

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

THURSDAY, 21 JULY 1887

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The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the following be the Address to Her Majesty :—

“ MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,—

“ We, the members of the Legislative Council of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, desire, on the occasion of the completion of the fiftieth year of Your Majesty's reign, to renew the assurance of our loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty's throne and person.

“ We offer to Your Majesty our dutiful congratulations on the prolongation of Your Majesty's reign for a period reached by few of Your Majesty's ancestors, and which has been marked by continuous advancement and prosperity in all parts of Your Majesty's dominions, and by unexampled progress in almost every branch of human knowledge.

“ Fifty years ago this province of the Empire was an almost unknown portion of the colony of New South Wales, containing only a few hundred people ; and when, less than twenty-eight years ago, it was erected into a separate colony under the name which your Majesty, to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants, was pleased to confer upon it, the population was still hardly 25,000, a number which in the succeeding portion of your Majesty's reign has increased nearly fifteenfold.

“ There is no portion of Your Majesty's wide dominions that enjoys greater freedom or happiness than that for which we speak, and we are deeply sensible of the gratitude which we owe to Your Majesty for the personal influence which Your Majesty has exerted in the government of the Empire and in the development and maintenance of the free institutions under which we live.

“ We earnestly hope that through the remainder of Your Majesty's reign—which we pray may long be continued—Your Majesty may witness an ever-increasing prosperity of all portions of the Empire, and a still closer union of its several parts under the common bond of allegiance to the Throne, and that Your Majesty may enjoy every personal blessing.”

The HON. W. D. BOX said it appeared almost invidious to say that “ almost every branch of human knowledge ” had been marked by unexampled progress. He was of opinion that every branch, without exception, had progressed, and thought it would be better to leave out the word “ almost.”

The HON. W. GRAHAM said he agreed with the Address as it stood, and he thought the objection of the Hon. Mr. Box was rather a hair-splitting one. He was not aware that the Hon. Mr. Box knew all the branches of human knowledge ; and there were some branches of human knowledge which had not advanced very much.

The HON. W. D. BOX : Name them !

The HON. W. GRAHAM said he did not pretend to be able to name them, because he did not know them all, and he fancied the Hon. Mr. Box was pretty much in the same position. He thought the Address was a very good one, and that the Committee ought to adopt it at once.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 21 July, 1887.

Answer to Address in Reply.—Address to Her Majesty.—
Leave of Absence.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The PRESIDENT announced that the Address in Reply to the Opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor, as agreed upon on the 20th instant, had been presented, and that His Excellency had been pleased to make the following reply :—

“ MR. PRESIDENT, AND HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

“ I thank you for your address and for your congratulations on the happy completion of the fiftieth year of Her Majesty's prosperous reign. I cannot doubt your continued loyalty and affection to the person and Government of our Most Gracious Sovereign ; and I receive with satisfaction your assurance of earnest co-operation with the other branch of the Legislature in measures for the welfare of the community.

“ A. MUSGRAVE.

“ Government House,

“ Brisbane, 21st July, 1887.”

ADDRESS TO HER MAJESTY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

That this House be put into a Committee of the Whole to consider an Address of congratulation to Her Majesty on the completion of the fiftieth year of her reign.

Question put and passed, and the House went into committee.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to an Address to Her Majesty.

The report was adopted, and the Address read by the Clerk.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—In moving that the Address, as read by the Clerk, be adopted by this House, I shall endeavour to give expression in a few sentences to feelings of congratulation on behalf of this Chamber and on behalf of myself as a colonist. I am sure the Address represents the feelings of the whole of Queensland, let alone this branch of the Legislature of which we have the honour to be members. Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria has ruled over the Empire for a period of half-a-century, and her reign has been characterised by great developments in the arts, in the sciences, and in commerce. Heartfelt congratulations on Her Majesty's jubilee year have proceeded from all parts of her Empire, and it is very pleasing indeed to her subjects to know that these congratulatory addresses have embodied the spontaneous expression of affection and loyalty to our Sovereign Lady, who has always evinced, in her life and in her acts, the greatest interest in the welfare of her peoples in all parts of the world, and the conservation and development of constitutional government. When Her Majesty ascended the throne I was not born, and have, of course, no intimate knowledge, except from what I have read in history, of the earlier years of her reign. But as the greater part of my life—from youth to manhood—has been spent in this great colony, I think it is not unworthy of the occasion to point out that this splendid territory, of which we are, I think, justly proud, was at that time almost wholly unknown to the civilised world. It bears, we are proud to own, a designation—a very happy one I think—which was given to it by Her Majesty herself; and as showing one of the developments which have taken place in the Empire—of which this forms no unworthy part—since Her Majesty ascended the throne, I will only refer to one subject which has received the greatest attention of the sons of the British nation in all parts of the world—namely, railway enterprise. When the Queen, in her youth, ascended the steps of the throne, there were barely 1,500 miles of railway in her whole Empire. At this moment we have, in this the youngest colony of the Australasian group, a larger mileage of railway open for traffic than subsisted at that time. I think that is a circumstance which is vastly to the credit of this young and enterprising colony, and one that does not discredit the wisdom and courage of the pioneers of this section of Australia, and of which even Her Majesty the Queen should, I think, feel proud. Throughout the whole of Australasia—I think we may confine ourselves to our own island continent on this subject—there have been spontaneous and deeply sincere expressions of loyalty to the throne and person of our good Queen. We are all proud of her. Her reign has been a glorious one, and it has been marked from the beginning to the present day by almost unvarying peace and prosperity. I am proud—no doubt every hon. member is—that we have the honour on this auspicious occasion of offering our humble congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. We pray that our Queen may long live to enjoy unimpaired health, so that she may fulfil in the future the great functions which she has so creditably discharged in the past; we pray that she may long continue her beneficent rule, and may God bless her.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I think that this is an occa-

sion that is well worthy of a speech from any member of this House. I thoroughly agree with what has fallen from the Postmaster-General. I have not his advantage of youth. I was born in the same year as Her Majesty, and therefore I have seen more of her reign than my hon. friend. I should very much like to be younger, but that cannot be helped. It cannot be disputed that during Her Majesty's reign the conditions under which we live have changed very much. I remember myself as a boy coming down the Thames in a Margate hoy before steam power was known. Electricity was unknown; photography and many other sciences were unknown; railways were few and far between; but now, as the Postmaster-General says, they are all over the world. In those days when there were so few railways I remember seeing a skit in *Punch*, with a map of England crossed and recrossed in every direction, with marks where railways should be; but it is strange to say that if a map of England were produced now, and the existing lines were placed on that map, there would be found to be more railways than were shown in sarcasm upon the map in question. When I first came to Australia, in the year 1839, the country was so far unknown that I have found old colonists who questioned whether the interior was a desert or not, and some of whom believed that there was only a crust of 200 or 300 miles and the rest useless. Experience has shown us the fallacy of that. The Postmaster-General, I think, said that at the time the Queen began her reign there were 1,500 miles of railway in England. I think the hon. gentleman is wrong, because I remember in 1838 travelling on the Great Western Railway which was then under construction, and only extended as far as Maidenhead, twenty-four miles; the only other railway I know of was Stephenson's first railway from Liverpool. But although the hon. gentleman may be wrong in that one fact, his conclusions are perfectly well justified. In speaking of Her Majesty I can hardly add anything to what the hon. gentleman has already said. We often meet in social conference, and then the very name of the Queen is quite sufficient in our imagination to show us what she really is. As a sovereign, she has shown herself to be the best constitutional sovereign in the world. She has reigned longer than any other woman who ever sat on a throne. As a wife and a mother she has shown an example to her sex. In every other path of life she has set an example worthy to be followed. I hope with the hon. the Postmaster-General that our Gracious Sovereign may long have health and strength to rule over us.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—I had hoped that some of the hon. members on the other side of the House would have taken up this matter before, because I am satisfied that we are all of one accord in the question now before us. For my own part my recollection goes back to the time of George IV. At that time, or rather a few years afterwards, when my memory began to fully develop, it was quite evident to me that the ancient feudal condition of England was fast dying out, and that the last dying embers would soon be cold. We had just at that time terminated a long and expensive war necessitating an immense expenditure, and which on its termination was the means of a number of young men being thrown upon the country without any proper occupation. The result was easily to be understood, and the old adage, that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," was fully exemplified. In those days it was looked upon as a distinct loss of caste if those who belonged to the class commonly known as gentlemen took to any other

occupation than that provided by the army, the law, the church, or the navy. Following upon that, we entered upon a condition of transmission; we had our sailor king, and the time had arrived for a great reform, and upon the accession of our present Sovereign, Queen Victoria, there was an opportunity for a great and marked change in our social condition. Fortunately, Her Majesty's advisers were all determined that everything should be done in order to improve the social condition of England, and set an example that all might follow. At the same time we also saw that change in our social views with regard to the occupations that might be undertaken by the educated classes; it then was no longer derogatory for a man to be either distinguished for his art or his technical knowledge, nor was he any longer despised because he acquired his position by means of commerce or manufactures. Fortunately our Queen and her Consort and all those around her did everything they could to favour the great improvement that was coming over the nation, and we see that not only was our social condition improved outwardly, but there was no special inducement for people to become worse than they were, but rather a tendency showed itself for them to become better than they would have been. Again, the setting free of a large number of educated men and bringing them into occupations that were more useful had a marked effect, and caused us to gradually modify our institutions. We see a vast improvement, not only in our material condition, but in our social and moral condition. The result of this has also been that the people have been educated, and instead of some three-fourths of the people being in a condition of gross ignorance we now cannot say that one-fourth of the people are really uneducated. I think it is a matter for congratulation also that during Her Majesty's long reign the conditions of government should have so much improved. We have seen the reformation made in our government, not only as regards the work of mere matters of official routine, but we have seen also vast advance made in the freedom of the subject. I can remember the time when such publications as now appear, and the free comments that are now made on Parliament and public men in general, would have met with the immediate consignment of the writers or publishers to duress vile. Now everyone can express his opinions freely, and, unless they are prejudicial to society and are really bad, few people trouble themselves about them. In fact, that great freedom of everyone to express his real opinions so long as he does not disturb the condition of society has been one of the most important items of freedom that we have enjoyed, and I think it a source of congratulation that we have arrived at a period in Her Majesty's reign when we can say she has reigned fifty years, not only with success, but with great success. I can only join in the hope set forth in the last paragraph of the Address, that Her Majesty may enjoy "every personal blessing."

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I will just say a few words on the subject of this Address, which I am very glad to be in a position to record my approval of. I think if we look back upon the history of our Queen we cannot admire any one quality in her more than her behaviour as a wife and a mother. As a wife she was an example to all women, and as a mother she certainly has been an example not only to all those in the British dominions, but throughout the world; and not only has she been an example to mothers, but to children also. Her Majesty has shown that she possesses the very strongest maternal feelings, and at times when overcome by grief at the losses she has sustained,

she has been sometimes censured for hiding herself so much from her subjects; but I am sure those who have watched the career of Her Majesty will agree with me that in her maternal feeling—the feeling she displays towards her offspring, and in the feeling of interest she has shown in all her people—she has proved herself to be worthy of the love, honour, and regard of her subjects. I cordially approve of this Address, and it is with satisfaction I record the very high esteem in which I hold Her Majesty.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said: Hon. gentlemen,—I thoroughly agree with the terms of the Address, and I fully agree with everything said by every speaker as to the good qualities of Her Majesty, but I really consider that the subject has been pretty well thrashed out, and I have no hesitation in saying that the last speaker, the Hon. Dr. Taylor, has treated us to a good deal of gush and bunkum. If the motion is now put I have not the slightest doubt it will be passed, but it is useless to go on speechifying about these things we have read forty thousand times over in the newspapers. I consider myself as loyal a man as there is in the colony; as a boy—I cannot go back to the time the Queen was born, but I can remember her coronation—I used to go religiously through the wet to see her when she used to come to Scotland. I think hon. members have been piling on the agony a little too much, and we had better get on with some other business, if there is anything else to be done.

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a letter from the Private Secretary of the Governor, intimating that His Excellency had granted leave of absence for the present session to the Hon. Sir James F. Garrick.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—I wish to give notice that I will ask the Postmaster-General how long leave of absence is to be recommended by the Crown. It appears to me that—

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but I think he is entirely out of order. He may ask a question without notice, and the Postmaster-General may answer it if he likes, but it is a rule that no debate can take place on a question.

ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—It is desirable that the House should adjourn till next Wednesday week, and I hope some hon. gentleman will move an amendment to that effect on the motion I am about to make. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR: I presume there will not be much work, if any, for us to do for some time, and I move as an amendment that the House adjourn until Wednesday the 3rd August next.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said: Hon. gentlemen,—Before we adjourn for so long a period, I think it devolves upon us to maintain our position and protect the character of a member—any member—of this House, who has been unscrupulously or otherwise attacked elsewhere. A most violent attack has been made upon, I do not hesitate to say, one of the most promising and one of the youngest members of this House; made elsewhere, in a place to which I may not refer. If the hon. gentleman is really culpable to the extent he was said to be, he is bound, at any rate, to make such an explanation

as will justify him in sitting here. I feel that I am doing that hon. gentleman a kindness in giving him the opportunity of showing that he is not blameable to the extent he appears to be according to the public prints. No doubt a very serious charge has been brought against a member of this Chamber—namely, the Hon. Dr. Taylor; but I am perfectly sure that he will avail himself of the opportunity of meeting that charge; and I am perfectly sure also that it is due to the dignity of this Chamber that he should meet it. I wish to preserve this Council from the public accusation of misapplying the power and position members occupy here by writing letters to constituencies and exercising an influence under the patronage of the Government which members of this Chamber should not endeavour to exercise.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—As the Hon. Mr. Walsh has referred to an incident which occurred in another place reflecting very seriously upon my position here as well as on my personal character, I should like at the present moment to be able to enter into a full explanation of the occurrence which gave rise to the remarks of the hon. member. At the present time, however, I am not in possession of sufficient information to warrant me in stating the case positively to hon. members; but as soon as I am in possession of all the necessary facts I shall take the very first opportunity of making a full explanation.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am at a loss to know why the Hon. Dr. Taylor should be in want of information. I have seen the letter written by the hon. member, and can give it nearly word for word. I know the man to whom it was written—Patrick Higgins, of Warwick. The letter pointed out that it would be much wiser—

The PRESIDENT: I must point out that according to rule 22 “no member shall digress from the subject-matter of the question under discussion, or comment upon the words used by any other member in a previous debate, or upon any expressions said to have been used in the Legislative Assembly.” Though the word “Assembly” has not been used, no member of this House can mistake what is meant; and the debate is exceedingly irregular, and will, I hope, stop at once.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: I did not allude to the Legislative Assembly at all; and I have not even perused what took place in that Chamber. I saw the letter written by the Hon. Dr. Taylor to Patrick Higgins.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: No letter has been referred to in this Chamber.

The Hon. W. GRAHAM: I am telling hon. members who do not already possess the information what I know about the matter. What I got up for was to find out whether we, as members of this House, have a right to take part in the election of members of the other House, and use that influence we have in favour of either one candidate or the other. I do not know whether we have or not, and I should like to get a ruling on the point.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The Hon. Dr. Taylor informed us that he required certain information in reference to the subject-matter of the incident referred to by the Hon. Mr. Walsh, and that when he receives that information he will take an early opportunity of dealing with the subject in this Chamber. I think we may rest at that to-day, because when he does take that step the discussion which the Hon. Mr. Graham desires will naturally follow.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

The House adjourned at 5 o'clock.