

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1888

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 5 September, 1888.

Question.—Resignation of the Government.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. PALMER asked the Colonial Secretary—
Will the Government take into favourable consideration the necessity for the establishment of a laboratory for the cultivation of virus for inoculation for pleuro-pneumonia?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead) replied—

Under the existing circumstances, I must ask the hon. member to postpone his question until a future occasion—when there may be someone else to answer it.

RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—With the indulgence of the House, I have a statement to make. I informed the House yesterday that His Excellency had communicated with me, and that I had asked for time to make myself acquainted with the facts which had led to the Government tendering their resignation. Having made myself acquainted with the facts, I had an interview with His Excellency this morning, when I informed him that, for reasons which I communicated fully in writing to His Excellency, I did not feel myself able to undertake the duty of forming an Administration. I am not in a position at present to inform the House what were those reasons, but the House will no doubt be informed of them at a convenient time. But I think I am at liberty to say that I informed His Excellency that in my opinion there was no sufficient reason for the resignation of the Government.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir. T. McIlwraith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I received from His Excellency the following memorandum this morning:—

“MINUTE FOR THE HON. THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

“Government House,

“Brisbane, 5th September, 1888.

“The Governor has had the honour to receive the Chief Secretary’s letter of yesterday’s date, in which he tenders to the Governor the resignation of himself and his colleagues.

“The Governor had already acquainted the Chief Secretary that he had no desire for their resignation, and sees no necessity for it; and he therefore declines to accept it. The Governor telegraphed yesterday to the Secretary of State for his instructions with regard to the questions under discussion between his advisers and himself, and only regrets that they should have been unnecessarily made public by what passed in the Houses of Legislature yesterday.

“Even in the cases where Ministers have ceased to command the confidence of the Assembly and their resignation has been accepted, it is usual for them to retain office until their successors are appointed.

“A. MUSGRAVE.”

To that I replied as follows:—

“Chief Secretary’s Office,

“Brisbane, 5th September, 1888.

“SIR,

“I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency’s minute of this date, in which you decline to accept the resignation of myself and my colleagues in the Ministry, which I yesterday tendered to Your Excellency.

“I regret that the action of Ministers in informing Parliament yesterday of the question under discussion between Your Excellency and your advisers has not met with your approval. I submit, however, that it was the only constitutional course which they could pursue. It was clearly our duty to inform Parliament that the Ministry had resigned, and it was equally incumbent on the leader of the Opposition to inform the Assembly that Your Excellency had sent for him and requested him to form an Administration. It was impossible in this case to confine my statement in the Assembly to a mere intimation of the fact that we had tendered our resignation, but the reasons which it was thought necessary to give were confined to such information as, in my opinion, Parliament was entitled to have.

“Ministers quite understand that they retain office until their successors are appointed, but until the question at issue is satisfactorily determined, it will be impossible to proceed with any parliamentary business.

“I have, &c.,

“THOMAS McILWRAITH.

“His Excellency

Sir Anthony Musgrave, G.C.M.G.,
Governor.”

Of course the position is now exactly as it was. His Excellency having declined to accept our resignation, does not affect our resignation, because it is there all the same, and we only await our successors to take our office. In deference, however, to his request—it is not put in exact terms, but I take it to be a request—that we should wait until he hears from the Secretary of State from home, I think the proper thing will be for us to adjourn, because we cannot possibly do any parliamentary business. With regard to the remark made by the hon. member for North Brisbane, who leads the Opposition—that he had advised His Excellency that he did not see there was any necessity for us to resign—I take it for what it is worth. Of course it was the resignation of a Ministry whose honour is in our care, and therefore we have to regard our honour a great deal more than the opinion of the hon. member opposite. I take the hon. member’s opinion for what it is worth. We were guarding our honour in resigning, and we see no reason whatever to recede from the position we have taken up, and so long as we are Ministers we shall certainly not recede from it. I move that this House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at twenty minutes to 4 o’clock.