality or divisional board should be authorised to levy a special rate for the payment of its member, that special rate to be subject to the usual contingency attending a vote to be raised on loan. If the majority decided that they would not have the rate it could not be levied; but if they decided in favour of the rate it would be levied, and their member would be paid. Then the matter would come more directly home to them, and they would more thoroughly understand the precise position in which they stood with regard to their representatives, taking care that if they did pay their members they would get the best men and get a fair amount of work out of them. I shall certainly not vote for the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. G. KING: Hon. gentlemen,—I shall vote for the postponement of this Bill, but I cannot agree with the Hon. Mr. Gregory that the money required for the payment of members should be charged to the divisional boards and the municipalities. I am afraid that if his suggestion were adopted a very inferior class of members would be elected as members of Parliament.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—It is perfectly evident that this Bill is going to meet with the same fate as its predecessors.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member has spoken.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I have not spoken upon the amendment though I have spoken on the original question. I quite agree with the views the Hon. Mr. Macpherson has expressed with regard to the speeches of hon. members in this Chamber made up to the time when he addressed the Chamber. There was very little argument in them, but possibly a large amount of declamation. Since that time we have had some speeches which have contributed to our enlightenment. We have had some strong, solid, ornate, courteous, and chaste speeches from some hon. members, and some execratingly witty speeches from others, but I have heard no arguments so far, that at all shake my own convictions upon this subject. There seem to be chiefly two objections urged against this Bill with anything like force. The first is that payment of members is opposed, we will say, to the genius of British ideas. On the second reading of the Bill I pointed out that practically Great Britain and New South Wales are the only two important portions of the British Empire in which payment of members is not the rule. The Hon. Mr. Macpherson has referred to a period many years ago, when payment of members was the rule in Great Britain; and I say, that although it does not exist there now in name, there can be no doubt that it does exist in fact to a very large extent. One hundred and fifty members of the House of Commons are persons receiving salaries from the Crown, and a large proportion of the other members of that body receive indirect payment through the salaries which their friends are receiving on account of the patronage exercised on their behalf.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I say it is a fact that the Civil Service in Great Britain is almost entirely composed of the protégés of supporters of the members of the Government in the House of Commons. There is a strong feeling now growing up in favour of payment of members in the Imperial Parliament, and I anticipate that members of this House will live to see the day when payment of members will be introduced in the Imperial Legislature. Another objection urged with some force has very little in it when we analyse it. The objection is that it is indecent, to say the least of it, for the Legislative Assembly to propose that money should be paid to themselves—that actually by this Bill they were asking the country to put money into their own pockets. I ask hon. gentlemen to say what reason there is why those gentlemen should not receive compensation for the losses entailed upon them by their attendance to their duties in Parliament. This is the fourth or fifth occasion on which this proposition has been made to this Chamber, and it is in consequence of the action of this House that a provision of this kind is not the law of the land. For many years past—for the last ten or fifteen years at all events—after the general elections, except on one occasion, during the first session of each Parliament, the Legislative Assembly has affirmed that payment of members of the Legislative Assembly should be a portion of the law of the land; and if the voice of the people, as expressed by their representatives in Parliament, immediately after the elections, had been carried into effect, those gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly would be now drawing considerably

more than this Bill proposes they should draw as reimbursement for the outlay they incur in attending to their duties in Parliament. We, of course, are all too patriotic, and high-minded, and independent to accept anything in the shape of remuneration for our services. But I say there are several hon. gentlemen in this House receiving indirect payment for their attendance in Parliament. Every member of this House uses a railway pass, for which he pays nothing. I have known that hon. gentlemen—the bulk of them, at all events—are constantly in the habit of using these railway passes for the purpose of travelling over our railway lines, not on the business of the country, but on their own private concerns. Why are these gentlemen receiving this kind of payment? It is because they are members of Parliament. I will go further than that. I know of an instance where an hon. gentleman was a member of this Chamber, and resigned his seat to contest an election in the interest of the Government, but was defeated, and the Government afterwards reappointed him to this Council; and, during the interval, he on more than one occasion made use of his *efete* railway pass. These are the gentlemen who would scorn to touch anything in the shape of money, directly or indirectly, as payment for their services in Parliament.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who was that?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Still they use these passes. Why do they not give them up? I say, let hon. gentlemen be consistent, and do the whole thing or nothing. Let them throw up their railway passes.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: There is no analogy at all in the case.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Of course there is no analogy; but why do they get free passes?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Do not the members of the Legislative Assembly get passes?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Precisely—because the members of the Legislative Assembly are members of the Legislative Assembly; because the State recognises that their services in Parliament entitle them to that privilege. It is for the same reason exactly that the railway passes are granted to hon. members of this House. They get them because of their attendance in Parliament.

The Hon. A. H. WILSON: What about the members who use the coasting steamers? They do not get free passes.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: At present railway passes are given to members of both Houses of Parliament, and I say it is not any difference in principle at all—it is simply a difference in degree. I am glad to see that hon. gentlemen appear to be somewhat irritated at this reference to the railway passes; it seems to have had some effect upon them. I said on the second reading of the Bill, and I repeat it now, that in the great bulk of the free States, and in the most important of the British dependencies, this law is in force. It has been urged here by one or two speakers that a very large number of persons offer their services at an election to various constituencies, and that therefore there is no dearth of suitable men. I think that argument answers itself. It is not because a man offers his services as a candidate for election that therefore he is fit to represent the sentiments of the constituents to whom he offers his services. One hon. gentleman said that in no single instance could there be any difficulty found in selecting suitable local men to represent constituencies. We need go no further

back than the last two Parliaments to see the fallacy of this statement; and I refer to one constituency—that of Cook. The constituency of Cook could not find two local representatives. One local man deserted them, and they got hold of a professional man here, who was subsidised in a most improper manner. During a great portion of the sitting of Parliament he was employed to do work for the Government. This man was a Brisbane barrister, and he found it apparently so profitable to represent that constituency that at great expense he offered his services again and tried—I do not say he tried, but I say that on his behalf most dishonourable practices were resorted to for the purpose of securing that person's return, and he had not the courage to face the matter out before a committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly. He left the place as soon as a petition was presented against his return on the ground of improper practices. The constituency then had to fall back upon the services of a man they had never seen, simply because he happened to be a Brisbane lawyer, and because many eligible men in that district, as I know from my own knowledge, were unable to afford the expense of coming down to represent that constituency in Parliament. I suppose it is unnecessary to argue further upon this question, but I will read an extract from a book written by the late Governor-General of Canada—the Marquis of Lorne. His book is a most interesting and instructive work upon Canada, and he refers incidentally to the question of payment of members there. I refer to his remarks upon the subject, because they are peculiarly applicable in this colony. The Marquis of Lorne writes:—

"With regard to payment of members, it may here be noticed that it would be very difficult indeed to get a House together were the members not indemnified for serving. They have to leave their work and travel in many cases hundreds of miles; and men whom the country would desire as its best representatives could not attend in the absence of payment, which is not so much remuneration for service as partial compensation for loss or interruption of their usual avocation."

The utmost a man can receive by way of compensation under this Bill in any session of Parliament will be £200 per annum, and his travelling expenses once to and from the House, unless there is an adjournment for over a period of thirty days, in which case a second allowance for travelling expenses is made. Can hon. gentlemen tell me that the small amount proposed to be paid to members of the Legislative Assembly in compensation for the loss they incur in attending to their duties in Parliament will bring about such a state of affairs as the introduction into our Parliament of professional politicians? I say they can not.

The Hon. W. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I think there are very few members in this House, if any, who will not admit that the foremost, and, in every respect, the most exalted legislative body in the world is the British Parliament. While it has been pointed out that in nearly all the Houses of Legislature in Europe the system of payment of members is adopted, it has also been pointed out that the members of the British House of Commons are not paid. I would like to ask hon. members whether we should follow the example of the highest Legislature in the world, or follow the example of inferior Legislatures? I do not need to go abroad to see the pernicious and evil effects of payment of members; we can see what its effects have been very near our own door in another colony. I know what the effect of the payment of members has been in Victoria, and nothing in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, will ever induce me to vote for payment of

members. The result of payment of members in other colonies has been to degrade legislation, and to raise a crop of trading politicians. Are we to countenance anything that will bring us down to that level? I hope this House will never countenance anything of the sort. With regard to the trifling expenditure to which the hon. gentleman has referred, we are accustomed to hear him call things trifling, as when he deals with the question of rental, for instance, and speaks of so much an acre—it looks very small—for 3d., or even 3d. an acre looks trifling enough; but when we come to calculate it, and find that 3d. per acre amounts to £8 a square mile, it comes home to us with a vengeance. The hon. member says that £200 a year is a trifling expense, but let us look at it in this way: It will amount in the aggregate to about £10,000 or £12,000 a year, and that, capitalised, amounts actually to £250,000 at 4 per cent. We are now making railways at £2,500 a mile: take it at £3,000 a mile, and we find that we can make eighty-three miles of railway with what it will cost us each year to pay members of Parliament.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: How can you make eighty-three miles of railway for £10,000?

The Hon. W. FORREST: The hon. gentleman is about as weak in his calculations as he often is in his law. Then if I say this—that £10,000 a year will pay the interest at 4 per cent. on £250,000—does the hon. gentleman understand that?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No. Of course I cannot understand it at all.

The Hon. W. FORREST: £250,000, taking the cost of making railways at £3,000 a mile, will make eighty-three miles of railway. I hope the hon. gentleman understands that much. I would like to know whether the population of this country would prefer to have the railways that could be made for this money, or to pay the money to members of Parliament. Perhaps the hon. the Postmaster-General will inform us that this mile of railway to the Valley, which is going to cost £160,000, or this political railway to Cleveland, which is going to cost £80,000—say, £240,000 in all—perhaps the hon. gentleman will give up these, and devote the money to paying members of Parliament. If the constituencies are prepared to show their *bona fides* by making some practical evidence of them, then I may believe that they are in favour of payment of members. I think if you put it to any constituency, and ask them whether they would prefer that their members should not be paid at all, and that they should have this money expended in making railways, or that they should give up the railways and pay their members, what would their answer be? The answer would be exactly the same as I am going to give to-night by voting against the second reading of this Bill. I was in Victoria a good many years ago, when a similar discussion was before the House there, and I had a very great many strong, though friendly, discussions with a friend of mine who was not practically engaged in politics, but was theoretically in favour of payment of members. It is an old saying that "time brings its revenges," and my revenge came about a week ago in letters which I received from that gentleman when he heard that we were about to introduce payment of members here. He said—"I trust nothing will ever induce you to vote for payment of members. I have lived to repent my opinions, and have repented, because the evil consequences of payment of members here have been burned into us with red-hot irons."

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided :—

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Resolved in the negative.

Question—That the words “this day six months” be added—put and passed.

Question—That the Bill be read a second time this day six months—put and passed.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT BILL—
SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said : Hon. gentlemen,—The objects of this Bill are three in number. The principal one is to create an additional salaried Minister of the Crown; the second is to provide a readjustment of the manner in which Ministers of the Crown may sit in the different Houses of Parliament; and the third is to provide that persons serving in the defence force of the colony, and officers in Her Majesty's Imperial Service, shall be at liberty to sit in the Legislative Assembly. Those gentlemen who have held the position of Ministers of the Crown during the past few years must have become aware that the business of the several departments is increasing so much that, taking into consideration the amount of work that our extending sessions throw upon Ministers in the shape of attendance upon parliamentary duties, and the increasing official work owing to the extension of the colony in the shape of population, Ministers have hardly any time at all to devote to their private avocations. In fact it requires a man of iron constitution to do justice to his position in the existing state of affairs. I need point no further than to the present Premier as an example. It is a marvel to everybody how he gets through his work. If it had not been that he has an iron constitution he must have broken down long since. I know that I myself—perhaps I am not so strong as some hon. members, but still I am tough—I find quite enough work thrown upon me simply in attending to my parliamentary duties when the House is sitting; and I know from experience that the work of my department—although it is considered the lightest probably amongst the Ministerial offices—has increased very considerably during the interval that has elapsed since I held the office on a former occasion. There is quite enough, taking into consideration parliamentary duties, to monopolise the attention of any man and leave him very little time indeed to look after his own private affairs. I do not think it is desired by this House, or by any member of the community, that the members should have no time at all to devote to their private affairs while they are Ministers of the Crown. It is desirable that the country should get the services of the best men—the best business men in all the walks of life—for Ministers if possible; and I am sure that the people do not require more than a fair amount of work from Ministers. Some time since a Minister for Public Instruction was appointed, but no salary was attached to the office. It is now proposed by this Bill to attach a salary to that office, and that there shall be seven members drawing salary at the present rate. Under our Legislative Assembly Act at present, only three Ministers are capable of being appointed to the Upper House—the

Postmaster-General, the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works. The Minister for Lands and the Minister for Works, or rather their departments, come so much directly into contact with the public, that I do not think the representative branch of the Legislature would consent to either of those Ministers being out of the Legislative Assembly. But there is no reason why the Attorney-General should not have a seat in this House. In some of the colonies the Colonial Secretary very often occupies a seat in the Legislative Council. For many years it was the rule in the Parliament of South Australia for the Colonial Secretary to have a seat in the Upper House; but seeing that the Colonial Secretary here performs to a large extent the functions of the Home Secretary in Great Britain, I do not know whether it is advisable that he should have a seat here. But there is no reason why the Minister for Public Instruction or the Attorney-General should not have a seat here. I think the time is approaching when it will be only fair for this House to expect that at least two members of the Government should have seats here. Todd is strongly of opinion that the Upper House of Parliament should always have two members of the Administration in it; and speaking for myself, and from my own experience of this Chamber, I know that my duties would be very much lightened indeed if we had another Minister here, especially seeing that I have always had, unfortunately, the necessity of conducting the business of this House against a powerful majority upon all important matters of public policy. The work of the representative of the Government in this Chamber is no light thing, as hon. gentlemen themselves must have seen during this session of Parliament. It is proposed by the Bill, as I have said, that there shall be an additional Minister. Any six of those Ministers may hold seats in the Legislative Assembly, and may be nominated by proclamation to that effect; and it is possible, as I have said, that any one of those Ministers—except the Colonial Treasurer, who of necessity must always be a member of the Legislative Assembly—may be appointed to a seat in this Chamber. In all probability the choice will be restricted, for some time to come at all events, to the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Public Instruction, or the Postmaster-General. These are the essential principles of the Bill. The only other matter that need be referred to is embodied in clause 3, which provides that officers in receipt only of pay, half-pay, or a pension as an officer of Her Majesty's navy or army, or who shall receive any new or other commission in the navy or army respectively, or any increase of pay on any such commission, or any person who is in receipt only of daily pay as an officer or member of the defence or volunteer force of Queensland and is not employed permanently or at an annual salary, shall be eligible to be elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly. There is a further provision which is a necessary one. It has often been found convenient to redistribute the offices held by Ministers of the Crown, and it has been considered doubtful whether a member could go from one office to another without resigning his seat. This Bill places the matter beyond doubt. It provides that any interchange of offices shall not involve the necessity of the Minister changing in that way going before his constituents for re-election. There is also a provision that where a Minister holds two offices he shall only draw the salary attached to one of them. I do not know that that is fair. I know it is a rule that does not exist in Great Britain. On several occasions there Prime Ministers have held the offices of

First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and have drawn salary for both offices.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: They were Liberals.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No; they were Conservatives. Disraeli did it. However, we will place the matter beyond any doubt here by providing that only one salary shall be paid to a Minister, no matter how many portfolios he may hold. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am rather surprised at this Bill being brought on for second reading this evening, and I must say that I cannot, for the life of me, see the necessity for such a Bill. I believe that there are quite sufficient offices now filled by members of the Government. I believe myself that if the gentlemen who have undertaken to perform the duties of those offices would do their duty conscientiously and continuously during the office hours, not only would they have plenty of time to perform those duties, but they would have some to spare. I cannot conceive that any one of those officers is overburdened with the duties of his office unless by mere accident. I know very well that most of the gentlemen who fill those offices, and apparently fill them with credit to themselves, have other duties to which they allot a great deal of time, and that they have their pleasures which occasionally they indulge in. In fact, I have some doubt whether taking the Ministers generally they are not the least overworked Ministers of the land; but for some reasons that have not been mentioned, for something behind the scenes which we have not heard and do not know, this Bill is brought in to provide for another Minister. Why does not the Postmaster-General tell us frankly what it is for and who it is for?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I told you what it is for. I am not in the habit of concealing things.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: If the hon. gentleman is not in the habit of concealing things, he certainly conceals his intentions and thoughts. He may not consider those as "things," but I do; and, having listened attentively to the hon. gentleman, I am at a loss to understand what necessity there is for another Minister. They can be shifted about at pleasure without affecting their position in Parliament. They can shuffle the cards as they please. That is provided for in this Bill, but there is no positive information, as far as I can see, as to who is the officer, and what is the office that the Government really intend to fill. My conviction is that there are too many Ministers in the other Chamber; that it is overweighted with Ministers as far as working power goes; and I do not hesitate to say that if another Minister is introduced into this Chamber, and he has the ability and persuasive powers of the Postmaster-General, we shall find ourselves overweighted here. I do not think a good case has been made out at all. The hon. the Postmaster-General has chosen to refer to his own department, and if he had not done so he would not have given me this opportunity of referring to it. He says that he has found that he himself is overworked.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I did not say anything of the sort.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon. I did not hear him distinctly, I admit.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I said I found the work had considerably increased since I held the office before.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: I must admit I did not hear the hon. gentleman, and did not quite understand what was being said, and on appealing to an hon. gentleman alongside of me he led me to understand what I have stated. Still, as we are on the subject, let me say that I think if the hon. gentleman or his successor will pay a little more attention to his department—if he will waken it up to the exigencies and necessities of the times, he will crown himself with glory and credit, and confer a lasting boon upon the people of the colony. I do not hesitate to say—I say it advisedly, from experience—that I regard the management of the Post Office of the colony as at least 100 years behind the times. The hon. gentleman knows I have reason for what I say—everybody here knows that I have reason for it—and I say that a more fossilised or mediævally managed establishment does not exist than the General Post Office of the colony. I have watched it for the last fifteen or twenty years, and it seems utterly impossible to put any "go" into the establishment. Minister follows Minister, but still there is the old fossilised arrangement; and on behalf of the people of the colony I ask the Postmaster-General to do something that will bring the Post Office of the colony equal to the necessities of the times. I will give an instance which may be verified any day by hon. members. As sure as the hour between 10 and 11 comes round every morning a postman may be seen delivering letters in George street approaching this building. I live 2 or 2½ miles out of town, and I get my letters soon after 9 o'clock in the morning, read and answer them, and then drive to town in time to see the first postal delivery in George street. Instead of the letters being delivered at 9, or half-past 9 o'clock at the latest, you may see a postman any morning dragging along his weary way, and delivering letters at 11 o'clock. It shows either that one Minister is not able to deal with the institution, or that the institution has not called forth the extraordinary energies possessed by the Hon. Mr. Mein. I protest against the creation of another Minister. I see no necessity for creating this new office; and I think that before this Chamber accedes to the second reading it should understand a little more than it has been told respecting not only the necessity but also what sort of a Minister it is intended to create.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: Hon. gentlemen,—I am not going to vote against the Bill, but I think that, instead of providing for an additional Minister in another place, assistance should be given to the Postmaster-General in this House. I know very well that when a single Minister has to keep his attention on the stretch for a number of hours it is a great strain, and the Postmaster-General would be less fatigued if he had someone in this House to assist him. I would suggest that if provision is made for another Minister, he should take his seat in this House. There are fifty-five members, of whom five are Ministers, in another place, and there are thirty-four members here, of whom only one is a Minister. In another place every Minister takes charge of matters relating to his own department, whereas the Postmaster-General has to take up every matter that is brought forward by the Government. It may happen that some measures brought forward are measures in which the Postmaster-General does not thoroughly believe, and in such cases it would be much better to have a colleague in this House who might take charge of such measures.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: Hon. gentlemen,—If the Postmaster-General had told us who was

to be the additional Minister, and where he was to sit, he would have simplified the matter very much; and I have no doubt that he could have answered both questions.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I can answer one, but not the other. It is intended at present that he shall sit in the other House.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: I am sorry to hear it, for assistance is wanted here more than there. I should like to find out how many hours a-day those gentlemen are in their offices on public duty, and how many hours they are on their own private business? The Colonial Secretary is a barrister—how much time does he devote to business outside?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Very little indeed.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: I often see his name in connection with Supreme Court cases—and important cases too. We know that the Colonial Treasurer is an auctioneer doing a large business, and no doubt he spends a good deal of his time auctioneering. Then there is the Attorney-General, and I fancy I often see his name in the papers as a barrister.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Prosecuting for the Crown.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: I have seen his name in connection with civil cases also. Then we come to the Minister for Lands, who is a squatter, and cannot look after his private business, and therefore probably looks after the working of his department. And the same may be said of the Minister for Works, who is also a squatter. Then there is the Postmaster-General. How many hours a day is he in his office; and how many in that of the great firm of Hart, Mein, and Flower?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Move for a return.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: There is no doubt in my mind that the representative of the Crown in this House ought to have some assistance, and I think the new Minister should sit here and nowhere else. I have heard that the new Minister is to be the Secretary for Public Instruction, and I see no reason why he should not sit here.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That can be arranged under the Bill.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: I think it ought to be so arranged. It seems a curious thing that we should have seven Ministers, seven or eight judges, seven or eight Crown prosecutors, an Attorney-General, and I do not know how many law officers of the Crown, in a colony where there are only 50,000 adult males. It is a staff big enough to rule England; and I do not suppose any country in the world is so expensively governed as Queensland. With regard to the new Minister, I believe the Postmaster-General could name him if he liked.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No.

The HON. J. TAYLOR: I have been told so, at any rate; and if the gentleman I have heard named is to be Minister for Public Instruction, I think it will be a most objectionable appointment.

Question put and passed; and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BUNDABERG GAS AND COKE COMPANY BILL—SECOND READING.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON said: Hon. gentlemen,—I have to move the second reading of this Bill, which comes to us from the Legislative Assembly, accompanied by the report of

the Select Committee which inquired into the matter. It is a Bill to enable the Bundaberg Gas and Coke Company (Limited), incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1863, to light with gas the town of Bundaberg and its suburbs, and for other purposes therein mentioned. I may state for the information of hon. members that the Bill is founded on an agreement made between Mr. Robert Fleming and the municipality of Bundaberg for the supply of gas to the municipality for a period of ten years. The provisions of the Bill are identical with the provisions of the Gympie Gas Company Bill and the Townsville Gas Company Bill, which have this session received the sanction of this House, with the exception that the local authority in the case of this Bill can purchase the company's works at the end of ten years, instead of fourteen years as provided by the other Bills. I have only further to remark, in reference to the Bill at this stage, that by the 38th clause the 7th, 8th, and 9th clauses of the agreement are repealed. The effect of those clauses was considered by the Legislative Assembly to give Mr. Fleming a monopoly of the manufacture of gas for ten years, and tie down the corporation to take gas from nobody else during that period. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

The HON. W. H. WALSH: Hon. gentlemen,—As this is a private Bill affecting the welfare of a very important seaport town of the colony, I think we should have some proof from the Government that it has been reviewed by them and meets with their approval. The Government have a duty to perform in connection with a matter of this kind; and I do object strongly to Parliament being made use of—to members with the utmost inattention giving their services to the passage of Bills which may be of serious importance to private individuals who are not taken into consideration at all. I can see at a glance that the document has some very extraordinary peculiarities about it. In the first place, it proposes to give to Mr. Fleming—a Brisbane gentleman, I believe—the monopoly of supplying the town of Bundaberg with gas; and I will call attention to one reason why he seeks from Parliament the protection of a Bill of this kind. It is a matter of grave importance that the Committee which took evidence, and brought up a report in another place on the propriety of passing such a Bill, and on whose work we have to rely to a considerable extent, did not choose to examine more than one witness, and that witness the very man who asks for this special Bill. It appears to me to turn Parliament into a regular farce. A man petitions Parliament for a special Bill, he gets a select committee—and a very select committee—to examine into the preliminary matters connected with the introduction of that Bill, and he is himself the sole witness called upon to give evidence as to whether it is or is not interfering with private rights, or whether it will not be injurious to municipal rights or the rights of the people at large. Here is the reason he gives for this Bill. This is the kind of pabulum brought up to us, and we are expected to be satisfied with it. I find in the evidence of the Committee that Mr. Fleming, who is the promoter of this Bill, and the gentleman who is to have the monopoly of supplying the town of Bundaberg with gas, is asked by the Chairman:—

“Mr. Fleming, your intention is that this Bill, if it becomes an Act, shall take the place of the agreement in question? Well, I do not say it can possibly take the place of the agreement. I must adhere to the agreement with the corporation, in conjunction with the Bill; that is to say, I must sell my gas at the price stated here. In all Gas Companies Acts I have seen the price

of the gas is not given, I think. They may give the price to start with; but they do not bind the company down to any price for any length of time.

"Perhaps you will explain your reasons for applying for this Bill?"

Now, the answer given to this question is what I call the attention of hon. gentlemen to—

"My reason is a very simple one. In the event of my falling out with any individual in the town of Bundaberg, he might cause me a lot of trouble and obstruction. For instance—and I give you an actual instance—in doing my excavating and carting, a drunken fellow there, worth a great deal of money, because I did not employ him, seeks to go into the corporation as an alderman, and threatens what he will do, and so on. He could not do anything except annoy and obstruct me, perhaps. The Bill is simply to get out of that sort of difficulty. That is the whole reason of it. A cantankerous man may get into the council and be able to put me to expense and cause me annoyance."

So here the time of Parliament is to be taken up, committees invoked, and hon. members are desired to take a great personal interest in the passage of this Bill, and all the reason or excuse given by the sole person interested in it in a pecuniary point of view—all the reason given is that he wants to protect himself from a cantankerous individual who might happen to get into the municipal council of Bundaberg, and cause him some annoyance. If hon. gentlemen think that a sufficient reason for us to debase ourselves to pass a Bill of this kind, I do not. I have objected to these private Bills introduced during the last two or three sessions. I say we are being made tools of, and by agreeing to them we may be doing an incalculable amount of harm to private individuals or to public bodies. I hope the Government will stop this.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: The hon. gentleman has been denouncing the Government for not stopping this Bill. We have passed, since I have been in this House, a very large number of gas Bills, introduced for the purpose of conferring certain powers upon companies to lay down pipes and break up streets for the purpose of supplying the public with gas. The hon. gentleman has referred to the evidence, and I may say I read that evidence myself some time ago, before the Bill came into this Chamber, and I certainly see nothing objectionable in the application made to this House for permission to pass this Bill. It appears that the promoters of this company entered into an agreement with the municipality of Bundaberg with regard to the supply of gas to that town, which at present is not supplied with gas. No private individual or company could interfere with the roads of that municipality for the purpose of laying down pipes to supply the inhabitants with gas, unless with the consent of the municipal corporation or by the authority of an Act of Parliament. The promoters of the company entered into an agreement with the municipality of Bundaberg by which they undertook to supply gas at a stipulated price for a term of years. In consideration of that undertaking, the corporation agreed with Mr. Fleming, who represented the promoters, that he should be at liberty to use the streets of the corporation for the purpose of laying his pipes. There would be no necessity, under ordinary circumstances, for the promoters of the company to go any further; but it appears this gentleman asks this House to do on behalf of this company what this House has been constantly doing where no agreement has been entered into between the corporations and others. He only asks the House to give him the same protection which other companies possessed. As the Hon. Mr. Macpherson has pointed out, this Bill, which incorporates the agreement, provides that the inhabitants of Bundaberg shall not be called upon to pay more than a certain amount for the

gas supplied. As an individual, I should be glad to see a general measure introduced, stipulating that gas companies should not be entitled to make more than a certain amount of profit, and that the gas they should supply should be of a certain ascertained quality. That question was mooted before in this Chamber when, I think, the Toowoomba Gas Bill was before the House, but apparently no person has had the time or inclination to introduce a Bill of that kind since. Seeing, however, that we are in the habit of passing, and have passed this session, one or two Bills authorising persons to manufacture gas, the same privileges should be conferred upon this company. There really can be no objection to the passing of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

On motion of the Hon. P. MACPHERSON, the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—Before the motion is put I wish to say a word or two in order to put myself right with this Chamber. I wish to call attention to the peculiar reporting in which the reporters of *Hansard* indulged last evening in connection with my name. In the first place I should like to remove an impression that has been created by their misreporting in referring to the Chief Clerk of the Council, Mr. Radford. I am reported to have said, "I do object to the most menial officer in this House being attacked in that way." I am there reported to allude to Mr. Radford as the most menial officer of the House, and why *Hansard* should specially apparently have placed that construction upon my words I cannot understand. What I did say was that "even the most menial officer of this House should be protected." There is another matter that I must more earnestly protest against, and that is the reporters of *Hansard* indulging, for what reason I do not know, in comments of their own. I find here, under the heading "Defence Bill"—

"[The President here resumed his seat, the Hon. W. H. Walsh being engaged in conversation with the Clerk of the House.]"

I say it is a most unwarrantable liberty on the part of the reporters of *Hansard* to put such a paragraph at all in *Hansard*. It is something entirely new, and I presume it was done under inspiration; but I insist that the reporters of *Hansard* have no more authority to put in paragraphs of that kind in the reports of the debates in this House than they have to give a description of the appearance of hon. members who sit in this Chamber. I am merely stating this in defence of *Hansard*. I feel that I am perfectly justified in calling the attention of the House to this matter. I never correct *Hansard*, and I have never corrected a speech in my life. I never give the least trouble, but when I see a new departure is attempted in order to describe the proceedings of this Chamber which is not true, I say that it is a matter which affects us all; and as it affects me individually, I announce at once that I will not allow it. I also take this opportunity of stating that the *Courier*, with its usual want of truth, refers to the same matter, and much in the same way. I believe that it also was inspired by the same person, and the article was probably written by the same pen. The *Courier* states that for three minutes I carried on a conversation with the Clerk. The whole thing is utterly false. It must be thoroughly understood, and I trust it will be observed in future, that para-

graphs of this kind cannot be inserted in *Hansard*, and the reporters of *Hansard* are here simply to report the speeches which are made in this House.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes to 9 o'clock.
