

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**TUESDAY, 13 JULY 1886**

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1886.

QUEENSLAND.



# DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

DURING THE

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

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER  
MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1886.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, 13 July, 1886.*

Meeting of Parliament.—Opening Speech of Administrator of the Government.—New Members.—Resignation of Member.—Leave of Absence.—Absence of Member.—Ministerial Statement.—Bill *pro forma*.—Address in Reply.

### MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

PURSUANT to proclamation, bearing date 11th June last, convening Parliament for the despatch of business, the Council met shortly before noon this day.

### OPENING SPEECH OF ADMINISTRATOR OF THE GOVERNMENT.

At noon His Excellency the Administrator of the Government came in state to the Houses of Parliament, and was received at the main entrance by the Presiding Chairman and other members of the Legislative Council, and conducted to the dais in the Upper Chamber.

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

HIS EXCELLENCY read his Opening Speech, as follows:—

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

“I have summoned you somewhat later in the year than has lately been usual, the delay having been caused by the necessary and prolonged absences of some of my Ministers from the capital upon public business of urgent importance.

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“Early in this year the first session of the Federal Council of Australasia was held at Hobart. Much important work, mainly of a preliminary character, was transacted; and I am glad to believe that the foundation has thus been laid of a Federal Union, whose influence upon the future welfare of the Australasian colonies will be of continually increasing importance. I hope that the colonies at present unrepresented in the Council will before long join with the federated colonies, to which end my Government will not fail to devote its best attention and efforts.

“The Joint Address agreed to by you at the close of last session with respect to the relative rights and powers of the two Houses of Parliament in regard to money Bills was duly transmitted to Her Majesty, who was graciously pleased to refer the matter for the report of the Privy Council. The report of that tribunal will be laid before you, and will, I trust, be found to be a satisfactory termination of a much-vexed question.

“I regret that the question of the future administration of the government of British New Guinea is still unsettled. My Ministers have formulated proposals on the subject, which have received the assent of the Governments of the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, and under which the primary responsibility of the administration would devolve upon Queensland. I am confident that these proposals will meet with your concurrence, and I trust shortly to be in a position to inform you that they have received Her Majesty's approval, and to recommend for your consideration the necessary measures to give effect to them.

"My Ministers have joined with those of the other federated colonies in remonstrating with Her Majesty's Government against the proposed abrogation of the agreement now existing between the Governments of Great Britain and France for respecting the independence of the New Hebrides. I am happy to be able to inform you that these remonstrances are likely to have good effect.

"The Indian and Colonial Exhibition, in London, which has lately been opened by Her Majesty in person, cannot fail to make better known the wealth and resources of the Australasian colonies. It affords me much satisfaction to know that the various industries of Queensland have been well represented, and I have great pleasure in expressing my recognition of the services rendered by the Commissioners in the colony, to whose unremitting exertions is mainly due the success that has been attained.

"The tribunal appointed for assessing the compensation to be paid to the employers of the natives of New Guinea who were returned to their homes by order of the Government has concluded its labours, and the several amounts awarded have been paid in anticipation of your sanction.

"Papers on all these subjects will be laid before you.

"Notwithstanding the adverse seasons, considerable steps have been taken to bring into operation the provisions of the Crown Lands Act of 1884; and I am glad to be assured that its provisions are already conducting in a large degree to a beneficial settlement upon the lands of the colony.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The Estimates for the current year will be laid before you without delay.

"It was not to be expected that Queensland would wholly escape the consequences of the long-continued and disastrous drought with which the Australian continent has been visited. The finances are nevertheless in a sound condition, and the unprecedented success of the stock lately offered in London is abundant proof of the high credit of the colony.

"The recent rains with which nearly all parts of Queensland have been blessed, and the improving prospects of many of our industries, give good ground for confident anticipations of future prosperity.

"It will, however, be necessary for the present to exercise the most rigid economy in expenditure, and I am sure that you will cordially concur and assist in this course.

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

"The advantages of the system of local government now established in the colony can hardly be over-estimated. The statute laws on the subject are, however, in many respects defective, and you will be invited to devote your early attention to the consolidation and

amendment of these laws, particularly with regard to the constitution and working of divisional boards and the joint action of local authorities.

"You will also be asked to consider a measure having for its object to define and declare the rights to natural water, and to provide for the storage and distribution of water by local authorities constituted for the purpose.

"The Bills relating to justices of the peace and to settled lands, which have already been under your notice, have been carefully revised, and will be again submitted for your consideration.

"Amongst other measures which will be laid before you as occasion offers are—

"A Bill to provide for the Payment of the Expenses incurred by Members of the Legislative Assembly in attending Parliament;

"A Bill to constitute a Tribunal for the trial of Election Petitions;

"A Bill to amend the law relating to the Occupation of Crown Lands on Gold Fields;

"A Bill to amend the laws relating to Quarantine;

"A Bill to amend the Mineral Lands Act of 1882, so far as it relates to Mining for Coal;

"A Bill to amend the law relating to the Incorporation and Winding-up of Gold Mining Companies;

"A Bill to extend and regulate the Liability of Employers to make Compensation for Personal Injuries suffered by Workmen in their Service;

"A Bill for the Protection of Oysters and the Encouragement of Oyster Fisheries;

"A Bill to regulate the Manufacture and Supply of Gas;

"A Bill to repeal the Acts relating to the Introduction of Labourers from British India;

"A Bill to put Restrictions upon the Sale of Opium;

"A Bill to amend the criminal law so far as regards the Punishment of Persons convicted of First Offences; and

"A Bill to amend the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Fisheries Act of 1881."

"You will also be invited to sanction the construction of several lines of railway for which the necessary funds have already been appropriated.

"Complaints have occasionally arisen of delay in the administration of public business in the more remote parts of Queensland, and sometimes of apparent inattention to local requirements. I hope that time will allow of your dealing with this subject, and of adopting such measures as may lead to the removal of any similar grounds of complaint in the future.

"I invite your most careful consideration to the various matters that will be brought before you, and I trust that under the blessing of Divine Providence your labours may tend to the permanent advancement and prosperity of the colony."

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN resumed the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## NEW MEMBERS.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of letters intimating that His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to advise the Executive Council to summon Frederick Thomas Brentnall, Esq., John D. Macansh, Esq., Dr. William Frederick Taylor, and H. C. Wood, Esq., and that His Excellency had administered to them the oath of allegiance.

The Hons. F. T. Brentnall, W. F. Taylor, and H. C. Wood were then introduced, and, having subscribed the roll, took their seats.

## RESIGNATION OF MEMBER.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a letter notifying the resignation of the Hon. K. I. O'Doherty.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced that leave of absence had been granted to the Hon. J. F. Garrick, Q.C., K.C.M.G., and the Hon. W. H. Walsh, during the present session.

## ABSENCE OF MEMBER.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a letter from the Hon. J. Swan, stating that, in consequence of his visit to Europe, he would not be able to attend during the present session of Parliament.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. T. Macdonald-Paterson) said: Hon. gentlemen,—I have the honour to inform you that a formal change has taken place in the constitution of the Government since this House last met. An office has been constituted under the title of "Chief Secretary," which has been taken by the Premier, the Hon. S. W. Griffith; and the office of Colonial Secretary is now held by the Secretary for Public Instruction, the Hon. B. B. Moreton, who occupies the dual position. I have also to inform the House that, under the Constitution Act of this colony, the Attorney-General has appealed to the Privy Council with respect to the question of the seat of James Gibbon.

BILL *PRO FORMA*.

A Bill to amend the laws relating to game was presented and read a first time.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN having acquainted the House that for the purpose of greater accuracy he had obtained a copy of the Speech which His Excellency the Administrator of the Government had delivered to Parliament, and having read so much of it as was addressed to that House,

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and prepare an Address in Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Administrator of the Government; such Committee to consist of the Hon. H. C. Wood, the Hon. F. T. Brentnall, the Hon. W. F. Taylor, the Hon. J. C. Heussler, and the Mover.

Question put and passed, and the Committee retired.

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

"To His Excellency The Honourable Sir ARTHUR HUNTER PALMER, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, President of the Legislative Council and Administrator of the Government of the Colony of Queensland and its Dependencies.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

"We shall give our best attention and consideration to all such matters as may be brought before us, and we beg to assure Your Excellency that it will be our constant endeavour to pass such laws as will tend to promote the advancement and welfare of all portions of the colony."

The HON. H. C. WOOD said: Hon. gentlemen,—I rise to move the adoption of the Address just read by the Clerk at the table, and in doing so I must ask the generous forbearance of the House to a new Parliamentary hand. In reviewing the Speech of His Excellency I do not think it necessary—indeed it would be hardly useful—to touch on all the measures which we see in the programme laid before us to-day. It will be a better plan to touch more particularly upon the salient points, the first of which in importance is the paragraph relating to the first meeting of the Federal Council, lately held at Hobart. I think that this colony and all the federated colonies should be congratulated on the work done during that session, on the material and visible progress made in drawing more closely the bonds of interest which hold the Australian colonies together. I venture to express the opinion, and I think this House will agree with me, that a great deal of this grand result is owing to the action and the efforts made by the hon. and learned gentleman at the head of the Government of this colony. I think that gentleman took part in that conference with honour to himself and credit to the colony he represented. The joint address referred to in the second paragraph of the Speech can now be relegated to the limbo of abortive creations. The contention that was raised has been settled for ever, and I may say now that I have always been surprised that the contention was ever raised. In connection with this, I observe that a Bill to provide for the payment of the expenses incurred by members of the Legislative Assembly in attending Parliament is to be brought before the House, and I take this early opportunity to say that I thoroughly agree with the principle and that I intend to give the measure my hearty support, and hope it will become law. With regard to the third paragraph, I have no doubt that the future administration of the government of New Guinea will be a source of great anxiety, but as the primary responsibility of governing that new territory will be thrown on this colony, and judging from the past action of the Special Commissioner and Deputy Commis-

sioner, we have reason to believe that this new territory will be wisely and firmly governed. About the financial aspect of that government it would be premature at present to say anything, but I hope sufficient means will be furnished to the Commissioner to enable him to prosecute his affairs with vigour. I believe that the appointment of the Special Commissioner has given general satisfaction. He is a gentleman of great attainments and industry, and specially adapted to dealing with the delicate and often difficult questions which must arise in connection with the natives. In connection with the name of New Guinea, I think this is the time to mention a name inseparably associated with New Guinea—I allude to Sir Thomas Mcllwraith and his retirement from public life, which I look upon as a national misfortune, because a statesman with his large intellectual horizon, with his great energy and his immense courage, can ill be spared from the councils of this colony. I believe I reflect the opinion of this House, and the whole of the body politic, when I say that his retirement from public life is greatly deplored, and that his return will be hailed with acclamation. The exhibition in London has, of course, come in for its meed of praise, and deservedly so, because, if it make better known the wealth and resources of the Australian colonies and the visible advantages which these colonies offer to the crowded portions of Europe, mutual benefit may perhaps follow. With regard to the sixth paragraph, I have to tender to the Government my hearty thanks for their promptness in returning the natives of New Guinea to their homes—I mean those natives who were brought here under misapprehension or want of apprehension of the circumstances under which they came. In connection with this, I observe that a Bill to repeal the Acts relating to the introduction of labourers from British India is to be introduced, and I am glad that it is so. I observe also that the law relating to local government is to be amended, and I am glad of that, because there is no doubt that a great deal of discontent exists in the more distant portions of the colony on account of the defects in the present law. I am also glad to see that the Government intend to bring in a Bill to conserve water, and I consider that such a measure will be very useful; indeed, I do not see how the lands in the West can be properly utilised without it. I thank you, hon. gentlemen, for the courtesy and consideration you have extended to me while making these few remarks, and I conclude by formally moving that the Address, as read by the Clerk, be now adopted.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—In rising to second the adoption of the Address in Reply, I may say that I shall not occupy the time of hon. members any longer than is necessary in commenting on the various clauses in the Speech read by His Excellency the Administrator of the Government. To criticise such a speech fully requires reflection and earnest thought—far more than I have had time to give to the matters with which it deals; but I should be failing in my duty were I not to give expression to my opinion upon one or two matters which it contains. One in particular is that which refers to the action of the French in regard to the New Hebrides. There is no doubt that the annexation of those islands by France is an accomplished fact, whatever assurances we may receive to the contrary. The action of the Federal Council in opposing this proceeding on the part of France is to be highly commended, and I only trust that the remonstrances they thought proper to send against the action of France will have due weight. As Australians we are deeply

interested in the question, and unless a satisfactory solution is arrived at now it will have to be decided at some future time. If France is allowed to retain those islands she will undoubtedly deport a lot of the convict classes to them. We have had sufficient difficulties with the escapees from New Caledonia, and if we have a large number of those classes to deal with those difficulties will be further increased. I think, therefore, that too strong a remonstrance cannot be made against this action on the part of France. There is one clause in the Speech which refers to the working of the present Land Act. Of the working of that Act I have had practically no experience, but I may say that I am perfectly satisfied with the assurance here given, that its provisions are already conducing in a large degree to a beneficial settlement upon the land of the colony. Whatever faults this Act has—land legislation is a most difficult subject to approach in all countries, more especially in new colonies—whatever faults this Act may have, it has this one undoubted virtue—it has put a stop to the wholesale alienation of the public lands. Anyone having a knowledge of the history of Queensland for the last twenty years cannot but lament the fact that large tracts of the most valuable agricultural country have passed from the hands of the Crown, and are likely to be locked up for many years to come. That this Land Act is capable of amendment I have no doubt, but the principle is one that ought to commend itself to everyone who wishes to see the lands of the colony closely settled. I am glad to see that it is intended to take some action with regard to the increasing difficulties of local government. The divisional boards which have been created have done very good work indeed, and anyone who has lived in the country districts, as I have done, under the old system, when the roads of the colony were managed by the department in Brisbane, must feel that the advent of the present system is to be highly commended. I do not wish to find fault with the old system any more than it deserves, but I must say that it is impossible, in a large colony like this, that the roads can be managed properly, and the money judiciously expended, from any central point. I hope the principle of self-government will be still further extended. The tendency of the present age is to decentralise as much as possible in all civilised countries, and I am strongly in favour of decentralisation, having experienced the evils of centralisation while living in the interior of Queensland; and having seen the disagreeable and injurious effects of having to refer everything to Brisbane, even the most trivial matters, I cannot speak too strongly in favour of handing over to local authorities, as much as possible, the management of their own affairs. I trust, therefore, that this subject will be well considered, and that a large measure of local self-government will be given to the various portions of this colony. There is another subject here which claims our earnest attention, and that is the clause relating to the storage and distribution of water by local authorities. The different Governments of Queensland have neglected this very important subject; the whole of their attention seems to have been devoted, up to the present time, to the making of railways. Railways are undoubtedly useful in a country like this where there are no large rivers to provide water carriage. In such a country railways must perform their functions, so far as main lines are concerned, and they ought to be constructed as rapidly as possible; but this habit, as I may call it, has gone a little too far. Every place wants a branch line, and when these railways are made they do not pay, and the Government do not know what to do with them. I am glad to see

that a different direction has been given to affairs, and that a national attempt will be made to store water on a large scale. The effect of storing a large quantity of water, and creating a number of artificial lakes throughout the arid plains of the interior, would produce a more equable climate and a more equable rainfall, and tend to produce an absence of those conditions which result in droughts and disastrous floods such as have hitherto prevailed. Too much attention cannot be given to this point; and to my mind it should take precedence of all others. A plentiful supply of water is absolutely necessary, and the water should be of good quality. Hitherto quantity seems to have been the chief thing considered, quality being of very secondary consideration. The water we have had to put up with in this city has not been of good quality. The water itself is very good, but impurities are allowed to remain in it, and they are very disagreeable. They can be easily got rid of with little expense and little trouble, and why steps have not been taken to purify the water and give us a drinking water of good quality, instead of the liquid supplied, is more than I can imagine. There is no want of knowledge on the matter, and why it is not done is a mystery to me. I trust, therefore, that some steps will be taken, either to compel municipalities to supply a good sample of water to consumers, or else take the control out of their hands. There is just one other point to which I will refer, and that is the promised Bill to amend the laws relating to quarantine. Our ideas of quarantine in this part of the world appear to be rather crude if measured by those which prevail in the old country. The great idea here appears to be, if there is infectious disease on a ship, to keep it on the ship, and as far away from the general community as possible; to subject the passengers to as much inconvenience as possible; to detain the ship a long time, and do everything to hinder commerce. The great question to be considered is that of isolation, together with the plentiful supply of disinfectants—though their beneficial effect is a point that has not yet been quite settled; and disease should be dealt with in such a manner as to interfere with commerce as little as possible. After all, regulations are of no avail unless we regulate our lives and the condition of our cities so as to make them cleaner and less liable to infection. It is absolutely necessary that some better attention should be paid to the laws of sanitation; because, though perfectly isolated from the rest of the world, and with no possible chance of the introduction of disease from abroad, unless due attention be paid to sanitary measures, conditions will arise within any community to produce within it pestilence and disease. I regret to have to say that sanitary measures have been allowed to remain in abeyance, not only in Queensland, but in all the Australian colonies. Difficulties have been encountered even in attempting to keep the city of Brisbane clean. The system adopted is one which will never work; and it would be far better, and cost far less, if proper advice and able assistance were obtained from the old country in view of going into a thorough and efficient system of sewerage. It is useless to endeavour to shut disease out by quarantining vessels. We ought to keep our cities in such a condition as to be able to defy disease. Not long since, during an epidemic of cholera in Southern Europe, the medical officer to the Local Government Board in England said that the condition of London was such that he was not afraid of the introduction of cholera there; and I hope we shall be in a position to say so in Brisbane before very long. London is a much larger city, and much more difficult to manage, than a place like

Brisbane, and as they can manage matters in such a way as to be perfectly fearless about the introduction of cholera or any other disease, I do not see why it should not be done in Brisbane. The consideration of this matter may appear to hon. members to be out of place just now, but it will be seen on consideration to be closely connected with the welfare of the colony, for whatever affects the health of the community affects also the welfare of the people. I have much pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Address in Reply.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—It is always a very much more agreeable task for me to undertake to speak pleasantly of either men or manners when public questions are before this House, and on the present occasion I am in the agreeable position of being able to compliment the House and the mover and seconder of the Address upon the very sensible, modest, and reasonable style in which they treated the subjects presented to us in the Speech. There was none of that attempt to bolster up and assert that the Government were right in everything they had done, nor did the hon. gentlemen attempt to discuss measures of which, in their present condition, we know nothing, and have nothing to enable us to come to a just conclusion. That is an error which many young speakers fall into—speaking with authority upon measures, while not referring to the particular provisions of the measures themselves. But there are one or two points upon which I would say a few words, inasmuch as I see a lead has been taken in the right direction in the various questions brought before us, and chief above all others is the question which is given a most prominent position—namely, Imperial federation. Hon. gentlemen are well aware of the deep interest I have always taken in this matter, both in the mother-country and here, and I am indeed pleased now to be able to express my warm appreciation of the active part taken, the wise and statesmanlike course pursued, by the Premier of this colony in endeavouring by fostering and encouraging colonial federation to aid that ultimate and larger scheme—Imperial federation, a scheme which I have always regarded as of the greatest importance, and one which it would be desirable some day to consummate. The steps taken by the Government during the recess have been such as have met with the approval of nearly every thinking man in the community, and as such, I again say, it gives me much pleasure to express my sense of gratification at what has been done by the present Government in regard to the question. I have no intention now of taking up the other side, having given such praise to the Government as is just; nor do I intend to condemn any of their other measures, or raise any issue upon matters which it is proposed to deal with. I am not cognisant of any of the measures that may come before us beyond the general expressions which have been conveyed to us through the Governor's Speech, nor can we rightly judge of what the contents of these measures will be, except, perhaps, in the case of one or two, such as the Payment of Members Bill and the Repeal of the Coolie Statute. These are questions which must be treated on their own merits, and to waste the time of the House now upon them is a thing I should be exceedingly sorry to encourage, much less to do myself. The second question that is dealt with is that of the Joint Address of the two Houses, which was presented to Her Majesty, asking her to refer to the Privy Council the question of privilege in reference to money Bills; and I am very glad the question has been apparently satisfactorily determined—at least so says the Speech. What the

determination says I do not know, but only hope that the reply may be such as to clearly define our rights, and leave us with no doubt as to what is intended, and that it may not be an evasive reply that will tend to leave us just where we were before. I should not have framed my expressions in the way I have done, but that nothing but indefinite and evasive statements have yet met the public ear, nor am I aware that any special point has been decided. We see paragraphs in the papers to the effect that the rights of the Assembly have been upheld, but I am not aware that the rights of the Assembly were ever assailed, which casts a doubt upon the whole matter. But there will be time enough to discuss the whole question when we get the text, if there is anything left to discuss. Possibly the question may have been so satisfactorily settled that it will need no further comment. The third paragraph, referring to the government of New Guinea, is one that will occasion a very great deal of care and thought on the part of the Administration of the day to carry out; but I am satisfied that so far as matters have gone, and so far as the papers that have been distributed amongst us previous to our meeting show, the suggestions made by the present Government to the Imperial Government with reference to the future administration of New Guinea will be such as to meet with approval. They are of a nature such as are likely to meet the requirements of Queensland in reference to the position we occupy towards New Guinea. That New Guinea should be firmly and energetically taken in hand by this Government, and all necessary steps taken to ensure good government and protection to those persons who feel inclined to settle in that very promising country, everyone will admit, and it is very important that matters should be placed at once on a sound basis. There appears to be every hope that such will be the result of the efforts now being made, but there is a great deal yet to be done by the Home Government when assenting to the propositions made, so that the colonies may be left in no doubt as to what has been thrown on their hands. Queensland in particular must be left in no doubt, as under any circumstances she is bound to bear the chief brunt of providing a good government and facilitating the successful colonisation of New Guinea. With regard to the question of the supposed annexation of the New Hebrides, I will not take up your time beyond saying that the impression left on my mind when in England a year ago, with reference to the general question of annexation in the Pacific, was that the position of these colonies is such that leading politicians, and I may say statesmen, adopt a very different tone towards us now to what they did some years ago. There is a strong feeling on the part of leading statesmen at home that the day has arrived when Australasia is now so important a scion of the British Empire that her wants and requirements must be attended to in a somewhat different and better spirit than formerly existed, and I am, therefore, particularly hopeful that matters connected with all the Pacific Islands will be dealt with in a spirit much more to our satisfaction than heretofore. Passing over other matters, which I need not detain you upon, I will briefly refer to the Crown Lands Act of 1884, and sincerely trust that the statement in the Speech is correct, that the provisions of the Act are already producing beneficial settlement on the lands of the colony. It will, however, be quite time enough to discuss that matter when we find that the hopeful view taken is not being realised, or when we find that the Act is doing even much better than we have any reason to believe it does. I quite agree with the paragraph which

states that it will be necessary, for the present, to exercise the most rigid economy in expenditure. Of course that statement is especially addressed to the gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly, but as legislators and citizens and colonists we feel quite as keenly the importance of economy, and I sincerely trust that wise counsels will prevail in both branches of the Legislature with regard to expenditure. More especially I refer to the expenditure of public loans. The expenditure of colonial revenue is, of course, an important matter, but it is much more likely to find its own proper level by force of circumstances and by the outspoken expression of public opinion. Under these circumstances I only refer to loan expenditure. There has been a very strong tendency up to the present time towards exhausting our means too hurriedly, and because loan moneys do not come directly out of the pockets of the public the impression seems to exist that it may be spent with a recklessness and lavishness as will only tend in the future to increase the burdens of the country, which are already by far too heavy. I therefore trust that wise and prudent counsels will influence the Ministry of the day in not trying to force on unduly—merely for the sake of distributing the loan which Parliament has authorised—the expenditure of public loan money. However, it is in the hands of Parliament to consider the matter, and, without regard to any shade of politics, I trust every member of the House will watch over and carefully consider every question brought before us in which the expenditure of loan moneys is involved. And this applies more particularly to railway construction in the colony. As to the general policy of constructing railways, I have always been in accord with that, so long as the lines are judiciously selected; but I have seen a tendency to go much faster than is wise and prudent. I therefore throw out this expression of opinion, and it behoves this House to fairly reflect upon the question. I quite concur in the proposition to reserve the rights of water supply, and that is a question which in the old deeds of grant from the Crown the Government were very particular in watching over. The rights of the Crown to water, minerals, and such like were always recognised in the old deeds of grant, and I sincerely trust that any measure that may be brought forward having that object in view will be undertaken in an impartial spirit, while at the same time the rights of private individuals who may be holders of large tracts of country where water supply may be readily obtained will be reserved. I hope that the Government will be prepared to produce a comprehensive measure, and that useful results will ensue. There are a number of other Bills mentioned in the Speech, and some of them, I see, are old acquaintances which, when they come before us, will have to receive great care and attention. The tribunal for the trial of election petitions refers to the other branch of the Legislature, but that is a question which I have always thought should be put upon a more sound footing. I look at the question from an exceedingly independent standpoint, inasmuch as in our House we are in no way subject to the chance of having our right to sit appealed against. But, for the good government of a country, I think such a measure is necessary, and I shall be very pleased indeed to see a fair and independent tribunal established which will place the position beyond cavil. The last point is one of no less importance than others which I have mentioned, although the ultimate intention of the Government has not been made very clear. I refer, of course, to the proposal to redress some of the grievances which the people of Northern Queensland have,

in having their affairs administrated at the seat of government in Brisbane. For years past I have seen the necessity of a very important measure dealing with this subject which, sooner or later, it was proper that the Government should introduce. Of course, the difficulty in a measure of that sort is the probable increase of expenditure which would be necessary to establish branches of the most important departments in remote parts of the colony; still, so widely distributed are the centres of population in the colony that there is no doubt that, sooner or later, something of the sort must be done to allay the feeling which exists in the northern parts of the colony. No doubt other elements have been at work in giving rise to the demand for the separation of Northern from Southern Queensland. I am, of course, now alluding to the question of coloured labour. I am not going to discuss the merits or demerits of that question; but I cannot help alluding to it in connection with complaints that have arisen of the want of more local administration. No doubt it will become necessary to enlarge the provisions of local self-government upon many subjects, which will have the effect of giving people a voice in the management of their own affairs, and also in relieving the central government of many of its heavy burdens. Local taxation can be, and will be, borne by the taxpayer when the disposal of it is in his own hands, and he will become more cautious in asking for large expenditure when he is aware that the money comes out of his own pocket. There is one very large branch of the Public Service in which local taxation will have to be sooner or later resorted to. I refer, of course, to the large and still growing Department of Education. The principle of local boards of education adopted in the mother-country, in Germany, and in many other places, has been found to work well and satisfactorily, and where a considerable portion of the money expended is raised locally and dealt with by local authorities, the effect is to place the people in a position to feel and appreciate what they have got, very much better than if the money is handed over directly by the Government whenever clamoured for. There can be no doubt that the raising of money by direct appeals to the pockets of the people in a district, and the expenditure of that money by local boards, does much to relieve the central Treasury of considerable burdens, and if that system is adopted here it will go far towards abolishing that feeling of dissatisfaction that is otherwise felt by those who live at a distance from the central Government. Under all circumstances I sincerely trust that the measures that will be brought forward will be such as to meet with general approval, but at the same time it is to be hoped that this House will use its best judgment in making those measures of which members do not entirely approve as suitable as possible. As a whole, I have as little fault to find with the Speech which we have heard read to-day as with any Speech which has been presented to the country during the twelve years I have been in this House.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said: Before the question is put, I would like to say a few words upon the subjects dealt with in the Speech. I must congratulate the hon. gentlemen who have made their appearance in the House to-day for the first time, and I think that members of the House generally will be pleased to see them among us, and to feel that we shall have their experience and knowledge on special subjects to guide us in the different questions that come before us. I must confirm what the Hon. Mr. Wood stated with regard to what is to be gained by the Federal Council. I happened to be in Hobart at the

commencement of the sittings, and from what I saw I think that the principal credit for the success of the Council during its first session is to be attributed to the Premier. There were many difficulties which cannot be made public which took his greatest care and perseverance to overcome. I think that the Council acted wisely in restricting itself to measures of a preliminary character with the representation they had. With such a few colonies joined together it would not have been judicious to make any very serious alteration in the laws applying to those colonies, because of the absence of some more important colonies of the group. The constitution of the Council I do not think is sufficiently wide. It struck me then, and the more I have thought of it since the more I am of the same opinion, that a council having such large powers as the Federal Council is possessed of should consist of representatives drawn from a much larger field than the representatives of this Council. I saw therein a board, you may call it, of eight gentlemen legislating for the greater portion of Australasia, and it occurred to me that the smallness of the number seemed likely to furnish an element of danger which ought to be avoided. I therefore think that it will be necessary before the remainder of the colonies are induced to join the Council that the mode of representation should be altered. My friend the Hon. Mr. Gregory said he hoped this was the first step towards Imperial federation; but I must confess that I am not yet converted to the hon. gentleman's views on the subject, and I think Australia will do well to very carefully consider any proposition for Imperial federation. Australia has a future of its own before it, and that great future may be to some extent endangered or prejudiced by too intimate an association with any Government in the old country. We are happily, however, free from many of the difficulties and dangers that exist in the old country, and it would be dangerous for us, without very careful consideration, to attach ourselves to any country which has defects such as we have not amongst ourselves. Great Britain is now—to those who look beneath the surface—in a state of very great uncertainty. There are great struggles in England at the present time—the struggles between the landed interest, the mercantile interest, and the ordinary population. It is a sort of triangular duel, and we do not know what may be the development of that duel in a very few years; and why should Australia have itself attached to questions of that kind which are not interesting to us as Australians? In political and other unions it is always found that the stronger power sends the weaker to the wall when there is an association of parties or countries; and in a federated council the stronger power would be vested in the old country, and the representatives of the older parts of the federation would by their greater power have the great proportion of the benefit of federation. There are many things in connection with the subject which require very careful consideration, before the people of the colonies are led away by the rather taking phrase—at first sight—of Imperial federation. With regard to the question of British New Guinea, I think some credit is due to the Premier for the first practical attempt at providing for the government of that territory; but when that government is vested in the Government of Queensland, how it is to be worked is another matter. I should think that with the views of the land question held by the present Government they could not have had a better field for trying their ideas than a country like New Guinea, where there is no freehold and no such difficult question as land



monopoly in existence. If we look at the reports of proceedings in New Guinea, we find one extraordinary indication of what is to come. Some surveyors have gone up and they are surveying town allotments. It seems to me that wherever we have Australians settling, the first thing done is to survey some town allotments. Evidently New Guinea is going to follow suit, and when once there are town allotments other things will follow, which will end in the destruction of the natives. It has long been a grave question whether the aborigines of different countries settled by Europeans have been fairly treated or not, and here is an opportunity for the exercise of those ideas of philanthropy which are frequently strongly urged upon us. I trust there will be some delay, at any rate, in offering for sale town allotments in New Guinea. I do not know whether a *Government Gazette* is established there or not; but possibly the allotments will not be advertised until a *Government Gazette* is established, as that seems to be the only method by which sales of land are made public. I think the charge of the government of New Guinea is a very serious one, and it is incumbent on the people of Queensland to look very carefully into the question. I notice that there is to be an amendment of the Local Government Act. No doubt in some respects this is necessary, but the fact remains that the Divisional Boards Act is now accepted as a great benefit by both political parties in the colony. It is not long since that Act was regarded by one party in this colony as a very great mistake—as an injustice—but they have survived the infiction, and I am pleased to see the hon. gentleman who moved the adoption of the present Reply has spoken of the system of local government provided by that Act in terms such as can scarcely be excelled. In connection with local government, I may mention that there is a pretty large amount of taxation incurred in consequence of the subsidy paid to local bodies, and it would be well to look carefully into the incidence of that taxation. We must be very careful in preventing anything in the shape of class legislation. The working of the divisional boards and other local bodies is chiefly beneficial to property holders, and property owners receive a subsidy out of the other class who are not property owners, and are receiving out of revenue raised by taxes, customs duties, and so forth, £2 for every £1 raised in the shape of local rates. There ought to be some competent person to look into that matter carefully, and I think it will be seen that we are not acting quite fairly on the question of endowments to local bodies. The last question to which I shall refer is that of separation—one of the most important questions that will come before the present Parliament. The fact that there is a serious demand for separation is a very grave commentary upon the administration of the Government—I do not wish to say the administration of the Government by one party or the other, but I say it shows that the system of administration adopted for some time past in the southern portion of the colony has not given satisfaction in the northern portion. And while it would be a great pity to see this colony divided at the present time, still it would be better that the division should take place than that injustice should continue to be done to the northern portion of the colony. I would not be jealous of seeing the northern portion of the colony made into another independent colony if every attempt to satisfy them were made, and if we succeeded in parting on friendly terms; but I should be sorry to see separation take place as the result of a strong feeling of injustice done to the extreme northern part of the colony.

The HON. A. RAFF said: Gentlemen,—It is not my intention to say anything with regard to the Speech itself, but merely to make a remark with regard to one of the concluding paragraphs, which says that complaints have occasionally arisen of delay in the administration of public business in the more remote parts of Queensland. I take in connection with this the statement we have had from the Postmaster-General, who referred to the changes in the Ministerial arrangements since we met here last. I hope I am in order in saying that this House welcomes any change in the Ministerial arrangements which will tend—as we have reason to believe is the intention—to prevent delay in the administration of public business in Queensland.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the Address as adopted be presented to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, at Government House, by the Presiding Chairman and such other members as might be present, to-morrow afternoon, at 4 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at seventeen minutes past 5 o'clock.