

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 17 DECEMBER 1896

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 17 DECEMBER, 1896.

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

QUESTIONS.

MACKAY AND BOWEN RAILWAY JUNCTION.

Mr. CHATAWAY: I would like to ask the Secretary for Railways, without notice, if the Government have any intention of pushing on, at an early date, with the junction of the coastal system between Mackay and Bowen?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied: The railway policy of the Government will be duly considered.

ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.

Mr. BELL asked the Secretary for Railways—
When does he propose to complete the survey of the railway between Dalby and St. George?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

All the routes between St. George and Warwick, Pittsworth, Dalby, Roma, and Yeulba are now being fully reported upon.

Mr. BELL: I would like to ask, without notice, whether the Minister will take care that the route from Dalby receives as close an examination as that from any other of the alternative places he has mentioned?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Certainly.

THE FEDERAL CONVENTION.

Mr. DRAKE asked the Premier—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to take any steps to provide for the representation of Queensland at the forthcoming Federal Convention?

2. If so, what steps?

The PREMIER replied—

The answer to the question of the hon. member is in the negative. It is possible that the Convention may be postponed until after we meet again, in which case some steps may be taken.

Mr. GLASSEY: Have you taken any action with a view of attaining that end?

The PREMIER: Oh, no!

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were read a third time passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence:—

The Sandgate Racecourse Bill; and
The Appropriation Bill No. 4.

The Electric Light and Power Bill was also read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Council with a message intimating that the Assembly had agreed to the Bill with amendments.

DISEASES IN PLANTS BILL.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, this Bill was read a third time and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that the Bill be returned to the Council with a message intimating that the Assembly had agreed to the Bill with amendments.

Mr. GROOM: I understood last night that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government—

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that this is a formal motion.

Mr. GROOM: It is merely with regard to the privileges of the House that I rise.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member rise to a point of order?

Mr. GROOM: Yes. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government stated last evening that he would reserve the rights of the Assembly in returning this Bill to the Council. I now ask the hon. gentleman to fulfil his promise.

The PREMIER: I pointed out to the hon. member that he should bring the matter up at the consideration stage, but he neglected to do so. We are now on the formal motion for the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

RABBIT BOARDS BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Council intimating that they had agreed to these Bills with amendments.

The amendments were ordered to be taken into consideration in committee at a later hour of the sitting.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

REPRESENTATION AT THE FEDERAL CONVENTION.

Mr. DRAKE: I move the adjournment of the House in accordance with the notice I have given.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a letter from Mr. Drake intimating that he intended to move the adjournment of the House in accordance with Standing Order No. 130 for the purpose of debating a matter of urgent public importance—namely, the action of the Government with regard to the representation of Queensland at the forthcoming Federal Convention.

Five members having risen in their places,

Mr. DRAKE said: I think a number of members of the House, and a great number of persons outside, will regret the position the Government have taken up with regard to the representation of Queensland at the Federal Convention. The answer the Premier gave me this afternoon was that no steps would be taken by the Government to have Queensland represented, unless the Convention was put off until after next session. According to latest advices from the south, and according to the statement made by the Premier of New South Wales when he was here, it seems probable, indeed almost certain, now that the Convention will be held early next year, whether Queensland is represented or not. It will be a matter very much to be deplored if Queensland should be absent from the Convention. It has been stated—I believe upon some authority—that the Convention may not be held until April next year, and that that suggestion has met with some degree of favour. If the Convention should meet in April, means should be taken to ensure the true representation of Queensland by holding an early session of Parliament next year. There are two ways by which means could be taken to have Queensland represented. One would be to pass a Bill during this session, and the other would be to hold a short preliminary session early next year, as was done in 1892 and 1893. In 1892 Parliament assembled in March and sat for a fortnight, and if that were done early next year it is probable that there would be time then for Queensland to be represented. Of course if the Government were disposed to take the necessary steps they would find it easy to pass a Bill during this session, and I would ask the Government again what is there to prevent them from doing that and ensuring the representation of Queensland at the Convention? If the Government really earnestly desire that Queensland should be represented at the Convention, I do not think they would find any difficulties at all in the way. The House sat until the 20th of December last year, so that without sitting any later this session than we did last session there would be ample time to pass a Bill, and ensure the representation of Queensland at the Convention. We have had one instance this session in which a Bill was passed through all its stages in both Houses, under the suspension of the

Standing Orders, in one sitting. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that if the Government desired it, they could easily pass a Bill this session.

The PREMIER: Why did you not support the Bill when we did bring it in?

Mr. DRAKE: I supported an amendment to provide for the election of representatives according to the agreement arrived at at the Hobart Conference, and which has been adhered to by the other colonies.

Mr. MCMASTER: On your own lines.

The SPEAKER: I would ask hon. members not to lead the hon. member off the track. He must confine himself to the definite matter of which he has given notice, and not reopen a discussion that has been closed.

Mr. DRAKE: The Premier of New South Wales and the Premier of Tasmania have both declared that whether Queensland is represented or not the Convention will be held. That gathering early in 1897 will be a great historical event in the history of Australia, and it will be very much to be regretted if, from any causes whatever, Queensland should be absent from that Convention. It is the custom, I know, with some people to treat this matter with a good deal of flippancy, but those who do that are very short-sighted. When the future history of Australia comes to be written I venture to think that a gathering of that kind will be regarded as one of the greatest events that has ever happened in the colonies, and as of very much more importance than a great many of the matters we have been devoting time to during this session. If we have time enough to pass the Diseases in Plants Bill, the Sandgate Racecourse Bill, and little things like those, surely we could find time to pass a Bill to enable Queensland to be present and have a voice in the deliberations of a Convention of such great importance. If the Government really desired that Queensland should be represented, they would find no difficulty whatever in passing the necessary measure through both Houses during the closing days of this session, and so prevent Queensland suffering the humiliation, because it would be a humiliation, of being absent from such a gathering. The Convention will no doubt take place, and some kind of Constitution will no doubt be drawn up. That Constitution may not be accepted at once; it may not be accepted for a number of years, but it will stand there ready to be accepted in time of danger, should the necessity arise, and it will be a matter for the very greatest regret then if Queensland should be almost compelled to come in under a Constitution in the framing of which she has had no voice. That can be prevented now by the Government if they choose. Under the circumstances I think I am justified in the action I have taken for the purpose of getting from the Government a clear, explicit, and unequivocal statement of the causes which have led to the present condition of affairs. The matter has been amply discussed in this House and in the other Chamber. The debate has been going on, on and off, for fully six months, and almost innumerable pages of *Hansard* have been filled with the discussion, and when this Parliament has ceased to sit it will be possible for people to very much misrepresent what has taken place in connection with the debates on the subject. It has been said that history is a lie agreed upon, and we know how difficult it is, when an untruthful statement once becomes established as a matter of history, to afterwards correct it. It is right, therefore, that before this Parliament disperses, and while Parliament has an articulate voice, we should have a clear statement from Ministers as to the causes that have led up to the present state of things. If some statement of that kind is not given steps

will be taken as soon as Parliament rises to throw the blame upon the Labour party, other hon. members, or the Legislative Council, or upon everybody else, in order to relieve the shoulders of the Government of that burden. Nobody asks that any blame should be laid upon shoulders that are not entitled to bear it, and the best thing we can do is to decide now where the blame should rest. Again I point out that it lies in the power of the Government to pass a measure if they choose now to secure the representation of Queensland at the Convention. That is what I should most earnestly wish for, but if we cannot have that I think it is desirable, as a guide to us in any future action that may be taken in this or a future session, that we should know clearly and distinctly the reasons why the present state of things has been brought about under which, if the Convention is held early next year, as it probably will be, Queensland will not be represented at it. I move that the House do now adjourn.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I have no objection to the House adjourning.

Mr. GLASSEY: To say the least, it is most unusual on a motion of such importance being moved by an hon. member on this side that the Premier or some member of the Government should not say something in reply. It is not very courteous to the member moving the motion or to members generally. The Premier might have said something more than that he had no objection to the House adjourning. The hon. member for Enoggera has moved the adjournment to ask whether the Government intend to take any steps to have Queensland join the other colonies by sending delegates to the Convention to be held for the purpose of framing a Constitution under which Australia, if federated, may be governed. In view of the recent visit of the Premier of the neighbouring colony for the purpose of consulting the Government and hon. members upon this matter, we should be informed whether the Government are favourable or not to the requests made by that distinguished visitor. The hon. member for Enoggera has moved his motion that the Premier may have an opportunity of saying whether the Government intend to take any steps to carry out the object of that gentleman's visit. That is a question upon which we might reasonably expect an answer would be given.

The PREMIER: I answered his question. I gave a most distinct answer.

Mr. GLASSEY: I do not wish to utter a word that may cause irritation, but the action of the Premier and members of the Government in this matter is not very creditable. I have never attempted to hide my feelings in this matter. I have said over and over again—

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the terms of the motion, and not reopen a debate which has been closed.

Mr. GLASSEY: I have no desire to reopen the whole question. Doubtless, as the hon. member for Enoggera has said, statements may be made by members of the Ministry or their supporters attaching the blame for any mishap that may occur to persons other than the right persons. During the visit of Mr. Reid I had interviews with him two or three times, as he was anxious to know the feelings of members on this side in the event of the Government introducing a measure by which delegates might be sent from Queensland to the Convention. I told him that so far as I could gather there was no desire to block such a proposal if it was made; that members on this side would be no party to any stonewalling of such a measure; that we would deal with it in a constitutional manner, leaving the responsibility upon the Government

for the manner in which it might be proposed that the delegates should be chosen. I make that matter very clear. I think the Government might make some explanation as to what they intend to do this session or early next year—whether they intend to join with the other colonies in the formulation of a federal Constitution or to propose that the Federal Council should be made more useful and beneficial by being established on a broader basis. The Premier in answering the question of the hon. member for Enoggera did not say that he would do anything, but a person reading between the lines might infer that he would be prepared to do something if the Convention was postponed to next year. That the matter might be cleared up I interjected asking him if he was prepared to take any steps in that event, and I now ask him if he will take any steps to secure the postponement of the Convention until this Parliament meets again?

The PREMIER: You know I cannot answer you.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. gentleman can answer; the House will be only too willing to hear him say something in reply. If he does not care about answering it, well and good; but I would ask him if he will take steps to communicate with the other colonies with a view to obtaining a postponement of this Convention until after this Parliament has met again, so that we may have another opportunity of joining the other colonies in framing a Constitution under which the people of Australia may live for many years?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member has made the positions of himself and his party clear. He said he promised that, although they would not oppose the election of delegates, they would vote for their election by the people. The hon. member knows that at the eleventh hour the only way we can send delegates is to have them appointed by both Houses; but he wants to go to the country, and have the delegates elected by the people. It would have been more honourable for him to say one thing or the other. The hon. member for Enoggera said some kind of a Constitution would be framed by the Convention, but he did not expect any good would come of it for a period of years.

Mr. DRAKE: I said it might not be accepted.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: That is the strongest reason why it is not necessary that Queensland should go to all this trouble when there is so much difference of opinion. I am one of those who hold that the delegates should be elected by the people, and I voted against the Government; but after all the wrangling we have had with the other House, it would be unseemly for us to elect delegates at this time. The hon. member for Bundaberg says it is discourteous to the Premier of New South Wales to take no further action in this matter, but that gentleman said he came here unofficially, and not as a mediator or to attempt to worry us into attending this Convention. He certainly did not show that we would gain anything, and we must not forget that he applauded the action of one of his supporters who moved a motion regarding our appointment of delegates, and said he had the fullest sympathy with him, but now he is prepared to have Queensland at any price. The Premier of New South Wales failed in his object here, and is trying to cover his defeat by blaming the Government of Queensland and its supporters. I have no sympathy with this motion for adjournment, and consider that it is better to allow things to remain as they are, especially as we would otherwise be forcing the Labour party into a very peculiar position by making them support the appointment of delegates by a vote of both Houses.

Mr. CROSS: I think the position taken up by the leader of the Opposition will be supported

by the whole colony. He has done all he could to secure the election of these delegates by the people, and now he is only acting as a legislator in following the majority. I have taken up that position all along, and have maintained that the election should be by the people, but I am not going to say that the minority shall rule the majority. If we took up that position our legislation would have no finality. Although I am in sympathy with this motion, I do not think that the hon. member for Enoggera has taken up the position I should have liked. I am as desirous of seeing the colony represented as he is, but seeing that we are in a minority we ought to take the next best thing possible. The colony should be represented, but the Government have shown an impotency in dealing with the matter that is discreditable to them, while that taken up by Mr. Reid was quite the reverse. He was willing that Queensland should stand upon the same level as the other colonies, and was only anxious that we should be represented somehow, and I think hon. members on both sides will agree that that gentleman was justified in leaving with the impression that some practical proposal would be made; but the result has been humiliating both to the Queensland Government and to our distinguished visitor. For that the Government are entirely to blame. Their supporters are blocking the way, and they wish to cast the blame upon hon. members on this side. There may have been a few members who were prepared to stonewall the proposals of the Government, but a majority of members on both sides were quite prepared to acquiesce in what might be the will of the majority.

Mr. BELL: On the great question of the federation of the whole of the colonies of Australia—a question which is on a higher plane than any other question which we can discuss, and one which should be quite outside the lines of party politics—we have hon. members on the other side endeavouring to turn the question to their own private party uses. As a medium for ascertaining the intentions of the Government there was no justification for this motion, because the hon. member for Enoggera knew as well as any member of this House what the Government were going to do. No hon. member was ignorant that, for this session at all events, the Government had no idea of bringing forward any further proposition with regard to federation; but on the principle, I suppose, that “any stick is good enough to beat a dog,” the hon. member thought he might make some party capital, and that he might lead those who ardently wish for federation to believe that the gentlemen now occupying the Treasury benches are out of sympathy with those who believe in federation and in the future of our country. I am as keen a federationist as any man in Australia. The few observations I made on the second reading of the Bill the Government introduced bear testimony to that, but I can see nothing in the attitude of the Government which merits the censure of this House. Though the Bill they introduced may not have been wise, it was conceived in all sincerity, and a genuine attempt was made to pass it. It received the opposition of hon. members opposite, and it brought them into political company with men whom they had never previously been associated with. We had the hon. member for Enoggera—one of the greatest radicals in this House—enthusiastically defending the members of a nominee Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now going outside the limits of the discussion. The question is the action of the Government with regard to the representation of Queensland at the forthcoming Federal Convention, and in

discussing this matter the hon. member can only refer to the action of the Government since the other measure was before this House.

Mr. BELL: The Government would certainly be acting out of sympathy with the large number of their supporters if they were to take any further action this session. The most dignified course for them to pursue is to take no action with regard to federation during this session. In the visit of the Premier of the adjacent colony we had a display of what I am almost disposed to call cajolery, as applied to the members of this Parliament. Perhaps I am in a little different position to some hon. members with regard to the attitude of that hon. gentleman. I have a vivid recollection of the proceedings in Sydney in 1891 at the last gathering to frame a federal Constitution, and of the attitude of the hon. gentleman who is now Premier of New South Wales. In 1891 there was no stronger opponent of federation than that hon. gentleman. That I know from my personal experience of that hon. gentleman. Yet in 1896 we find the hon. gentleman adopting an entirely different line. No doubt circumstances have changed, particularly with regard to the hon. gentleman; but I can be excused for not holding any enthusiastic opinions such as are apparently held by hon. members opposite with regard to the visit of the Premier of New South Wales, and his endeavours to bring the Queensland Government into line with himself. I have no great belief as to the work that is going to be done at the Convention, and the best thing all the colonies can do is to agree to a postponement if they are so very desirous that all the colonies should be represented at the Convention. In a few months we shall be again in session, and we may be able to approach the question in the light of later information and with a calmer mind. Whether they postpone the Convention or not, I am convinced that no great harm will be done to this colony by standing out of the Convention. I do not forget the slurs cast upon this colony, and the conditions certain men in the New South Wales legislature sought to impose upon this colony, and which were in some degree under the countenance of the hon. gentleman now at the head of the Government of New South Wales. Remembering that, I am not sorry that we should show that Queensland can get on without federation, and that we have no fears of what the future may bring. But that we should take any further steps under existing conditions would be a great mistake. I go further and say that if the Government came down now with a proposition that Queensland should be represented at the Convention they would find that a very large number of their own supporters would oppose it.

MEMBERS on the Government side: Hear, hear!

Mr. FINNEY: I am a very strong federationist, and I regret very much to have heard the remarks of the hon. member who has just sat down. I consider that the language he has used with respect to our recent distinguished guest was highly improper, and if I felt justified in saying what the hon. member has said I would have stood up at the meeting at which our guest was present and told it to him before his face. I do not believe in attacking a man behind his back, and I do not think the hon. member is the sort of man to do it under ordinary circumstances, but I suppose in politics a considerable amount of latitude is allowed. The Bill which was brought before the House has been thrown out and there is no necessity now to go into the past. It is all nonsense to say that it would be degradation or a change of front on the part of the Government to send delegates down. The thing is whether

even at the eleventh hour the Government should not bring in a short Bill to enable us to do so. I think that is the proper course for them to take.

Mr. MCGAHAN: You are the only Government supporter who would say so.

Mr. FINNEY: I am an independent supporter of the Government and am always prepared to say what I think. I am not here to support any action whatever that the Government may take. I shall support them in all matters in which I feel satisfied I am right in doing so, but no further. If I feel that I cannot speak my opinions freely in this House I would prefer to retire from politics altogether. "Where there's a will there's a way," and the Government could pass a short Bill to deal with this question with the greatest ease if they had the will to do so. The Convention will not commit the colony to anything. I agree with the hon. member for Enoggera that it will be humiliating to Queensland if she is not represented at the Convention. It is nonsense to say that the Government should not turn back upon the action they have taken, as we are encouraged to redress a wrong even at the eleventh hour. There are great deeds done, and the salvation of many is worked out at the eleventh hour, and I hope sincerely that the Government will even now pass a Bill to enable us to send delegates to the Convention, and that Queensland will not be placed in the position of the "sulky boy" who draws his marble out of the play, and will not be left standing alone like "a pelican in the wilderness."

Mr. ANNEAR: I think the motion is due to the negative answer given by the Premier this afternoon to the question put by the hon. member for Enoggera. I agree with the hon. member for Toowong that every member has equal rights in this Chamber, but I cannot agree with the remarks he made with reference to the hon. member for Dalby. The New South Wales papers have reported that Mr. Reid has said that the Queensland Government are dominated by the Labour party. That is extraordinary, coming from such a source, because the Premier of New South Wales has carried any legislation he has passed through Parliament by going on his knees to the party by which he says the Government of Queensland is dominated. The hon. member for Bundaberg, with many other hon. members, advocated the enlargement of the powers of the Federal Council, and said that he believed that by doing that a great deal of good work has been done and could be done; but no statesman in Australia has done more to cast a slur upon the Federal Council than the present Premier of New South Wales. He has opposed it upon every occasion, and yet he says that a great deal might be done by enlarging the powers of that Council, which he has always strenuously opposed. Coming to this motion—for coolness recommend me to the hon. member for Enoggera. He opposed the colony being represented, as I maintain, by the voice of the people, because we had only just come from the people, and now he comes and asks why Queensland is not to be represented. He has been strenuous in his opposition to the representation of the colony, as well as the majority of hon. members on the Opposition side; but I am satisfied that no voice was raised by the people against the Bill introduced by the Government. The *Brisbane Courier* and other papers said that many of the supporters of the Government were blocks in the way of our being represented at this Convention; but no one has opposed the representation of Queensland more than the *Brisbane Courier* and many hon. members opposite and their friends in another place. The hon. member for Enoggera and others said

there is still time to pass a Bill, but I agree with the hon. member for Dalby, that if such a Bill were introduced this afternoon those hon. members would act as they did before; and therefore I think the Government have taken a most dignified stand in deciding not to go any further with this question. I will not surrender my rights to gentlemen sitting in another place, nor to hon. members opposite, who have been the means of preventing Queensland being represented at a gathering which will be the greatest gathering that has ever taken place in Australia.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I was surprised to find this motion sprung upon the House this afternoon, and from what I have heard and read I think the action of the hon. member for Enoggera was untimely, unwise, and will, I hope, prove abortive. While I am strongly in favour of this colony being represented at the forthcoming Convention, I am not going to aid any party in this House in attempting to cause the Government to turn a somersault in regard to this important question at the very end of the session.

The HON. G. THORN: I commend the action of the Government in not going further with this matter. The Premier in introducing this measure said it was not a party question; that hon. members could vote as they liked, but some hon. members on the other side did make it a party question, even the hon. member for Toowoomba, who is an anti-federationist.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that the question is the action of the Government, and not the action of any party or member in the House.

The HON. G. THORN: One of the reasons why I did not go down the river with the Premier of New South Wales was that I found that this gentleman, who is supposed to be a strong advocate for federation, was really one of its greatest opponents. No man has more vehemently opposed the federation of Australia than the Premier of New South Wales, and my own opinion is that New South Wales will not join in this Convention. The only chance that colony will have of getting what it wants is by Queensland coming in, and Mr. Reid's object is to make Sydney the federal capital of Australia. Mr. Reid sees that if Queensland is divided there is a better chance of making Sydney the federal capital; that is his reason for becoming a federationist. I am sure that if Sydney is not the capital he will not come in. We shall see before many months are over whether New South Wales will go in for federation. The opponents of the Government proposal were the hon. member for Enoggera and other members on the other side, and when hon. members in another place saw a good minority in this House opposed to the Bill they thought they should come in too, but they had no right to come in, as they do not represent the people.

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member not to go into that question. That is past. He must confine himself to the motion.

The HON. G. THORN: The Government are adopting the wisest course, and federation will not suffer through being delayed a few months. I was never an advocate of federation unless for defence purposes, and it will be a calamity for Southern Queensland, and especially for Brisbane, when federation is brought about.

The HOME SECRETARY: I hope that on this occasion there will be no hot words used to disturb the friendly relations existing between parties in this House. The Government have given their final reply, and that is that during the present session no further action will be taken; but it does not follow that a Federal Convention will be held without Queensland. There is nothing going on in any part of the

world which calls for the federation of the colonies, and every big movement has to receive its baptism of fire. Federation is not going to be accomplished with a rush, and there is no haste in the matter. We waited several months for New South Wales to consider the matter on a former occasion, and there is no reason why the sister colonies, if they desire Queensland to be represented at the Convention, should not postpone its meeting. Queensland has come against one of the many obstacles to federation which I mentioned on a previous occasion. The Government made an honest attempt to have the colony represented at the Convention, which they have not been able to carry out, and it would be indecent at the close of the session to bring in a resolution or hastily devised Bill. The other colonies are not likely to hold their elections for the choice of representatives before May, and by that time we shall be again in session, and be, I hope, prepared to deal with the question of meeting the men they elect. There is no necessity for hot words, or to blame anybody. Things have been said both in this colony and outside it which had better have been left unsaid, not only by gentlemen who have been here but by persons in high places. It would be better for them not to say things which they will live to regret. Queensland has a record in regard to her federal attitude which defies any accusation that she is acting in a parochial manner, and is subordinating her national interests to her own private ends. History will prove that the Government of Queensland have had no such views. I regret the attempts which have been made to "sool" members of the Government at one another. I refer to the statement that had the Premier been left to himself, uninfluenced by his colleagues, a different course would have been taken. That is unfair to his colleagues. We have been unanimous on the question. All have tried to do what the Premier desired—namely, to have this colony represented at the Convention in the manner the Government proposed. It is far better that persons coming to this colony should leave the motives of individual members of the Ministry out of consideration altogether, and judge us by our collective acts. I hope there will be nothing said in the sister colonies by way of threat to Queensland or menace to this colony, and that there will be nothing said upon the individual opinions of members of the Government. The best record for the sister colonies to look to is what Queensland has done for the last six or seven years in promoting federation. Let them look at the federal action which the members of this Government have taken in dealing with the Federal Council, and outside of it in dealing with all matters affecting Australia as a whole. That is our record, and if on this occasion the Government have proposed to be represented in a certain way, and this Parliament—not this Assembly—has chosen to differ from the Government as to the manner in which Queensland should come in, and that postpones the matter for a time, no reflection should be cast on that account upon this Parliament or Assembly, and certainly not upon the members of the Government, for what has taken place. I hope that pacific counsels will prevail in the other colonies, and that they will see our difficulties as we have seen theirs in regard to these matters, and that they may be able yet, if they are earnest in the cause of federation—and I must say in regard to the earnestness of public men in some of the other colonies, my opinion has very little changed from what it was when I spoke here four months ago. I have even noticed today, as a justification for delay, a statement appearing in the leading paper of this colony to the effect that the majority of the members of

the New South Wales Assembly approve of the action of Queensland. I have heard some members of the New South Wales Government take that view; I have heard members of the Parliament of New South Wales and many public men in that colony make the same statement, and say that New South Wales is not eager in the cause of federation. If that is so, and there is divided opinion in New South Wales; and if Queensland has not been able to be represented through the causes we regret, is there any necessity at the present moment to hurry the thing to a conclusion? I wish that the views of this Assembly could have been endorsed by the other Chamber, and that we should have been able to send delegates to the Convention. I do hope that members in the other colonies will take it that members of this Government—and I am speaking as one of them—have in their action been collectively and individually sincere in their efforts to secure the presence of Queensland at that Convention. I am sure I speak the views of all members of the Government when I say that. I feel sure that if the other colonies will endeavour to meet Queensland under the circumstances by a postponement, at any rate until we meet again, there may be a chance of the Parliament of Queensland so deliberating over the matter in a serious mood that there may yet be no difficulty in having Queensland represented at the Australian Convention.

The Hon. J. R. DICKSON: I desire to say that had the Government after the departure of the Premier of New South Wales decided to proceed by resolution or by a Bill to secure the representation of Queensland at the Convention by representatives elected by the electors or the Parliament of Queensland, I would have supported such a resolution or Bill even at this late period of the session; but that they have not done so should not, I think, be a subject of adverse criticism. While I regret that Queensland should not be represented at the Convention, I agree with the Home Secretary that the Convention will suffer nothing by the delay, and perhaps before it sits we may still be able to remedy the omission to send representatives from Queensland. It is against my nature to speak against the gentleman who was here in the hope of surmounting certain political difficulties. His mission was not a success, but there are very few persons of intelligence who take an interest in the affairs of Queensland who could for a moment believe that a statesman from a neighbouring colony, however distinguished, could deliberately reverse the judgment which the Queensland Parliament so recently pronounced on this question. If that could have been done, we might feel that we had been subjected to undue influence and pressure in being told to set our house in order by the intervention of a gentleman who is not identified with the political or social interests of this colony. Without in any way referring to the past history of that gentleman in connection with federation, I cannot approve of the unmerited invective launched against him by a previous speaker. I think we might speak of a distinguished visitor such as he was with every respect, while exercising an independent judgment as to whether we ought to accept his counsel. I do not think he had any motive but a sincere desire to promote the cause of federation in coming here. I do not think he came here to secure kudos for himself or to aggrandise New South Wales, but it is due to our own sense of dignity that we should not be influenced by external pressure at the present time. I do not think the cause of federation will suffer from our action. If federation is to grow it will grow out of well-matured delibera-

tion, and I cannot support the hon. member for Enoggera in pressing the Government to introduce a measure now. Even if the Convention should meet before Queensland has had an opportunity to send delegates to it, the members of it will, I think, feel that Queensland has taken up a wise and dignified position.

Mr. KEOGH: I shall support the motion of the hon. member for Enoggera, and congratulate the hon. member for Toowong upon his manly speech; but I cannot congratulate the hon. member for Dalby upon his language in reference to an honoured guest, which language was backed up by the junior member for Maryborough. If those hon. members had anything to say about that gentleman, they should have said it when they were with him on the steamer, instead of traducing him when his back was turned. Every man has a right to change his opinions, and therefore the language used was quite uncalled for.

Mr. McMASTER: I supported the Government when they brought in the federation Bill, because I thought it desirable, if only as a matter of courtesy, that we should be represented at the Convention. I said then that I was not a federationist, and I have not altered my opinion. I was surprised to hear the speech of the hon. member who last spoke, because after inviting our visitor down the river how could we abuse him. We had no cause to say an adverse word; and, so far as concerns the people of one colony casting reflections upon those of another, when the Premier of New South Wales got back to his own colony he said the Government of this colony are led by the nose by the Labour party.

Mr. HARDACRE: He only said that the Labour party held the key to the position.

Mr. McMASTER: I am surprised that the Home Secretary did not speak out more plainly than he did, but he was evidently trying to pour oil on the troubled waters. If the Government had brought forward a Bill or a resolution to send representatives to the Convention I should have supported it previous to the statement made by the Premier of New South Wales; but I should have certainly opposed it afterwards, although I am a general supporter of the Government. The Premier of New South Wales did not succeed in bouncing the Government or in convincing them of the necessity of bringing in a Bill, or that they should do as they were told by New South Wales; but he did succeed in silencing the Labour party. The leader of that party told us that he gave Mr. Reid his promise that the party would not stonewall any resolution or Bill if the Government brought it in, and in obtaining that promise that gentleman did wonders. The hon. member for Bundaberg spoke very cautiously, and did not say that he would support the Government or vote for the Bill, but merely that the party would not stonewall it, and that was a great concession. They might have blocked the Bill without saying a word, because they know very well that a number of members behind the Government would not support them in submitting to the influence of statesmen down south, and they could have walked outside the bar and let hon. members sitting behind the Government defeat the proposals of the Government. I am pleased that the Government do not intend to bring forward any proposal this session, considering how we have been spoken of, and how an attempt has been made to coerce us to join the views of the Premier of New South Wales. He is a genial, good-looking fellow, and an able speaker, but, though he has apparently been successful in silencing the members of the Labour party, he has by no means succeeded in silencing the supporters of the Government. If anything, he has

put us on our mettle, and I am very glad we are not to be asked to support the Government in humiliating themselves in the eyes of the world.

Mr. SMITH: It is quite evident from this discussion that it would be foolish to take any steps to bring about the representation of Queensland at the Convention. I have always been an ardent federationist, but considering the feeling of members on this side it is undesirable for the Government to bring forward any proposal at this late period of the session. I do not agree with those hon. members who have spoken in a discourteous manner of the mission of the Premier of New South Wales, and with what they have said with regard to his change of views on the question of federation. It is partly a privilege of politicians to change their views under changing conditions, and no one can blame a politician for changing his views in accordance with what he considers the march of progress. I do not believe at any time in speaking discourteously of a distinguished visitor from another colony, and I give Mr. Reid credit for the best of intentions in coming to Brisbane. I believe he came here to try and convert the people of Queensland to view federation in the light in which he regards it. At the same time I do not regard delay in this matter as a very bad thing. I think that we are hardly educated up to the point of federating yet, and that we might endeavour to bring it about by means of the Federal Council. If the present movement is not a success, the Federal Council may be given enlarged powers, and be placed on a more representative basis, and eventually, through its agency, people may be educated up to a belief in federation. Though the Government may not have acted as strenuously in the cause as I could wish, I recognise that they cannot now go back upon the action they have taken. If the Convention does not take place at a very early date, we may still be represented there. It is an advantage that we are able to deliberately consider the question, and are not forced into it by wars or rumours of wars. The question is the most important upon which we could be engaged, and the more light that is thrown upon it the better it will be for the cause, and the better the people will be fitted for federation when it takes place.

Mr. HAMILTON: This motion is intended to criticise unfavourably the action of the Government, and yet if anyone is to blame for the failure of their proposal to have representatives sent to the Convention it is the hon. member for Enoggera. The hon. member did not rest upon his exertions against the Bill in this House, but carried his opposition to it to another place.

The PREMIER: Having previously prophesied its rejection.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; having previously prophesied its rejection, the hon. member used the most strenuous exertions to fulfil his own prophecy. But though the hon. member's objection to that Bill was that it did not provide for the election of the delegates by the people, he now unfavourably criticised the action of the Government in refusing to introduce a Bill under which the people would have no voice at all; which would mean that the delegates should be nominees. The hon. member for Bundaberg told Mr. Reid, on behalf of his party, that he would not obstruct a Bill to send nominees to the Convention, but that they would vote against it. When the previous Bill was introduced, which provided for the election of the delegates indirectly by the people, inasmuch as they would be elected by members who had just come from the people, the hon. member for Bundaberg strongly objected to it, on the ground that the delegates should be elected directly by the people. It would therefore be

only logical for the hon. member to have more strongly opposed the sending of nominees, yet he practically arranged with Mr. Reid to allow that measure to pass. Both the hon. members for Enoggera and Bundaberg have shown that they are now prepared to approve of what they previously condemned. When an hon. member on this side said that Queensland would be humiliated if she did not send delegates to the Convention, a chorus of approval went up from hon. members opposite, though they know that the only possible way in which we can send delegates now is by sending nominees, and although they admitted that if the Premier proposed to send nominees they would vote against it. The hon. member for Rosewood, who has constituted himself an exponent of gentlemanly conduct in this House, has charged the hon. member for Dalby with violating the rights of hospitality—a charge of which no member believes the hon. member for Dalby would be guilty. After speaking in complimentary terms of Mr. Reid, whom we were all glad to see, not only on account of his position but because of his *personnel*, the hon. member for Dalby said that he came here to cajole hon. members, which merely means to coax members, to adopt the views which he now holds. One objection which hon. members on this side have to Mr. Reid's proposal is that if they will not allow their own Premier to coax them to do a certain thing they are not going to allow any other Premier to do it.

Mr. SMYTH: I was very pleased to hear the remarks made by the Home Secretary and the hon. member for Fassifern. I have followed this subject carefully for years, and remember that when we joined the Federal Council New South Wales stood aloof from it; but if that colony had not adopted that course more good would have been done than by the Premier insisting upon our being represented at this Convention. Only three months ago there was a case in which a man in New South Wales summoned a man in Queensland for a debt, but the Chief Justice ruled that he had no standing, although it would have been different if he had come from Victoria, because the latter colony had joined the Federal Council. The people of New South Wales had never thought it worth while to join the Federal Council, and therefore they have no right to expect us to join in this Convention. We have to consider what will be the effects of federation. There are numbers of chimney-stacks in Victoria which have no smoke coming from them, but there very soon will be if we have federation and free-trade between the colonies; and Sydney will become the London of Australia. I do not care about federation, although it would be a very nice thing to have the same insolvency laws and joint means of defence, and so on, but if all the colonies joined the Federal Council we could very soon federate upon matters of common importance. In fact, the only reason why New South Wales did not join the Federal Council was because there was some jealousy between a politician in New South Wales, now dead and gone, and another person in Victoria; and Mr. Reid only came here for a holiday without caring a fig about federation. We had better leave federation alone; we are in a sound financial position, and the other colonies are financially weak, and they want our assistance to float their loans. At present we can pay 20s. in the £1, which is more than any other colony in Australia can do.

Mr. STEWART: I think the hon. member for Enoggera is to be commended upon his motion calling attention to the conduct of the Government in this matter. Nothing has occurred during the present session which shows more clearly the hopeless impotency of the Go-

vernment and the vacillating character of their policy than the way in which they have dealt with this question. Some time ago a joint agreement was made between the Premiers of the different colonies that a Convention should be held and each colony should be represented, but no steps have been taken to have Queensland represented there. If hon. members opposite think Queensland should not be represented they should say so, but if they think she ought to be they should take steps accordingly. My own conviction is that the colonies will be federated some day, and Queensland will be bound to come in whether she wishes or not; and therefore it is advisable that she should be represented at the Convention which will lay down the conditions under which the people of federated Australia will live. An attempt has been made to throw the blame upon the Labour party for the falling through of the negotiations upon this matter, but I disclaim any responsibility for the failure of the Government to carry out the promise made at Hobart. In the beginning of the session a Bill was brought in. We agreed with the principle of that Bill, which was that representatives should be sent to the Convention, but we differed as to the way in which those representatives should be chosen. Still, we consider it better that Queensland should send representatives down, even though we would prefer that they should be elected, than that Queensland should not be represented at all, and even at this period of the session we wish some steps to be taken whereby Queensland will be enabled to take a prominent position in the Convention. The Home Secretary has told us that there is no hurry. There never is any hurry for anything to which members on the other side are opposed. When another question came before this House the Premier asked that the Standing Orders should be suspended to enable it to be dealt with in one sitting, and wanted to rush it through without due consideration, and now we are told that there is no hurry in regard to this matter. It is over a century since Australia was first colonised, and Queensland is about forty years old, and the sooner we federate the easier it will be. It is no use hon. members opposite trying to throw dust in our eyes as to their real objection to federation. We know what that objection is. We see what vested interests are doing. We see that the opposition to federation is due to the creation of those vested interests, and every year adds to their power.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now going outside the lines of the motion.

Mr. STEWART: I am only replying to arguments used by other hon. members, which were never objected to by you. We have also heard a great deal about the dignity of the colony. Will the dignity of the colony be maintained by repudiating the agreement made in Hobart? That repudiation places this colony in a most contemptible position. The spirit shown towards the Premier of New South Wales has seemed very much out of place to me. The prevailing tone of the discussion seems to be one of resentment at the visit of Mr. Reid and his attitude as a federationist. The Government had not the courage to speak for themselves, and they seemed to depute the hon. member for Dalby to speak on their behalf, and the remarks of the hon. member were brimful of malice towards Mr. Reid. The hon. member said that Mr. Reid was not sincere. How does he know that? He says that Mr. Reid would not join the federation movement five years ago. Is that any reason why he should not believe in federation now? Has not the hon. member for Dalby changed his opinions, and is he not likely

to change them again in the future? At one time the hon. member declared he was a democrat, and he was looked upon as one of the hopes of the democratic party, and now we find him supporting the most conservative Government in Australia.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hear, hear! The best, too.

Mr. STEWART: I do not blame the hon. member for supporting the Government, but I am pointing out that he blames the Premier of New South Wales for doing exactly what he has himself done. The whole tenor of the hon. member's speech reminded me of the old story of the barrister who said to the attorney who was instructing him, "There does not seem to be any case here." "Oh, well," replied the attorney, "you can abuse the opposing barrister." The junior member for Maryborough, in that melodramatic way of his, says that we must not surrender our rights. Are we not surrendering the right of this Assembly to send representatives to the Convention to the other House? We passed a measure authorising this Assembly to send men down to the Convention—

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that he is not now criticising the action of the Government, but the action of the House.

Mr. STEWART: I was simply referring to the fact that we passed a certain measure.

The SPEAKER: Yes, but the hon. member is out of order in doing that. I would ask him to confine himself to the motion.

Mr. STEWART: It was claimed by hon. members sitting on the other side that we were surrendering our rights, and I am trying to show how we are surrendering our rights, and what a false position we have placed ourselves in. I do not think that members of this House, or any citizen of Queensland, should be influenced in this matter in any degree by the utterances of southern members of Parliament. We are called upon to perform a public duty, and it is absolutely childish for any member of this Chamber to say that he will not assist to bring about a certain thing, because certain individuals somewhere else have spoken disparagingly about the colony. Members should take a higher view than that, and be above such considerations. This House passed a Bill saying that Queensland should be represented at the Convention. That Bill came to grief in the Upper House, and the Government are now sheltering themselves behind that House, which is a position that should not be taken up by any Government. Every member knows that the Government could, if they chose, persuade the Upper House to pass any Bill that goes through this Chamber. If this Chamber did not possess that power, our meeting for the purpose of carrying on the business of the country would be altogether useless. In Great Britain, a country from which we take many precedents, when the House of Lords obstinately refuses to pass a Bill, the Commons brings pressure to bear upon them, and the Bill is passed; and I feel confident that if the Government of Queensland were anxious that the colony should be represented at the Convention they could easily pass the necessary Bill. If the Government do not want the colony to be represented, I do not object to their taking up that position, but they should not try to deceive the House and the country by bringing in a Bill on the subject, and asking members to waste months of their time considering it when there was no business intended by it. The whole thing is a farce unworthy of the Government, degrading to Parliament, and rendering Queensland contemptible in the eyes of the other colonies of Australia. If the Government are sincere, but I do not believe they are, let them show their *bona fides* by even at this late hour providing

that Queensland shall be represented at the Convention. If they do that I shall believe that they are sincere, and honour them accordingly; but if not, I can come to no other conclusion than that they are deceiving the people and houching Parliament.

Mr. DRAKE, in reply: I think the debate which has taken place amply justifies me in the action I have taken this afternoon. I have listened with a great deal of interest to the speeches which have been delivered, and I feel personally thankful to the members who have assisted me by the remarks they have made. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government has seen fit to decline to make any statement upon this subject. Of course he can pursue his own course, and I suppose he considers that is the proper course upon this occasion.

The PREMIER: I gave you a distinct answer to your question.

Mr. DRAKE: No doubt after Parliament is prorogued the hon. gentleman will be able, if he likes, to make statements to that electioneering association down Queen street, of which he is so distinguished an ornament.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that he must not open up new ground; he must simply reply to the arguments which have been introduced.

The PREMIER: "Conscience makes cowards of us all."

Mr. DRAKE: I am not breaking fresh ground in making this remark, because in my speech in moving the adjournment of the House I stated that one of the objects I had in view was to discount beforehand any untruthful statements that might be made after Parliament was prorogued, and I gave the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government full opportunity to make to Parliament any statement he had to make with regard to the causes which have led to the non-representation of Queensland at the Convention. In marked contrast to the surly attitude of the Premier was the speech delivered by the Home Secretary. His speech was temperate and moderate, and held out the hope that in the early part of next year Parliament might address itself to this subject in such a way that Queensland might be represented at the Federal Convention. A suggestion of the same kind fell from myself, and I hope that that course will be adopted. If it is, I am perfectly sure that the action I have taken this afternoon, and the support hon. members have afforded me, will not be in vain. There is only one general remark I desire to make with regard to the speeches that have been made on this question. It has been contended that no steps should be taken at this late period of the session, because if a Bill were introduced by the Government it might meet with opposition, and hon. members have quoted as a reason for that belief the fact that the Bill which was introduced in the early part of the session met with a great deal of opposition. But I would respectfully point out to those members who take that view that they have not discriminated between objection to the representation of Queensland at the Convention and the opposition to the system by which it was proposed to be represented—a system that would not really represent the people. Hon. members opposite cannot put their fingers on any one fact that will justify them in saying that a Bill introduced now to provide for the election of the representatives on the terms agreed to at the Hobart Conference would meet with any opposition at all, either in this House or in another place. The Government declining to bring forward a Bill of this nature, even at this late period of the session, simply shows their indisposition to have Queensland represented at the Convention at all. If any blame is to be

laid to the door of anyone in connection with the non-representation of Queensland, it must rest with the Government, or with some section of their supporters, who during this debate have shown themselves strongly opposed to any steps being taken to secure the representation of Queensland at the Convention. We have been told that to take any such steps now would be to lower the dignity of the colony or of this Parliament, but we will not be upholding our dignity by persisting in a wrong course. When we find ourselves on the wrong course the proper way to uphold the dignity of the colony is to get on to the right course at the earliest possible opportunity and undo the wrong that has been done. The Government can, if they choose, pass a Bill to do that now, and if Queensland is unrepresented at the Convention the blame will lie entirely at their door. I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

MESSAGES FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from the Legislative Council, returning the following Bills without amendment:—

Railway Act Amendment Bill No. 2;
Appropriation Bill No. 4; and the
Sandgate Racecourse Bill.

At a later hour, the following were received:—

Navigation Act Amendment Bill;
Defence Act Amendment Bill; and the
Pearl-shell and Bêche-de-mer Fishery Act
Amendment Bill.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that they did not insist on their amendments in this Bill to which the Assembly did not agree.

DISEASES IN PLANTS BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating their agreement with the amendments made by the Assembly in this Bill.

ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that they disagreed to the amendment made in the 46th clause of this Bill by the Assembly, because they consider twenty-five years was too short a period, and agreed to the other amendments in the Bill.

Ordered to be taken into consideration in committee forthwith.

COMMITTEE.

The HOME SECRETARY proposed to move that the Assembly did not insist upon its amendment. So far as regarded the past they had two Acts connected with Warwick and Rockhampton, and in them no time was mentioned at all. Under the Warwick Act the local authority might purchase after fourteen years, but that included the goodwill, and there would be little objection to fourteen days on those terms. The Warwick and Rockhampton companies could claim that the Bill as it stood when it left that Chamber practically repealed their Acts, and left them, so far as regarded electric lighting, subject to the provisions of that Bill, and subject to having their wings clipped down to twenty-five years. They were really entitled to be considered out of the Bill, and the only other vested interest was that of the company in Brisbane. The Bill went on to provide that the Order in Council should have a maximum limit of forty-two years, and although that might seem a very long time, it was the period which had been calculated by the very best experts, who knew how long they might expect a plant to take to pay sufficient to return interest upon its cost. That

was the opinion of experts in England and in the United States; and, having gone fully into the matter, he found that it practically came to this: That if they gave a company a dispensation, at the expiration of, say, ten years they would require an entirely new plant, because there were continual developments in the method of dealing with electricity, and it was not to be expected that people would enter into this business except upon terms which men trained in it might expect would pay. The action he proposed to take would have no damaging effect upon the Bill, because it would not apply to local authorities. The Bill was based upon the principle that the local authority would be the electric authority, and no rights could be granted to an electric authority under the Bill unless the local authority had been consulted and had refused. The whole object of the Executive was to consider the interests of the community, and objections that were sufficiently weighty in the mind of the local authority would generally be sufficiently weighty with the Executive. He did not think that anyone but local authorities would go in for electric lighting here, because it was the policy of the Bill to encourage them, and they were given a fair field. No one would risk money in running an electric lighting plant in competition with a local authority, because even if he were allowed the forty-two years, the local authority might compete even within the same area, so that the latter would be master of the situation. What influenced the Council in adhering to the clause as it originally stood was that they had had opportunities of consulting half a dozen men who had been trained all their lives in this business, and their opinion was that nothing less than forty-two years would be sufficient. But it had to be remembered that that was the maximum; that the Executive could grant the order for any shorter period that they thought fit. He had tried to frame an amendment which would conserve the rights of Rockhampton and Warwick, while placing a limit on all future electrical authorities; but, as the term would be fixed in each case by the Governor in Council, the interests of the people of the colony might safely be left in the hands of the Executive. He therefore moved that the Committee do not insist on its amendment.

Mr. GLASSEY: Surely the hon. gentleman was not going to allow the Council to override the Committee! He thought that twenty-five years even was too long, and he was very much astonished at the hon. gentleman wishing to extend the time to forty-two years. The Governor in Council might issue an order for the whole term. He did not suppose that the present Government would do such a thing, but there was a possibility that it might be done at some future time. He trusted they would not agree to the motion.

Mr. McMASTER regretted that the Government proposed to revert to the term of forty-two years. It was all very well to ask them to trust the Government, but he could not forget that it was a Cabinet Minister who had introduced the Bill in another place, and who had proposed forty-two years as the term. As to forty-two years being the proper term, it was impossible to say, because electrical science was still in its infancy. The Home Secretary said that it would not affect Brisbane, but the Bill would almost place the company at present in existence in legal possession of Brisbane. There was a syndicate in Brisbane which was ready while the Bill was going through, and clause 5 was inserted to protect that company, and that company alone. That clause would compel the municipal council to bargain with a company, which they did not acknowledge had

any legal right to be in possession of the city, and if the council did not make an arrangement with them within twelve months the company would be in possession for forty-two years. The same argument would apply to Charters Towers, where a company, and not the local authority, had undertaken electric lighting. He was surprised at the action of the Government in forcing such a clause on the Committee, and regretted that the senior member for North Brisbane was not present to protect the interests of the city.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: The Legislative Council no doubt adhered to the term they originally proposed, because they considered it was necessary to induce companies to undertake the erection of electric works. But it appeared to him that time was not so much an object, as though the maximum term was forty-two years the Governor in Council had power under the clause to limit the term for which an Order in Council would be granted. The Government would be very justly open to censure if they did not discriminate and investigate the circumstances of each case, and make an order accordingly; and while he would have preferred to have made the term twenty-five years instead of forty-two years, he thought it would be a pity to risk the Bill by refusing to accept the proposal of the Council, as it was desirable that electric works should be under the control and supervision of the Government.

Mr. STEWART: If they fixed the maximum term at forty-two years they would be practically granting a monopoly to electric companies for that period. It had been said that the Governor in Council could limit the term. Then why fix any limit at all in the Bill? The Council were evidently not willing to leave the matter to an Order in Council, but wanted it fixed by statute. The insistence of the Council on the term of forty-two years proved conclusively that the Bill was nothing more nor less than a huge job, and the action of the Government in delaying its consideration till the last week of the session confirmed him in that opinion. Consciously or unconsciously the hon. gentleman was playing into the hands of people who desired to rob the citizens of the colony. He would like to clearly understand the position with respect to North Rockhampton.

The HOME SECRETARY: There is no term allowed for purchase in the case of the North Rockhampton Company at all.

Mr. STEWART only desired to be clear on the matter. Could the council erect gas or electric light works of their own?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. STEWART: Queensland was only about forty years old now, and, so far as he could read it, the Bill gave persons power to rob people in Queensland for the next forty-two years. It was as big a swindle as the land-grant railway proposals, and as deserving of the opposition of the Committee. The Home Secretary's reference to the necessity for a renewal of plant every ten years was only another reason for reducing the term, and they would be acting in the interests of the people as against those of syndicates if they adhered to the twenty-five years' limit.

Mr. McMASTER: The Home Secretary explained that the term of forty-two years was the maximum, and under the Order in Council the time allowed would not necessarily be forty-two years. If that was so, why was the term of forty-two years included in the Bill, and where did the value of the opinion of the experts come in if under the Order in Council the term they considered short enough could be reduced? He thought twenty-five years ample.

Mr. GRIMES was sure that twenty-five years would be sufficient to encourage any company to go in for this business; because other companies

had laid down more expensive works with only that period of monopoly, such as the tramway company. Nearly the whole of the plant of an electric lighting company would be in machinery which could be taken away, but such was not the case with the tramway company.

The HOME SECRETARY: The tramway company are not bound to hand over their plant for nothing, but these companies will be.

Mr. GRIMES: Twenty-five years would be about the life of the underground plant of the tramway company, and it would be the same with that of the electric light company.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON had paid a great deal of attention to the provincial Press, and had not gathered from it that there was any demand for this Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that he is referring to the Bill, but the question is that the Committee do not insist upon their amendment in clause 46.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Arguments had been advanced by the Home Secretary to show what would be the value of the plant in forty-two years.

The CHAIRMAN: The Home Secretary interjected a remark to the effect that these people could be compelled to sell within a certain time.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON pointed out that only the other day the ice company offered the whole of their plant for sale as old iron if some one would cart it away, because machinery had come out that would make ice at a far less rate, and in the same way the development of electricity was so great that they should not give a monopoly of forty-two years or even forty-two months. He would give the local authority the right to purchase on giving twelve months' notice of their intention to do so, because a cablegram might come out any day stating that discoveries had been made which would wipe out the whole of the plant there was in Queensland. He should stick to the twenty-five years.

Mr. McMASTER: The Home Secretary had tried to impress upon hon. members that this plant was to be handed over at the end of forty-two years free, but that was not so. The local authority would have to buy it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I said without any goodwill.

Mr. McMASTER: The local authority would have to pay for the plant, the buildings, and everything else. The electric light was not a thing that could be played with, and the plant would have to be kept in good order. The clause also said that the local authority might purchase within six months after the forty-two years had expired, but if they failed to do so within that time the company could get another Order in Council for ten years.

Question put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 21.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Philip, Foxton, Dalrymple, Tozer, Dickson, Stephenson, Bridges, Story, McGahan, Battersby, Stephens, Finney, Lord, Armstrong, Smith, Hamilton, Smyth, Callan, Bell, and Crombie.

NOES, 20.

Messrs. Glassey, Keogh, Dunsford, Drake, Fitzgerald, Macdonald-Paterson, Fraser, King, Dawson, McMaster, Hardacre, Jackson, Sim, Turley, Groom, Grimes, Dibley, Daniels, McDonnell, and Stewart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee did not insist on their amendment with which the Legislative Council had disagreed.

The HOME SECRETARY moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with a message intimating that the Assembly do not insist on their amendment.

Mr. DRAKE: I think that message is wrong. What I believe the Home Secretary desires to

send to the Council is a message intimating that we accept the amendment that the Council have made in the Bill. I am inclined to think that a great many hon. members did not really understand the question upon which they were voting, and it appears from this message as if the Home Secretary did not understand it either. The message is that we do not insist on our amendment. I think we ought to have insisted on our amendment. I did not speak at any length on this subject, and I was of opinion last night that twenty-five years was too long; and I left the Chamber for a time under the impression that the hon. member for Bundaberg was going to move a reduction to fourteen years. Forty-two years appears to be absolutely monstrous.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 20.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Tozer, Dalrymple, Philp, Foxton, Bell, Annear, Bridges, Smith, Battersby, Lord, Hamilton, Armstrong, Stephens, Stumm, Stephenson, Story, McGahan, Dickson, and Finney.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. Turley, Glassey, Keogh, Dunsford, Fitzgerald, Macdonald-Paterson, Drake, Fraser, King, Dawson, Sim, McMaster, Jackson, Groom, Dibley, Daniels, McDonnell, Harlaere, and Stewart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

RABBIT BOARDS BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS—COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved that the Council's amendments in clauses 11 and 57, and the second schedule be agreed to. The amendment in clause 11 omitted the last paragraph and inserted in lieu thereof a provision to the effect that all runs in a district belonging to the same owner which were managed or worked as one station or holding should be deemed to constitute one run. The word "contiguous" had been omitted, and that really made clearer the intention of the clause. In clause 57 the maximum penalty for leaving open a gate in a fence erected for the purpose of preventing the passage of rabbits or encamping stock against a rabbit fence was increased from £50 to £200, which brought it into line with the other penalties imposed by the Bill. The amendments in the schedule were merely verbal.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendments, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council with a message to that effect.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS—COMMITTEE.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hon. members had had notice of what the amendments made by the Council were. In several places in the Bill they had used the words "office, building," and the Council preferred to use the words "building, premises," and he had not the slightest objection to that. In several places also where the word "Governor" was used the Council preferred to use the words "Governor in Council." In another clause where fourteen days were allowed in which certain things were to be done they had shortened the time to seven days. He had no objection to that. In another place they substituted the word "inspection" for the word "inspector," which had been wrongly used; and they added to clause 7, "in the presence of an officer of health or a constable." In clause 29 they preferred the word "decides" for the words "shall decide," and in clause 37 they inserted after the word "birth" "or other evidence of age." He had thought clause 40 so good that he inserted it twice, and the Council omitted it in one instance; and in clause 50 they objected to the word "stipendiary." With the consent of the Com-

mittee, he would move that the Committee agreed to the whole of the amendments of the Council in the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendments of the Council in the Bill, and a message to that effect was ordered to be sent to the Council.

CLEVELAND RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I wish to withdraw the motion standing in my name with reference to this matter. Even if we went on with it to-night, there is no time to get it through the Council. I shall bring it forward at the earliest possible opportunity next session.

LAGOONS STATION (MACKAY) TO SANDY CREEK, BRANCH LINE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to withdraw this motion also, and for the same reason as the previous railway. I may also state that the divisional board and the municipalities who will guarantee this railway have not yet obtained the consent of the ratepayers, and the Commissioner for Railways has not completed his arrangements with the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company, so that no time will be lost, and both matters will be satisfactorily arranged during the recess.

EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of debate on Mr. Dickson's motion—

That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when Government should consider and submit to Parliament proposals for the early revival of European immigration, to be chiefly composed of passage-paying adults, to whom reasonable inducements, under certain safeguards, to settle on the lands of the colony should be offered; also, to extend assisted or free passages to suitable female domestics desirous of emigrating from Great Britain to Queensland—

The HON. J. R. DICKSON, in reply, said: At this late hour of the evening and of the session, I do not intend to say anything in reply. I express my thanks to those hon. members who have addressed themselves to the question, and ask the indulgence of the House to amend the motion by omitting the words "Great Britain" with the view of inserting the words "the United Kingdom." With that I leave the motion to the decision of the House.

The SPEAKER: The motion can only be amended by leave of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be amended?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Amended question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 29.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Philp, Tozer, Dalrymple, Stephens, Smith, Crombie, O'Connell, McMaster, Story, Stephenson, Battersby, Lord, McGahan, Drake, Groom, Smyth, Bridges, Stumm, Fraser, Hamilton, Annear, Callan, Grimes, Finney, Dickson, Keogh, Armstrong, and Macdonald-Paterson.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Dawson, Glassey, Dunsford, McDonnell, Sim, Turley, King, Jackson, Dibley, Daniels, Fitzgerald, Harlaere, and Stewart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

SUNDAY EXCURSION TRAINS.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Grimes's motion asking for correspondence relating to the running of excursion trains from Charters Towers to the Burdekin River on Sundays (*vide* page 1851),

The question was put and passed.

MORTGAGE LIMITATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

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

Mr. Cross : Divide !

The HOME SECRETARY : I move as an amendment on the motion before the House, "That the Bill be now read a second time," the omission of all the words after "That" with a view of inserting "the House proceed with the next business on the paper."

Mr. CROSS : I am not sure that the amendment is in order, but even if it is, I think I have some right to a division on the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY : It has never been debated.

Mr. CROSS : This is the second session in which the Bill has been debated. We have had two second-reading debates on the Bill, and it has once been discussed in committee. I think the House is in a position to express an opinion on the Bill. The Secretary for Public Instruction, the Secretary for Lands, the Attorney-General, the hon. member for Bulimba, and other hon. members have expressed their opinions upon it, and it has been denounced by hon. gentlemen opposite contrary to the opinions of people outside. I would like to reply to some of the remarks made against the Bill, and I may say that, to the discredit of the leading journal of the colony, I was refused the right to do so through its columns.

The SPEAKER : Order ! I remind the hon. member that he must confine himself to the question that the House shall proceed to the next business on the paper.

Mr. CROSS : The Bill has been discussed very fully, and though it has been objected that the second reading last year was carried in a thin House, I point out that many Bills involving large sums of money have been passed in both Houses when there was not half the number of members present. However, if the hon. gentleman likes to shirk the responsibility of expressing an opinion upon the Bill, the blame will be upon him and upon those who support his amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION : I cannot understand the hon. member saying that the Home Secretary desires to shirk the responsibility of expressing an opinion upon this Bill, when all that that hon. gentleman asks is that he should be given an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it. The hon. member says the Bill has passed a second reading, but that was in the last Parliament, and what happened when it got into committee? The Committee decided that it was not advisable that its most important clause should take effect for the next 100 years. That can hardly be said to be a Bill which has met with the favour of the House. The hon. member says that the public outside are in favour of the measure, but that is probably because they have not considered it, while this House has done so. It is a proof that the public require more information on the subject, and the hon. gentleman should therefore allow it to be debated. If a man has a good case, there is no reason why he should decline to discuss it, and I wish this matter to be discussed, although I do not suppose the hon. member will be able to convert me. Apparently public opinion is not matured upon this subject yet, and I think it is desirable that the public should know more about it.

Mr. SIM : I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is not addressing himself to the amendment.

The SPEAKER : There is no point of order.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION : I do not know why the hon.

member should wish me to be called to order unless it is that he cannot follow me, which is not my fault. I am surprised at any hon. member who believes that the truth is with him, and who knows that a majority of the House are not in favour of his view of the case, should not be willing to allow that time to elapse which might put the majority on to his side. How is the wisdom of Parliament to be elicited if no one speaks? It is a novelty to me to discover hon. members upon that side of the House, who were elected because they could talk, and it was thought they had opinions worth expressing, should be the very ones to say we should come to conclusions without properly examining them, particularly when the expression of the opinions of those hon. members may lead me and others to entertain different opinions from those we now hold.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor conveying the Royal assent to the following Bills :— The Loan Bill, the Goldfields Act of 1874 Amendment Bill, the Federal Council Referring Bill, the Brisbane Traffic Bill, the Companies Act Amendment Bill, and the Queensland National Bank (Agreement) Bill.

MORTGAGE LIMITATION BILL.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, resuming, said : I hope the House will pass to the next business, but I do not believe in giving a vote upon a question of this sort without placing before my constituents the reasons upon which my action is based.

Mr. ANNEAR : I very much regret that the hon. member for Clermont cannot see his way to accept gracefully the postponement of his Bill.

Mr. CROSS : I do so.

Mr. ANNEAR : The Bill deals with a very important question, and without in any way attempting to flatter the hon. member, I may say that he has shown the people of this colony that he possesses a grasp of finance which qualifies many of our politicians to become Treasurers. Only two or three members have spoken on the Bill, but the speeches of those hon. members, and especially the speech of the hon. member for Clermont, have led people throughout the colony to think most seriously that the law relating to the mortgage of real property requires amendment. I think there should be a limitation, and if the hon. member introduces his Bill next session, I feel certain that he will find that he has made several converts. I hope the hon. member will agree to let us get on with the next business, and then we may adjourn.

The HOME SECRETARY : I understand the hon. member wishes to move that his Bill be discharged from the paper, and therefore with the consent of the House I shall withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. CROSS moved that the order standing in his name be discharged from the paper.

Question put and passed.

MACKAY HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that they had agreed to this Bill with amendments.

Ordered that the message be taken into consideration in committee forthwith.

COMMITTEE.

The HOME SECRETARY said that the amendments were purely verbal, and he moved that they be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendments, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council with a message to that effect.

VETERINARY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. ARMSTRONG moved, on behalf of the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Stephens, that this order be discharged from the paper.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACTS.

On the Order of the Day being read for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Turley's motion on this subject (*vide* page 742).

The HOME SECRETARY said: I was continuing the debate on this subject at the time we adjourned for tea on the 22nd October last, and I discussed the matter with a desire to give the hon. member who introduced the motion as much assistance as I could by argument, but I had not much time to speak, as I only rose about five minutes before 6 o'clock. I am sure, however, that the hon. member will see that—apart altogether from the question of this motion being one of political fireworks—he cannot expect to get the deliberate opinion of the House on it to-night. The motion in its present form is embarrassing to any hon. member who may desire to fall in with the general principle, as the first part deals with Government contracts, while the second part states that a clause should be inserted in all contracts to the effect that eight hours shall constitute a day's work. If the question is put to the vote, I can unhesitatingly say that the vote that I shall give will be no index whatever of my opinion on the subject. But I am not going to discuss the matter. I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 25.

Sir H. M. Nelson, Messrs. Tozer, Philp, Dalrymple, Dickson, Hamilton, Macdonald-Paterson, Finney, Grimes, Callan, Stumm, Groom, McGahan, Battersby, Crombie, O'Connell, Armstrong, Annear, McMaster, Lord, Smyth, Stephenson, Stephens, Fraser, and Smith.

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Fitzgerald, Keogh, Glassey, Cross, Dunsford, McDonnell, Story, Sim, Drake, Turley, Dibley, Jackson, Hardacre, Daniels, Dawson, King, and Stewart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member wish to make a motion for the resumption of the debate?

Mr. TURLEY: No.

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' WAGES.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of adjourned debate on Mr. Hardacre's motion—

“That in the opinion of this House—

“1. The new railway regulations dealing with the wages of employees are extremely unsatisfactory;

“2. The old rate of wages existing previous to the retrenchment of 1893 should be restored”—

on which Mr. Jackson had moved, by way of amendment, that all the words after the word “That” be omitted, with a view to insert the words—

“The Minister for Railways be requested to confer with the Railway Commissioner, with the object of reviewing the present railway regulations, which are alleged to work unsatisfactorily, and of endeavouring to increase the wages of the railway employees to the amounts paid before the retrenchment of 1893”—

Mr. HAMILTON said: I am going to vote for this amendment. My only objection to the motion is this: The Minister told the House long before this motion came on that he intended

doing what it asks him to do; he has already this year raised the wages, and has promised to still further raise them next year if the railway revenue will warrant it. It is evident, in the face of all this, that the motion is merely a political pyrotechnic display. The amendment of the member for Kennedy was framed by the hon. member for Bulimba, who is a Government supporter, and will be supported by every member on this side of the House.

Mr. KEOGH: I do not want to delay the business, but hon. members on this side cannot be blamed for any delay, because had it not been for the hon. member for the Valley the question would have been decided, and the Minister would have accepted the motion. I am glad to know that it is now decided to grant a request which both sides of the House are prepared to support.

Amendment agreed to; and the question, as amended, put and passed.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS.

On the motion of Mr. GROOM the House went into committee to consider the desirableness of increasing the value of Grammar School scholarships in certain cases (*vide* page 1595).

Mr. GRIMES said he had objected to an amendment to this motion last evening which had been misunderstood; and he had been grossly misrepresented by a section of the Press, which had stated that in doing so he had been actuated by animosity against the hon. member for Toowoomba in consequence of something that transpired at a meeting of the farmers' union. That was entirely wrong; his reason was that the amendment was sprung upon them late at night when hon. members were exhausted and the hon. member for Toowoomba had spoken in reply. Hon. members sitting around him had informed him that they were not in favour of the amendment, and he said “No” when the question was put. He was perfectly in accord with the motion, and should vote for it, but the amendment sought to be proposed would have made it something very different, and his action had prevented the amendment being discussed at the tail end of the session.

Mr. STORY explained that he also had objected to the resolution being amended, as the amendment had been sprung on them without any discussion.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to know what special cases were referred to by the resolution? He was anxious to assist everything that would tend to improve the education of the children of the colony, but he was anxious to have full information on the question before them before he could support it.

Mr. GROOM explained that children who gained grammar school scholarships had to attend the nearest grammar school, and their parents might not be able to afford to keep them there. For instance, a boy in Warwick who won a scholarship might be ordered to attend the grammar school at Toowoomba, and a girl in the same place might have to go to Ipswich or Brisbane. The young lady who had distinguished herself lately in the Sydney junior examinations had gained a scholarship in Toowoomba, but her parents had been unable to pay for her board in Ipswich, where the nearest girls' grammar school was situated, and she had been unable to take advantage of her scholarship. The same thing had occurred in other places. The resolution was intended to meet those cases, and nothing more.

The PREMIER thought the hon. member for Bundaberg must be remarkably “green.” He seemed to think there was “business” in this resolution, but there was none. There was nothing in the resolution, whether they passed it or whether they did not.

Mr. KEOGH wished to understand whether other than State schools would be included in the resolution?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Not in this resolution.

Mr. KEOGH: If the hon. member for Toowoomba was not prepared to allow the motion to include other schools, he would not vote for it. It would be very bad taste to attempt to force the resolution on the House without the amendment proposed by the Attorney-General.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the resolution before the Committee. The hon. member cannot introduce the matters referred to by the Attorney-General when the resolutions were before the House.

Mr. KEOGH: He was opposed to the resolution on the ground that it should include all children, even if they were educated at home.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot have read the resolution, which only embraces grammar schools.

Mr. KEOGH: Were other children than those attending State schools not eligible for grammar school scholarships?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Not all of them.

Mr. KEOGH: If they were not all included, injustice would be done to some sections of the community.

Mr. O'CONNELL agreed to a certain extent with the suggestion that all children educated in the colony should be eligible for grammar school scholarships, but did not agree with the proposal made the previous night by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba that such scholarships should be available for any schools or colleges outside the colony.

Mr. BATTERSBY had always been opposed to the system of grammar school scholarships. He thought that the State went far enough in teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. The parents of most of those children who won scholarships were well able to pay for their education at a grammar school.

Mr. STUMM agreed with the hon. member for Rosewood that every child in the colony, wherever educated, should be eligible to win a scholarship; but had he been present the previous evening, as seconder of the motion, he would have opposed the proposed amendment to make the scholarships available for any schools that might be prescribed by the department, as that was going further than they ought to go.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

The resolutions were ordered to be received on Tuesday next.

BRISBANE MUNICIPAL LOAN BILL. COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

This Bill was returned from the Council without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Thursday, the 24th instant.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. GLASSEY: Before the motion is put I should like to ask the Premier a question with respect to the committee that has been appointed to make further inquiries into the affairs of the Queensland National Bank. Have the gentle-

men who formed the committee in the first instance, and who have already done very excellent work, consented to make the further investigation; and, if not, have any other gentlemen undertaken to perform the work? I should like also to learn whether the hon. gentleman can inform the House when the work is likely to be commenced.

The PREMIER: Since the matter was last before the House I have had an opportunity of interviewing three of the four members of the committee, and they have all agreed to act, one of those three being the Auditor-General. I believe the fourth will also agree as soon as I have an opportunity to ask him.

Mr. GLASSEY: Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken, and can only speak again by the leave of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLASSEY: I simply wish to ask what time the House is likely to meet next year. I do so because I know that the people of the country are looking forward with great interest to the further report of the committee on the affairs of the Queensland National Bank.

The PREMIER: I have already intimated to the House that it is the intention of the Government to call Parliament together early next year, mainly for the purpose of dealing with the Land Bill and the Local Government Bill. Another Bill that we wish to proceed with, and which is now ready, is one dealing with the fisheries of the whole colony. But we are informed by most hon. members that it does not matter when we meet, because the House will always sit on to Christmas. The intention, so far as we can see at present, is to call the House together in the month of May next year; but I make no promise.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KEOGH: As the youngest member of the House, I congratulate the Premier upon what he has just stated, and I hope that when we again meet it will be in as good fellowship as we are in to-night.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-eight minutes to 11 o'clock.

Parliament prorogued by following Proclamation in Gazette Extraordinary, Tuesday, 22nd December:—

"A PROCLAMATION by His Excellency
"The Right Honourable CHARLES
"WALLACE ALEXANDER NAPIER, Baron
"Lamington of Lamington, in the
"county of Lanark, in the Peerage of the
"United Kingdom, Knight Commander
"of the Most Distinguished Order of St.
"Michael and St. George, Governor and
"Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of
"Queensland and its Dependencies.

"In pursuance of the power and authority vested in
"me as Governor aforesaid, I, CHARLES WALLACE
"ALEXANDER NAPIER, Baron Lamington, do, by this my
"Proclamation, Prorogue the Parliament of Queensland
"to Tuesday, the second day of February, 1897.

"Given under my Hand and Seal, at Toowoomba, this
"twenty-second day of December, in the year of
"our Lord one thousand eight hundred and
"ninety-six, and in the sixtieth year of Her
"Majesty's reign.

"By Command,

"HUGH M. NELSON.

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!"