

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 9 JULY 1895

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TUESDAY, 9 JULY, 1895.

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

TREASURY BILLS AND SAVINGS BANK
SECURITIES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of communications from the Auditor-General to the effect that the Treasury bills authorised by the Treasury Bills Act of 1893 and the securities of the Savings Bank had been duly audited and found to be correct. Ordered to be printed.

PETITIONS.

SUPPRESSION OF GAMBLING.

Mr. SMYTH presented a petition from the Presbytery of Brisbane in favour of the Bill for the suppression of gambling.

Mr. KINGSBURY presented a similar petition from the Brisbane Ministers' Union.

Petitions read and received.

NEW BILLS.

The following new Bills were introduced, and read a first time:—

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer): A Bill for limiting the hours of business in shops. Second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

By Mr. ARMSTRONG: A Bill to prevent in certain cases the lapsing of Bills by the termination of a session of Parliament. Second reading made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 26th instant.

By Mr. POWERS: A Bill to amend the Elections Act of 1885. Second reading made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 26th instant.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Upon the Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the Address in Reply being read,

After a pause,

Question—That the Address to His Excellency the Governor [*vide* page 12] be adopted—put and passed.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. M. Nelson): I have to intimate to the House that it will be His Excellency's pleasure to receive the Address to-morrow, at half-past 3 o'clock. I move that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed.

HANSARD.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving—

That the report of the joint committee of the two Houses on reporting, printing, and circulating *Hansard*, be now adopted—

said: It is my duty to move this motion, and I do so with some pleasure, because matters which were considered necessary to be inquired into last session have been inquired into during the recess, and I think many difficulties have been removed by the evidence obtained from the Government Printer and the Principal Shorthand Writer. I fully expected to have been able to get information upon more branches of the subject than I did. I had expected to be able to visit New Zealand and get information there, but I did not go there owing to circumstances over which I had no control. But the Principal Shorthand Writer had obtained valuable information from various quarters; and I may state the committee concluded that it was no use going over old ground. Hon. members will discover from reading "Votes and Proceedings" that there have been five or six committees sitting on precisely the same subject, and the object of this committee was to bring matters up to date, to discuss what things are being done, and to see if we could not remedy anything that time and experience had proved ought to be remedied. The only real thing that the committee did besides taking evidence was to decide that our present arrangements, considering the position of the colony, our finances, and our requirements, give us as good a record as we can reasonably expect. I have no doubt that hon. members will agree that so far as the record of the proceedings is concerned, the *Hansard* we have got is a credit to the colony, and is quite as good a record as some that the other colonies pay a very much greater price for. It was suggested last year that persons outside the

officers of this House had, in some direct or indirect way, influenced the mode of the publication and printing of *Hansard*. The evidence will dispel any idea of that. There never was anything in it, and it came out in the evidence that nothing of the kind had ever been done. The officers of the House interpreted what they conceived to be the wishes of the House, but I think it is wiser, as I suggested upon one occasion, to deal with the matter by direct resolution. It is easy to misinterpret the wishes of the House, and to avoid any difficulty of that character arising in the future the committee, without a discordant note, came to the conclusion that it was desirable to have a standing committee similar to what they have in New Zealand, and which works very well there. They call it "The Reporting of Debates Committee," and it acts as a board of advice to assist the officers of the House, and especially the Speaker, in the performance of what at times must be a difficult duty. Therefore the committee arrived at the conclusion that, whilst the present mode of reporting and circulating *Hansard* is satisfactory, the House would be more satisfied if it were known that a standing committee, consisting of eight members, four from each House, which is the rule, were appointed to assist the Speaker in all matters relating to *Hansard*. If any alterations are contemplated in future—and hon. members will find upon going through the evidence that there are some minor things which do not necessarily involve a special report—I feel sure that the committee, with the benefit of the knowledge they have acquired, ought to be able to make *Hansard* even a more accurate record than it is at present. For instance, it is suggested that after an hon. member has revised his speech a marginal note or asterisk should put against it, which will indicate that it has been revised, and that speech will go forth to the world with the authority of the member who made it. Although we have not said it would be advisable to do that, still I have no doubt that it would be. Another matter is this: As you read *Hansard* the time is not put against the speeches, and in that respect it is in fact misleading. For instance, an hon. member makes a speech which it is found necessary by the shorthand writer to report at length, and immediately afterwards another hon. member rises and is reported in only a few lines, which leads to an erroneous conclusion. The system in vogue in other places of taking the time at which an hon. member rises and at which he ceases may be considered with advantage. These are things which, although we have not mentioned them in the report, have been thought of, and I feel sure that the committee will be able to make suggestions which will make *Hansard* what we desire it to be—namely, a correct record of our proceedings.

Mr. RAWLINGS: How about reporting after midnight?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To report speeches fully after midnight would necessitate an increased staff, and there might be a difficulty in that respect; but under the present system, the reporting after midnight, except when anything in the nature of obstruction takes place, is satisfactory. I may state that arrangements have been made—I hope to the satisfaction of the *Hansard* reporters—by which the country secures their services permanently. They will not now be engaged merely for the session, but permanently on a fixed salary.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When Parliament is not using their services they will be told off to other departments and there employed. That arrangement has worked satisfactorily so far, and it is a matter of economy; so that we

have secured the services of a competent staff, and we have a very fair and impartial Principal Shorthand Writer.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He, so far as is humanly possible, condenses the speeches with fairness and discrimination. As to the issue of *Hansard*, of course, the convenience of hon. members should be primarily consulted, and arrangements have been made by which they will get the official record of each day's proceedings at 3.30 the following afternoon; and, in addition, they will get proofs, so as to be able to revise their speeches of the day before. On some days, if the proofs are returned without delay, they may be in time for correction before the speeches are issued to the public. If not, they will, at any rate, be in time for the bound volume. That arrangement seems to work satisfactorily for our convenience. Now, as to the convenience of the public. The information at our disposal seems to point to the conclusion that the public generally are satisfied with getting *Hansard* in its present form, to which an index is supplied at the end of the session. Every effort will be made by the Government Printing Department to carry out the wishes of the House, both in spirit and intention. No obstacle will be thrown in the way, and if anything can be done by the use of improved appliances or otherwise to further meet the convenience of the House it will be done. Generally the committee found—there was no discordant element in it—that taking things all round we have every reason to be satisfied. That is all I need say on that subject. The suggestions now made emanated from myself as chairman of the committee, and are the result of my reading of what takes place in New Zealand and elsewhere. If the committee now suggested is appointed, the Speaker and the President will no doubt, before any steps are taken in regard to altering the system, ask their counsel and advice, and act strictly in accordance with the expressed directions of the House. I think that the two suggestions made are good; and without further remarks, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. GROOM: Members have hardly come prepared to discuss this matter. They fully expected, after the adjournment of the debate on the Address in Reply being moved on Thursday, that the discussion would have been continued to-day. The result is that members have come utterly unprepared to discuss any Government measure; and it is most unusual that ordinary business should be gone on with immediately after the adoption of the Address in Reply.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is not Government business.

Mr. GROOM: I know that, but it is a matter to which we have not directed our attention. I am only pointing out the extraordinary anomaly that presents itself to the House. It is quite unprecedented. I have had no experience of such a thing before—the utter collapse of the debate on the Address after the adjournment had been moved by a gentleman on the Government side. The Colonial Secretary has said that the recommendations in this report are on the lines of the New Zealand committee. Is that so?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. GROOM: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is aware of it or not, but no member of the Legislative Council of New Zealand is allowed to be on the committee appointed to alter or revise the speeches of members of the House of Representatives. The proceeding adopted in New Zealand is this: When the Premier moves the ordinary motion for the appointment of a committee to regulate the printing connected

with the House, it is moved in this form: "That a committee of ten members be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters relating to the reporting of debates and to the printing ordered to be executed by the House," and the names proposed are those of members of the House of Representatives. I think that is the proper course to take. It may be quite right to invite the concurrence of the other Chamber in mere matters of detail in which both Houses are concerned, but the revision and alteration of speeches of members of this Chamber should, I think, be confined entirely to members of this Chamber. I would ask the hon. gentleman whether he is not going beyond the ordinary custom in asking us to appoint a committee of the character proposed? I am not saying anything disrespectful of the other Chamber, but, in view of what has happened in the mother colony within the past week or two, it is only right that we should religiously guard the privileges that we have, especially in regard to the printing and publication of *Hansard*, considering that it is to be paid for by this Chamber as the representatives of the people. I think, therefore, we should exercise our own powers, and not delegate them to the other Chamber, and I would suggest to the hon. gentleman that, as he is constituting the committee on the lines laid down in New Zealand, he should carry out the New Zealand practice in its entirety, and move for a committee composed of ten or eight members of this Assembly.

Mr. DAWSON: In New Zealand they have half-hour speeches.

Mr. GROOM: I am not now speaking of the limitation of the speeches, but of the constitution of the committee. I am aware that the Standing Orders there regulate the length of the speeches.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. T. J. Byrnes): It is a great failure.

Mr. GROOM: I believe it is a great failure. The recommendations of a select committee appointed by the New Zealand Parliament appear to me to be better than these recommendations. That committee was appointed to report upon the best means of circulating and distributing *Hansard*, the present system, I presume, not being in accordance with the wishes of a majority of the members of the House of Representatives, or the committee would not have been appointed. The committee brought up the following recommendations:—

"1. That the space allowed to each member, excepting the Premier, a Minister introducing business of his department, and the leader of the Opposition, and one member of the Opposition to be appointed by him, be limited to a space of fifteen columns of present *Hansard* per month.

"2. That the matter for publication in each *Hansard* be limited each day to debates taking place between the hours of midnight and midnight on the previous day.

"3. That the system of corrections by members be discontinued.

"4. That, unless specially requested by the member being reported, the *Hansard* reporters be authorised to condense speeches where this can be done without injury to the main arguments.

"5. That speeches made upon motions of adjournment of the House, and all irregular discussion, unless under special instructions from the House, shall be briefly summarised.

"6. That there shall be a daily issue of *Hansard*, in such form as may prove most suitable, which may be supplied to newspapers, for circulation, free of postage, at the cost of paper and printing."

At a later date the chairman of that committee brought up a supplementary report, expressing regret that reasonable attention had not been given to their recommendations, which were calculated to be of great advantage to the electors, and to lead to economy in expenditure. It would appear, as I said last session, that in

every colony, in every session of Parliament, there are debates with regard to *Hansard*. It seems that no Parliament in the colonies has hit upon what we may call the happy medium of pleasing all sides. Whether this committee recommended by the Colonial Secretary will satisfy the House and the public outside, of course remains to be seen. There is not much interest taken in *Hansard* outside the walls of this Chamber. Its circulation from the Government Printing Office is very limited; but as a record of the proceedings of the House I consider it to be invaluable, and in that connection I would point to one particular thing which occurred only a week ago. Newspapers, in the exercise of their discretion, may consider a speech not worthy of being reported. At the same time, the member himself may consider that it is of very vital consequence to his constituents. There was a speech delivered here not many evenings ago which occupies some seven or eight pages of *Hansard*. The constituents of that hon. member, I dare say, would have been pleased to have seen that speech *in extenso*, but the Press evidently thought it was not worth reporting, even to the extent of half a column. In a case of that kind a member has the protection of *Hansard*, if it is a protection, for having his ideas put in proper form before his constituents. Complaints have been made outside as to the way in which the hon. member was treated; but he is well able to take care of himself, and I am not here to protect him. But there is no doubt that *Hansard* is a protection to him if he considers he has not received satisfaction in the Press. As the Premier knows, *Hansard* itself was established simply for the protection of the House in that respect—that it should be a historical record of the speeches made here. Whether that is valuable or not, is for the outside public to say. However, as I said, members are not at present prepared to discuss the matter in the way they would like. I am glad the Colonial Secretary has seen his way to accept what he was rather opposed to last session—the retaining of a competent staff of reporters, instead of discharging them at the end of a session, and reappointing them at the beginning of the following session. I am convinced that the course he has foreshadowed is the right one to pursue. I fully endorse his remarks as to the character of the gentleman at the head of the staff. As long as that gentleman is there I feel assured the *Hansard* will be turned out in a way that will be creditable to the House and satisfactory to the country. I would only suggest further that the appointments to the committee should be made wholly and solely from this Chamber, and that the other House should have no voice in reporting and arranging the printing of speeches or documents connected with the House elected by the people.

The PREMIER: I should like to have some expression of opinion from hon. members as to the second paragraph of the report, which states that “the present system of reporting, printing, and circulating *Hansard* is generally satisfactory.” That is really the point we want to find out—whether the present system is one that should be continued, or whether we ought to amend it in some particular form. I think the report of the committee is correct, but I do not pretend to have any great experience in the matter. No complaints have come to me from any of the public as to the manner in which *Hansard* is now issued, or was issued last session. It would be a great point to know if this is really the voice of the House or not.

Mr. REID: How are you going to get at the voice of the House? The faction will have to get up one after the other.

The PREMIER: We can always get the voice of the House in the way provided by the Standing Orders, by somebody moving an amendment to the motion, or by some other form of that nature. The hon. member ought to know that very well. With regard to the strictures made on the third paragraph of the report, that a standing committee consisting of eight members, four from each House, be appointed to assist Mr. President and Mr. Speaker in all matters relating to the reporting of debates, I am inclined to agree with all that has been said by the hon. member who has just sat down. I think each House ought to appoint its own standing committee. This House ought to have its committee to confer with Mr. Speaker, and the other House ought to have its committee to confer with Mr. President. That decidedly would be an improvement. At the same time it must be recollected that we have only one staff of reporters: we have the Principal Shorthand Writer and his staff. The committee of this House, of course, would only deal with the speeches delivered and reported in this Chamber, and the same with the other committee. The Principal Shorthand Writer sends any part of his staff that may be most convenient to report for this House, and another part to report in the other House. Would there be any clashing that way?

Mr. GROOM: I do not think so.

The PREMIER: I have had so little experience in the matter that I cannot say. But I am entirely in accord with the idea that each House ought to have its own standing committee, and it would be as well for the House to express its opinion on that question.

Mr. CROSS: I was a member of this *Hansard* Committee, and the minutes of the last meeting, held on the 24th June, show that there was only one member of this House present on that occasion. Had I been present I certainly would have opposed the passing of the second paragraph of the report. I do not think it expresses what was brought out by the evidence. I do not consider the reporting is altogether satisfactory, not but what the chief and the members of the staff do their work thoroughly well, but that they have been hampered with instructions. In one case the evidence of the chief of the staff goes to show that he received instructions from the Speaker at the beginning of 1893 to condense very much more in committee in order to save expense. He also speaks of a resolution that was tabled in 1892 by the then Premier, Sir S. W. Griffith, the object of which was to reduce reporting in committee. That resolution was debated, and ultimately withdrawn, it being understood, so the witness states, that the House was satisfied with the character of the reporting at that time, which was somewhat condensed. That was stated in the debate. The witness also stated that previously he had received instructions from Mr. Speaker Norton, in general terms, to curtail the report of the debates, especially in committee. Then he went on to say that he condensed the reports according to what he understood from the discussion on that resolution. He admitted that the reporting was more condensed now than it was before. Since that time the House has not expressed its opinion by any discussion or resolution whatever. It appears, however, that the Speaker has taken on himself to give instructions as to condensation, and this is what I object to. I do not think he has any right to give instructions in regard to reporting the debates except on an express resolution moved in this House. I think the members of this House should be as jealous of interference on the part of the Speaker as of having their debates subject to revision by a committee which includes members of the other Chamber. I happened to be fifteen minutes late at the last meeting of the Joint

Committee, and I found that the report of the committee had been adopted in hot haste by a meeting consisting of four members of the other Chamber and the Colonial Secretary. I think fifteen minutes' grace would be little enough to allow, but when I arrived the report had been adopted and the committee had dispersed. I would like hon. members to take note of the fact that the Principal Shorthand Writer admits that the report is more condensed now than it was immediately after the debate in 1892, also that this was the result of instructions received from the Speaker. I am very much of the opinion of the hon. member for Toowoomba and Drayton, that only members of this House should revise the speeches of its members. I do not think it would be wise to allow the Upper House to have anything to do with the speeches of this House. In regard to the form in which *Hansard* is published, I must admit that generally the book form is approved of, though I am in favour of a daily *Hansard*. I think the committee, if it is appointed, should take particular notice of the fact that after 10 or 11 o'clock at night it appears to be the rule, no matter how important a speech may be, to condense it. That was shown very conclusively in the suspension cases, when it was found that the proceedings were so meagrely reported or so much condensed that the records were valueless to the court. I think the House should take some steps through this motion or by some other means to guard against this, and to revert to the condensed report in operation shortly after the debate in 1892. The instructions given by the Speaker at the commencement of this Parliament should be withdrawn, and the gentleman at the head of the reporting staff, while receiving instructions from the Speaker in many matters, should exercise his independence in reporting the debates except when the instructions given are authorised by this House. It is an invasion of the privileges of the House for the Speaker to give instructions unauthorised with regard to the reports, and I strongly object to any such thing. Many members have had good cause to complain with regard to the condensation of the reports. I do not say it is the result of partiality on the part of the staff; I only say that the manifestation is there. It is a very strange thing that certain members, especially Ministers, have a prominence given to their speeches which is far in excess of that given to the speeches of other members, especially on this side of the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No!

Mr. CROSS: In regard to extracts there is one very glaring case, and that case is mentioned in the evidence. During a debate in 1894 the Colonial Secretary read a very large number of extracts which were faithfully put in; but the extracts read by the hon. member for Burke, which were quite as important in connection with his speech, were practically ignored. That is only one of many cases. The hon. member for Woothakata has openly complained in this House of meagre reports, and I think some attention should be paid to the matter. I hope the House will express its opinion with no uncertain sound, and not permit the Upper Chamber, or the upper faction, to interfere in the reporting of the debates of this House.

Mr. DRAKE: After the remarks made by the Premier, I presume the sting will be taken out of this debate, and I should like to know from the Colonial Secretary whether he will be prepared to take back the report for reconsideration. Certainly as it stands it has a glaring defect, and I hardly think the members of this Chamber will be disposed to agree with the third paragraph. It appears that this report was adopted by four members of the Legislative Council and the Colonial Secretary, so

that really the second paragraph means that the present system is generally satisfactory in the opinion of four members of the Legislative Council and the Colonial Secretary. As I understand that it would not be in order to move an amendment on the report, the only correct course is to refer the report back to the committee for reconsideration. I quite agree with the remarks of the Colonial Secretary in regard to the present issue of *Hansard* in so far as it is regarded as an official record of the proceedings of the House, and I am very glad the Government have seen their way to permanently re-engage the *Hansard* staff. It is as good a staff as there is in any of the colonies, and I always urged on the Government the desirability of retaining the services of these gentlemen. But I am still of the same opinion I expressed once before, and it is that the discontinuance of the daily *Hansard* was inadvisable and unjustifiable—that the daily issue should not have been discontinued except by the authority of the House. It was upon the authority of this House that the daily *Hansard* was established, and without a similar authority it should not have been discontinued. Attempts, it will be remembered, have been made since 1892 to make a change in the production of *Hansard*, and every attempt that was made to get a decision of this Chamber in favour of an alteration was defeated. In 1892 the then Premier moved a motion to the effect that in future the reporting should be more concise than it had been, and after a long discussion the hon. gentleman found it advisable to withdraw the motion. He then stated that his only object had been to ascertain whether the House approved of a certain amount of condensation which was adopted at that particular time. Yet we learn now from this report that instructions were given to the chief of the *Hansard* staff at the commencement of 1893 to exercise a larger measure of condensation than he had done previously. No authority came from the House for that being done. In 1894, by the authority of yourself, Sir, and the President, or by the authority of the Government, the daily *Hansard* was suddenly discontinued, and it was not until the House had met and action had been taken for its discontinuance that the House became aware of the change. I do not wish to say anything unparliamentary, but I think that the action of somebody in discontinuing the daily *Hansard* without any authority from the House was highly improper. We may be very well satisfied with *Hansard* as it is published now, regarding it as an official record of the proceedings of the House, and I am aware that a number of persons consider the present form more convenient than the old form. In some of the country districts where the mails are very infrequent—only once a week, or once in two or three days—the fact that *Hansard* is not published daily is no inconvenience whatever; but I think that the publication of *Hansard* in the present method, excellent as it may be, is no compensation for the loss of the daily *Hansard*, especially in the metropolis. We have to remember the circumstances under which the daily issue was started. It was felt that fairplay was not given to members all round in the daily Press, and it was in order to correct that that the daily *Hansard* was published. In order that *Hansard* may be effective in correcting an evil of that kind, it is absolutely necessary that it should be published in the morning. The publication of the daily *Hansard* was particularly effective for that purpose. I believe it had the effect also of improving the reporting by the daily Press, and though I, for one, am not prepared to say one word against the way in which the reports of the proceedings of this

House are given in the daily Press at the present time, we must remember that just now it is on its good behaviour. If the House agrees—it never has agreed yet—to the permanent discontinuance of the daily *Hansard*, I feel sure that circumstances will arise again which will make hon. members just as anxious as hon. members were formerly to incur expense and trouble for the establishment of a daily *Hansard*. I trust, therefore, that members of this Chamber more particularly will consider very carefully before they sanction any change being made in that direction. I object altogether to the constitution of the committee which has brought up this report. The constitution of that committee was anything but satisfactory. The matter of the publication of a daily *Hansard* is a matter between the members of this House and their constituents. The gentlemen in the other Chamber, of whom I wish to speak with all respect, have no constituents. At the time when *Hansard* was first established, and for some years after, the reporting in the Council was not done by the *Hansard* reporting staff, but it continued to be done by one gentleman of the former *Hansard* staff, and though the reports of the Council appeared in the daily *Hansard* with the reports of the Assembly, they were for a great number of years always placed after the Assembly reports. It was only at the commencement of last session, I think, that precedence in the *Hansard* report was given to the Council. That may be a very small thing in itself, but it is one among others which shows a tendency on the part of the gentlemen who at present occupy the position of Government to magnify the Council at the expense of this Chamber. I think the constitution of the committee which submitted this report was a departure from the ordinary practice. I believe there have been joint committees in the past in which the number of members from the two Houses has not been the same, and I think it is only reasonable that in forming a joint committee the larger number of members should be from this more numerous House. We have seventy-two members in this House, while the other Chamber contains only about half that number; yet in forming this committee only four members of this House of seventy-two members are chosen, and four from the other Chamber, with the result, as is seen in the report of their deliberations, that there was nearly always a preponderance of the members of the Council, and at the meeting at which the report was adopted no member of this Chamber was present except the Colonial Secretary. I think the suggestion made by the Premier that there should be a separate committee for each Chamber is a very good one. If it were adopted we should get back very nearly to the same position we were in before. Previously the President of the Council and Speaker were, as it were, a committee for the management of *Hansard*, and if the proposal of the Premier is adopted that state of things will be almost unaltered, the only difference being that the President and Speaker would each have a small committee chosen from its own House to support the action of its head. Before sitting down I wish to say a word or two about reporting late at night. Everyone must know that the work of a shorthand writer is very exhausting, and that it is impossible for any staff to go on reporting day and night in the gallery. There must come a time, if the House sits very late, when the reporting must be considerably curtailed, if it does not cease altogether. The proper remedy for this is to have a limited time for sitting, and not to sit all through the night. I am informed that during the late very heavy debates in the Parliament of New South Wales one

gentleman, a very old member of the staff, became physically exhausted, and absolutely fainted at his post. Reference has been made to the way in which some debating was cut down last session, but I think no case that has been referred to was so glaring as the case to which I adverted when speaking on the Address in Reply—namely, the case in which the Government passed the Pastoral Leases Extension Bill and the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Bill after the House had been sitting from half-past 3 o'clock in the afternoon till 6 the next morning. The whole of the debate upon those Bills was suppressed, and nothing that was said upon them was allowed to be known outside this House, simply because for some reason or other the Government chose to keep the House sitting all through the night and the early hours of morning. The proper cure for that is not to ask the gentlemen on the *Hansard* staff to perform the impossible—to go on reporting fairly fully until 6 o'clock in the morning—but to make it impossible by a Standing Order for the Government to encroach upon the rights and privileges of individual members of the House by keeping the House sitting to such unreasonable hours. I do not know what the Colonial Secretary proposes to do, but I propose to move an amendment referring the report back to the committee. I propose this in no hostile attitude, and will withdraw it if the hon. gentleman likes; but until I know what he means to do, I propose the omission of the words “now adopted,” with a view of inserting the words “referred back to the committee for reconsideration.”

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is nothing to be gained by referring the report back to the committee, and I will suggest another way in which what is wanted can be done. This House was asked by motion to join with the other Chamber in making an inquiry into the very matter which the joint committee appointed have inquired into, and the very essence of the inquiry was joint action. That was the direction which came to the committee, and if there was the slightest idea that any question of this kind would be raised, the proper time to have raised it was when the preliminary motion for the appointment of the committee was before the House.

MR. GROOM: You brought it in at the tail end of the session.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, it was brought in because we were asked repeatedly whether the Government were going to adopt the suggestion made for the appointment of a committee to inquire into *Hansard*. No question of the difference between the two Houses was raised, and the members of the committee found themselves a joint committee created by the unanimous wish of both Houses.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Not unanimous.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps not unanimous so far as regards the *personnel* of the committee, but there was no dissentient voice raised against the proposal that the committee should consist of members of both Houses.

MR. DAWSON: Read *Hansard*.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no objection raised that I remember. This is how we approached the matter. We have two Chambers—

MR. GLASSEY: Which is very unfortunate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It may be so for some people. We have Standing Orders which provide for joint committees of the two Chambers at the commencement of each session being appointed to manage the library, the refreshment-rooms, and for the superintendence

and management of the parliamentary buildings. All these are matters within the jurisdiction of both Houses, and in the same way our reporting staff is under the authority of the two Houses. They are officers of both Houses, and take directions from both Houses in connection with the conduct of *Hansard*. We thought it wise to revise that, and propose some better means in regard to the publication of *Hansard*. It was for that reason the joint committee was appointed. I must say I did not get very much support from the members of this Chamber who were on that committee, as all the work was thrown upon my hands.

Mr. RAWLINGS: You ran the show yourself.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot hear what the hon. member says, but I can assure him that I endeavoured to round them up on every occasion. At the first meeting called only two members of this Chamber appeared, Mr. Stephens and myself, and we sat a long time waiting for assistance to carry on our work. Before the report was brought before the committee I read out, at a meeting at which the hon. member for Clermont was present, a draft of what I would submit as the report of the committee. I then particularly requested the hon. member to fix his own time so that we might discuss the report at a future date that would be convenient for himself and for the hon. member for Warwick. It was very much against my inclination that the matter was postponed at all. A special meeting was called to enable both those hon. members to be present, and neither of them came. A caucus meeting of the Labour party held at the same time accounts for the absence of the hon. member for Clermont, as he no doubt considered that of more importance. We waited in vain for the help of the hon. member for Clermont as a gentleman connected with the Press, but up to that time the hon. member had never given the slightest intimation that he desired any other arrangement than that which I suggested, or that he dissented in any way from the terms of the report. It was explained that there was plenty of time, as the matter could extend over the whole session; but the Monday previous to the opening of Parliament was fixed for the consideration of the report, as it was thought that by fixing that day we would have the assistance of the hon. members for Clermont and Warwick. So far as regards the assistance which is to be given to Mr. Speaker by the committee, I see no difficulty in the matter; but by going one step further you may give occasion for clashing with the other Chamber. You may say that the whole of the members of the staff are to stop and report our proceedings, and then the members of the other House may tell us that we have no jurisdiction. The report of the committee is merely a drawing together of the opinions of the committee, and it is now for the House to sum up its opinions. I merely moved the report as the chairman of the committee, and it appears to me that the opinions of the House would be met by accepting the report with this proviso—"Provided that the members appointed from each House do act only on such committee in matters relating to the reporting of debates in their respective Houses." It must be remembered that this resolution does not appoint the committee. It will be necessary to move a subsequent resolution to give effect to this. The report has been adopted by the other Chamber, and they would not have adopted it in its present form had they known that this House would have any objection to it. I must say with regard to the members of the Council who were on the committee, that they gave me every assistance in forming a quorum, and they made no suggestions hostile to the wishes of

this House. There is no need for anyone to imagine that any member of the Council desires in any way to encroach upon the privileges of this Chamber. I trust that the hon. member for Enoggera will withdraw his amendment, and allow me to move the amendment I have suggested. If that should meet the views of the House, it will enable us to have the matter further considered in the other House. I should be more favourably inclined to have a committee to assist Mr. Speaker in connection with the reporting, and another committee to assist the President in connection with the reporting of the debates of the other Chamber. As other matters may arise which will involve a lot of expenditure, it seems to me, without going very deeply into the matter, that if we go too far we may clash with the other House, and therefore I agree with the principal observations of the hon. member for Enoggera, and I think my amendment should meet his views.

Mr. DRAKE: How will the amendment affect the Council? We may bind our own members, but we cannot bind the Council members, and they may interfere with our reporting.

The PREMIER: This resolution will go up to the Council by message.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When our message goes to the other Chamber, and they see what are our wishes in the matter, I am sure they will take the necessary steps to bring their resolution into accord with ours. If our views do not turn out to be in accord with theirs, then they may take what action they like. I wish to make it clear that no single suggestion emanated from any member of this Chamber—in fact the matter has never been discussed—in the direction of what has been said to-day, and the proposition which has been adopted by the committee was moved by a member of this Chamber, and moved in good faith, because as the House agreed to the appointment of the joint committee, and as we have other joint committees, it was naturally thought that the best method of dealing with the question, and of avoiding clashing between the two Houses, was to have a joint committee in this instance also. But, as this House seems to hold another view, I have no doubt the other House will rescind the resolution it has come to and adopt ours. Under all the circumstances, I would ask the hon. member for Enoggera to withdraw his amendment.

The SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. member for Enoggera and to the House that if the words he proposes to omit are omitted, I cannot put the words which he proposes to add—that the report may be referred back to the select committee—because that committee has expired; it no longer exists. On consideration, will the hon. member withdraw his amendment?

Mr. DRAKE: Not yet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. POWERS: So far as I understand the Colonial Secretary's argument, it amounts to this: That the committee we appointed, containing three members of this House—and not without dissent, because there was a division taken on the matter, as it was pointed out that it could do no good so late in the session—but from what the Colonial Secretary says it appears that the three members appointed by this House—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Four.

Mr. POWERS: Three of the four did not take any part in bringing in this recommendation, so that it is really the recommendation of the Colonial Secretary and the members of the Council who were on the committee. The only member of the committee in this House who has spoken disagrees with the report itself, and the other two members who were on the committee are absent; therefore it is really the

report of the Colonial Secretary, who was working the committee, and the members of the Council. The first suggestion made in connection with the report—that of the hon. member for Toowoomba—has been accepted by the hon. gentleman in charge of the report as a good one, and if the discussion goes on there may be other suggestions made which the hon. gentleman would also accept. It might, therefore, be better to adjourn the debate, so that there may be further discussion. The hon. member for Warwick has always taken an active interest in this question, and he is not present, as he never dreamt—like many other members—that the question would come on for consideration this afternoon. He was a member of the committee elected by this House, and I really think he should be allowed an opportunity of giving expression to his views on the matter. I do not think the matter ought to be pressed to a division at once.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Will you move the adjournment of the debate?

Mr. POWERS: There is an amendment before the House, and I cannot do it until that amendment is withdrawn, but I am glad to hear the suggestion of the hon. member.

Mr. CROSS: I would like to put myself right with the House in regard to the statements made by the Colonial Secretary. I understood him to say that one meeting was specially arranged for my convenience, and I was not there; but I would like it to be known that I was not absent from any committee meeting except the last one, when I was a quarter of an hour late, and by the time I arrived the report was adopted by the hon. gentleman and four members of the other House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: You were not present at the first meeting.

Mr. CROSS: The only refutation I can give that is to refer hon. members to the minutes, which will show that I was present, but that the hon. gentleman was not so particular in his attendance. At the first meeting this year he stopped about five or ten minutes, and then he had to keep some engagement in the "Lucinda"; and upon another occasion he said he could only stop for a quarter of an hour, but he stopped altogether, and the pressing engagement he had, had to stand over. I complimented the hon. member for attending to his duties on that occasion. On 18th June the hon. gentleman promised to furnish me with some copies of certain reports. I waited patiently for the hon. gentleman to fulfil his promise, and I called upon him on the morning before the committee sat, but, after a great deal of hunting up, he could not find the reports, and I had no opportunity of reading them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are in the library.

Mr. CROSS: I am only speaking of facts. I never missed any meetings at all. At one meeting on 7th December there was no quorum, and if I and the hon. member for Warwick had been present at the last meeting, this report would never have been carried. I make this statement to show that the hon. member's statements and the facts do not always agree.

The HON. G. THORN: Like the hon. member for Toowoomba, I did not expect any business to be done this afternoon except the Address in Reply, and I am aware that several hon. members are away who would like to take part in this debate. What I rise to say is that in my opinion we should go back again to the daily *Hansard*. I have been looking over the report, and can see that the difference in cost between the daily and the bi-weekly issue is only about £100, and such being the case the sooner we get back to the daily issue the

better. My great reason for advocating this course is that only hon. members connected with newspapers and newspaper directors are reported *in extenso* in the morning papers. I have watched the *Courier* carefully, and have found that to be the case, and that beings so we should revert to the daily issue. I have not a word to say against the *Hansard* staff. In my opinion they report very fairly, and strictly impartially, and with very great ability; but the time has arrived when we should go back to the daily issue. The public expect it, seeing that they do not get fair reports from the metropolitan morning papers. I must remind some hon. members that the other House is a co-ordinate branch with ours.

Mr. GLASSER: More's the pity.

The HON. G. THORN: We have every right to treat the other House courteously as they have always treated us courteously, and it would be a bad thing for the colony if that House were abolished. I should be very sorry to see it. I would seriously put it to the Colonial Secretary that it would be a good thing to go back to the daily *Hansard*.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member who has just spoken has touched upon a very important point. When this discussion was on last year I took the opportunity of pointing out that the Government had no authority to make the change from the daily to a bi-weekly *Hansard*. It was the act of the Colonial Secretary.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The House approved of it.

Mr. FISHER: If it is in the power of any Minister to cut down our privileges regarding *Hansard*, it is within their power to limit *Hansard* to only one copy, and deprive it altogether of its usefulness. I deny the right of any Minister or Ministry to arrogate to themselves a power that is properly in the hands of members of this House. They are playing fast and loose with high principles when they undertake to do things they have no right to do without the authority of this House as a body, and a fuller discussion on this subject will be necessary before we thoroughly understand the position. I think that the daily *Hansard* is the greatest safeguard the Opposition has, and it is absolutely necessary to hon. members who want to put themselves right with their constituents and have fairplay. There should be the earliest possible opportunity for hon. members to get their speeches before the public. When the discussion comes on more fully I shall point out how, under certain circumstances, it was impossible for the *Hansard* reporters to deal impartially with all members of the House.

The PREMIER: I would draw the attention of the House once more to the misstatements made in regard to the Government interference with *Hansard*. If a man makes a misstatement once it can be excused, as it may have been made in ignorance, but when he continually repeats it and attaches his name and authority to it, then I leave other people to form their own opinions as to what kind of a man he is. We have the evidence of the Principal Shorthand Writer, who says that on no occasion has he received directions from the Government. He says, "I have never received any instructions with regard to my duties from anybody but the Speaker or the President—chiefly from the Speaker." We had it on the authority of the Speaker last session that the alteration from a daily to a bi-weekly issue was done by his direction, and was not done by the Government. That was distinctly stated last session, and yet in spite of those facts the hon. member still has the effrontery to get up and repeat that statement after the facts being furnished and in spite of them being so furnished.

Mr. GROOM: The Colonial Secretary seems to think we are raising objections now which ought to have been raised when the committee was first appointed; but the reason we did not do it then was this: No action was taken in this matter until the 28th November. Then, on the last sitting day of the House—the 7th December—this matter was brought up, when a large number of members had gone away, I being among the number. There was an exceedingly thin House, and the matter remained a dead letter until the 4th June, so that the hon. gentleman cannot blame hon. members for raising points which they were not able to raise when the committee was appointed. But even supposing that members on this side did not take any objection to the matter on the 28th November last year, this was a motion to appoint a committee to collect certain evidence and make recommendations, and the House is now asked on the strength of that information to adopt a certain report. What does the hon. gentleman do? He asks the House to appoint now a standing committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, I do not ask the House. We recommend that course.

Mr. GROOM: That a standing committee consisting of eight members be appointed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not asking the House to appoint the standing committee. That will be a subsequent resolution.

Mr. GROOM: The hon. gentleman is asking us to adopt the report, and thus bind ourselves. Members of the House who know anything of parliamentary practice know that when you adopt the report of a committee you either dissent to what you disagree with or you adopt the whole as a uniform report.

The PREMIER: Or you modify it. It is proposed to modify it.

Mr. GROOM: That is what I am coming to. What we take exception to now is not the appointment of a committee of this House, but we take exception to the appointment of a standing committee to revise and arrange for the printing of speeches. I think I may safely challenge the hon. gentleman to name any other colony where such a procedure has been adopted. Take New South Wales. I dare say that has about the most liberally conducted *Hansard* in the colonies. They have a larger staff, and the reports are published more in detail than in any other colony. They seem to do it regardless of expense, but no member of the other House interferes. The Legislative Council are certainly reported, and a portion of the staff under the Principal Shorthand Writer is sent there to report the speeches.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Are you arguing against a committee altogether?

Mr. GROOM: No, I say the committee in connection with the arrangement of *Hansard* should be a committee of this Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That has never been discussed by the committee.

Mr. GROOM: You are asking us now to adopt a report which provides for the appointment of a standing committee consisting of members of both Houses, and even in the proceedings of this committee you will find that the members of the Legislative Council, who are all residents of Brisbane, were able to attend regularly, while the members of this Assembly, who are not residents of Brisbane, were not able to attend so regularly, and the result was the report comes up as a report from the Legislative Council principally. What is to prevent the same thing occurring if you appoint a standing committee? If you appoint a standing committee, when the members meet they meet as a common body and will go by a majority of votes, and if it should so happen that one member of this Chamber is

absent, then undoubtedly the preponderance of voting power will be with the Legislative Council. I do not think that is fair. The hon. gentleman says that is on the New Zealand plan.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is what it is intended to be.

Mr. GROOM: I admit the evidence of the shorthand writer of the New Zealand Parliament would uphold the hon. gentleman's contention, but the New Zealand committee consists of members of the Assembly. The Council has nothing whatever to do with it. Why should they have anything to do with it here? Who finds the money, and who votes it? Surely it is this Chamber. So that I think if the hon. gentleman looks at it on broad grounds, even on the grounds of constitutional practice, he will see there should be no interference with the representative branch of the legislature. I think we should be careful to allow no interference, because it is establishing a bad precedent. We all remember the old constitutional maxim, "What is precedent to-day becomes law to-morrow." We must take care we do not make a bad precedent lest it should be inconvenient in future. As I have pointed out, we did not come here prepared to discuss this matter; and I appeal to hon. members on this side to bear me out that this was a matter that they intended to discuss very fully, and expected to have an opportunity for doing so. I think, therefore, it would not be asking too much if I asked the hon. gentleman to get a member on his side of the House to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. HARDING: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Questions put and passed; and resumption of the debate made an Order of the Day for Friday.

HARBOUR DUES BILL.

SECOND READING.

The PREMIER: This is a very short and simple Bill, and I do not think it will take up very much time. It merely supplies an omission made when the principal Act and subsequent Acts were passed. It establishes, or rather makes clearer, the principle we have established in various other Acts, such as the Divisional Boards Act, the Land Act, the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act, and other Acts of that nature. It is a Bill to give authority to the Governor in Council, in cases where it seems undesirable to levy harbour dues, to proclaim any harbour to be exempt. It will be a great advantage to many small harbours, which have accumulated a balance to their credit quite sufficient to undertake small improvements that may be required, to be exempt from the dues rather than to go on collecting them merely to allow them to accumulate in the Treasury fund. There are several harbours where, I dare say, the Act will come into operation. Take, for example, the harbour at Mackay. That harbour cannot be made a beautiful harbour without an enormous expenditure of money, some £200,000 at the very least. It seems hopeless to accumulate enough money to make a harbour there from the mere collection of harbour dues; and it might be to the interests of the producers residing there who have exports to make, and to the merchants who have imports to make, to be relieved from the payment of dues year after year, and not getting any benefit from them. The fund will be gradually accumulating without any expenditure, for it would be folly to expend money there unless you are prepared to expend a very large amount. The same thing may apply to, say, Port Douglas or Gladstone, and other places. I merely mention these as illustrations of what may be the operations of the Act. Of course it will be understood

that in this Act, as in the Divisional Boards Act and other Acts, that this authority which is asked to be given to the Governor in Council will not be exercised, as it never is, unless they are satisfied that it is the desire of the residents and the people of the locality. When that appears to be so, then I think it gives a power that might very well be given to the Governor in Council, and might be used very much to the benefit of the parties who are now liable to pay harbour dues, and do not in many cases get any benefit from them. I do not think the Bill requires any further explanation, and I move that it be now read a second time.

Mr. POWERS: Although there is no objection to the Bill passing its second reading, I think there is an objection to our going on with any more business this evening beyond this Bill. Several members would have been here had they known that the Bills on the paper would have been brought forward to-day, and I think they are entitled at any rate to be considered, because very few expected the Address in Reply would be over so soon, especially as the adjournment of the debate was moved by a member on the Government side, and other speeches were anticipated. Although this Bill may pass its second reading, we may fairly ask under the circumstances, that the other important Bills on the paper should not be gone on with. I have already been informed by the Attorney-General that it is not intended to go on with the Railway Bill, but the others, such as that for the suppression of gambling, might well be postponed till to-morrow. It will possibly save time. I trust the Government will not proceed with any other business this afternoon.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: There can be no objection to this Bill, but I trust that the power which the Governor in Council asks for will not be used in such a manner as to discourage the formation of harbour trusts. It is very desirable indeed that those trusts should be encouraged by all possible means, and although, as the Treasurer has told us, the revenue of one port may not be enough to provide for any improvements to the port, yet two or three of them associated together might find an adequate revenue to free the ports from obstructions, and tending to render them valuable for purposes of navigation. I take advantage of this occasion to express my great regret that the Government have allowed valuable months to elapse during the recess without doing anything to improve the reputation and the condition of the port of Moreton Bay. In spite of a resolution passed last session, I cannot find that any improvement has taken place in the direction which, in the opinion of all nautical men, is necessary to maintain the reputation of so large a port as Moreton Bay. At one time I thought there was an intention to provide a steam pilot vessel, in accordance with the resolution of the House, but nothing of that sort appears yet to have been done, although it is being brought constantly under our notice in connection with other ports. There, not only is steam being applied to pilot vessels, but also to life-saving vessels. Only recently we read of a very valuable steam lifeboat being presented by a wealthy townsman to an Australian community. It is the opinion of all nautical men that the accommodation and the reputation of the port of Moreton Bay have distinctly suffered from the absence of a steam pilot service. Since last session one of our large ocean-going steamers very narrowly escaped a most severe disaster. I refer to the grounding of the "Merkara" in the north-west channel. Had the weather been severe at the time, there is no saying what loss of life and valuable property would have resulted.

And this is not a solitary instance. Since I last addressed the House on the subject complaints have been made from time to time in regard to the port of Brisbane. I have here an extract which I will read. [The hon. member here read extracts to the effect that Captain C. Christensen, master of the Hamburg barque "Olga," writing from Brisbane on the 18th of December last to a London nautical journal, complained about the heavy expenses connected with the port, especially in the matter of towage, owing to the owners of the tugs having no competition; and he warned all owners and captains when chartering for Brisbane to consider that. His remarks were corroborated by the *North Australian Gazette*, printed at Brisbane, which said that the sailing trade had been declining for the previous three years; that, owing to the wreck of the "Aarhus," Moreton Bay had been declared by many to be dangerous, while others disputed the statement, but nevertheless two new lights had been erected at Moreton Island, and the pilots had been ordered to cruise outside the Cape, so that the entrance must be dangerous. Another reason assigned by the Brisbane paper for the decline in the trade was the high dues levied, notably for towage, which was due to the withdrawal of the Government steamer on account of complaints made that the Government vessel interfered with private enterprise, and the two firms which then became possessed of a monopoly having come to an agreement whereby the rates charged were three times as heavy as those formerly charged by the Government boat. During the month previous to the writing of the article a German ship from Rio Janeiro had been compelled by contrary winds to employ a tug both in coming into the port and in leaving it, the towage for the seventy or eighty miles amounting to the enormous sum of £167 10s., whereas the charge at either Sydney or Melbourne would have been only £45. If the vessel had arrived with a full cargo, and had had to take ballast to another port, while her freight under favourable circumstances might have amounted to £1,000 her disbursements would have been £450, of which the Government would only have exacted £50. The article concluded by remarking that it was no wonder the port was avoided.] I refer to this because the amount of harbour dues collected will greatly depend on the encouragement and facilities offered to the shipping trade, and I deeply regret that so much valuable time has been lost by the Government in the face of the imperative necessity for the improvement of the port of Brisbane. I do not wish to delay or obstruct the passage of the Bill, but I have taken advantage of the first marine subject to express my views and my regret that the port has not been provided with the appliances I thought would have been provided in consequence of the resolution of the House last session.

Mr. AGNEW: This is a matter in which a considerable number of my constituents are interested. In 1893 I moved an amendment on the Bill then before the House, and was defeated by only one vote, but had the promises given at the time been observed the amendment would have been carried. I do not wish to reopen that debate at this stage, but I would like to say that I have had several conversations with the Premier as to the desirability of extending the scope of the amendment so that exports from this colony will not be treated in the same way as imports. When goods are exported the exporter is compelled to take whatever price is ruling in the markets of the country to which he sends his goods; therefore whatever tax we put upon exports must be borne by the individual exporter, whom we want to encourage. The importer stands in an entirely different position,

because he is able to add the duty to the price of the article, so that the tax is borne by the consumer, practically by the whole of the community. I think it would be wise to exempt exports from harbour dues and let the ports be maintained by imposts and dues on imported articles. I rose to give notice that when we go into committee on the Bill I shall take the opportunity of moving an amendment on the lines I have indicated.

The PREMIER: This is not a Bill to deal with articles imported or exported; it is a Bill to deal with harbours as a whole, so that I can hardly see how the amendment suggested by the hon. member can apply. One remark made by the hon. member for Bulimba, I think, was a little bit premature, and I think that before saying nothing has been done by the Government he might have asked what the Government have done, and what they are doing now. He goes on the assumption that because the Government have not made public in the newspapers what they have done, they have therefore done nothing; but I can assure him that such is not the case by any means. I am glad he has brought this matter up, because, though I have heard complaints, it is a matter with which the Government have nothing whatever to do. The Government never did the towing; all the Government steamer would do would be to go and help a vessel in distress. It was never suggested that the Government should interfere with private enterprise in the matter of towage.

Mr. TURLEY: A vessel in distress outside Cape Moreton has to wait till a wire is sent to Brisbane and a tug goes down.

The PREMIER: As I understand the hon. member for Bulimba, his objection is that the port is getting a bad name on account of the excessive charges for ordinary towage; and he made no reference to vessels in distress at all. If they come to the port in the finest weather they have to pay just the same. Why should the Government put on a steamer to compete with private enterprise in a matter of that sort?

Mr. GLASSEY: We want a little more socialism in our time.

The PREMIER: This might be properly worked into a good genuine socialism, but spurious socialism I abominate. This discussion with regard to Moreton Bay hardly comes under this Bill. It is hardly relevant to it, and as I have not brought the papers with me, and I like to be exact, I shall defer giving the House information as to what the Government have done in the way of improving Moreton Bay and the navigation of the harbour. It cannot be done without money, and when hon. members see the Estimates they will see that the House will be asked to vote the money. In the meantime indents have been sent home, and the Marine Department are doing all that can be done in the matter. I do not like to rush at things in too great a hurry. I think it is well before we undertake the expenditure of money to have some assurance that we are going to expend it in a proper way. There is always one right way of doing a thing, and very often a dozen wrong ways, and it is well to give a matter due consideration before we determine in what way the money will be spent. All these matters will be submitted to the House very shortly in the ordinary course of business. With regard to what fell from the hon. member for Maryborough, I have no desire whatever to push forward any Government business with undue haste, and as it appears to be the wish of the House, which I am always desirous to consult, I shall have no objection, after we have finished this Order of the Day, to move that the House adjourn until to-morrow.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: The first business to-morrow will be the second reading of the Bill for the Suppression of Gambling. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: I would take this opportunity to ask the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government when he expects to be in a position to deliver his Financial Statement.

The PREMIER: I hope to be ready at any time to deliver the Financial Statement. I think it will be a very uninteresting one this year; it will be nearly all contained in the Treasury tables. The only delay now is the preparation of those tables, and, as hon. members know, at the end of the year the staff at the Treasury has as a rule more work than they can get through. I am not quite sure whether they have the Treasury tables ready; but I have not seen them. Possibly the week after next I shall be in a position to deliver the Financial Statement.

Mr. FISHER: I would also take this opportunity to ask a question. I think the time has expired during which the electoral ballot-papers have to be kept, and I should like to ask the Premier when he intends to submit a motion authorising the Clerk of the Assembly to destroy those papers.

The SPEAKER: This is not the time for asking questions. The hon. member should give notice of his question.

Question put and passed; and the House adjourned at fifteen minutes to 6 o'clock.