

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 26 JULY 1898

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 26 JULY, 1898.

THE House met shortly before 12 o'clock, at which hour a message was brought by the Usher of the Black Rod from His Excellency the Governor, requesting the attendance of Mr. Speaker and hon. members in the Council Chamber.

The Speaker, accompanied by hon. members accordingly proceeded to the Legislative Council, and, having heard the Address of His Excellency, returned to their own Chamber.

The House resumed at half-past 3 o'clock.

VACANCIES DURING RECESS.

The SPEAKER reported that during the recess vacancies had arisen in the House in the representation of Wide Bay, by the resignation of Sir H. Tozer; of Murilla, by the resignation of the Right Hon. Sir H. M. Nelson; and of Burnett, by the death of Mr. W. F. McCord; and that his writs had been returned certifying the election of Mr. C. M. Jenkinson for Wide Bay, Mr. W. J. H. Moore for Murilla, and Mr. W. J. R. Maughan for Burnett.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following new members took the oath and subscribed the roll:—

Mr. William John Harlen Moore, as member for the electoral district of Murilla; and

Mr. William John Ryott Maughan, as member for the electoral district of Burnett.

AUDITING OF GOVERNMENT SECURITIES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of letters—

From the Acting Agent-General, stating that the Savings Bank securities held in London had been audited and found correct.

From the Auditor-General, in reference to Savings Bank securities, Treasury bills, and the public debt reduction fund.

Ordered to be printed.

QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK.

REPORT ON BALANCE-SHEET.

The SPEAKER, after announcing the receipt of a letter from the Auditor-General, dated 28th February, 1898, transmitting his report on the balance-sheet of the Queensland National Bank laid before the general meeting of shareholders

on the 17th February, 1898, said: Under the circumstances I felt it only right that the document should at once be printed and circulated amongst members, and this was done.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ELECTIONS JUDGE FOR 1898.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received a letter from the Chief Justice, intimating that Mr. Justice Cooper would be the judge to preside at sittings of the Elections Tribunal for the year 1898.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGES DURING THE RECESS.

The PREMIER: I feel it my duty to announce to the House certain changes in the Ministry that have occurred since the close of the session of 1897. On the 9th December, 1897, the Honourable Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith's resignation as a member of the Executive Council was accepted. On the 23rd of February, 1898, James Vincent Chataway was appointed as a member of the Executive Council. On 2nd March, 1898, the resignations of the Honourable Sir Horace Tozer and the Honourable Andrew Joseph Thynne as members of the Executive Council were accepted. On the same date, the resignations of the Right Honourable Sir Hugh Muir Nelson as Chief Secretary and Treasurer, the Honourable Sir Horace Tozer as Home Secretary, the Honourable James Robert Dickson as Postmaster-General and Secretary for Railways, the Honourable Robert Philp as Secretary for Mines, and the Honourable Andrew Joseph Thynne as Secretary for Agriculture were accepted. On the same date the following appointments were made:—The Right Honourable Sir Hugh Muir Nelson as Chief Secretary, the Honourable James Robert Dickson as Home Secretary and Secretary for Railways, the Honourable Walter Horatio Wilson as Postmaster-General, the Honourable Robert Philp as Treasurer and Secretary for Mines, and the Honourable James Vincent Chataway as Secretary for Agriculture. On the 13th April, 1898, the resignations of the Right Honourable Sir Hugh Muir Nelson as Vice-President and member of the Executive Council and Chief Secretary and the Honourable Thomas Joseph Byrnes as Attorney-General were accepted. On the same date the Honourable Thomas Joseph Byrnes was appointed Chief Secretary and Attorney-General and Vice-President of the Executive Council. On the 19th April, 1898, J. Murray, Esq., was appointed as a member of the Executive Council. On the 27th April, 1898, the resignations of the Honourable James Robert Dickson as Home Secretary and Secretary for Railways and the Honourable David Hay Dalrymple as Secretary for Public Instruction and Secretary for Public Works were accepted; and on the same date the following appointments were made:—The Honourable James Robert Dickson as Home Secretary, the Honourable David Hay Dalrymple as Secretary for Public Instruction, and the Honourable John Murray as Secretary for Railways and Secretary for Public Works. In laying the *Gazettes* relating to these changes on the table of the House, I feel it my duty, following the precedent that has been established by those who have held office before me, to announce that since the close of last session of Parliament the Hon. Sir Hugh Muir Nelson has resigned office as Chief Secretary of the colony, and the choice of His Excellency the Governor for that position has fallen upon myself. I am quite conscious, in many respects, of my personal inadequacy for the post. Not only do I realise its responsibilities, but I also know that it has

tried the qualities and abilities of men who have preceded me, who were my superiors both in wisdom, in age, and in experience. At the same time, so long as I hold that office I can assure the House that it will be my best endeavour that none of the dignity that has formerly attached to it shall suffer by any conscious effort on my part.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I do feel that in the leadership of the House there is a responsibility that is more than personal, for although we may contend severely with one another on the hustings, and perhaps in debates in the House, yet, to some extent, with the leadership of the House the qualities of the House itself are bound up. Because, after all, we are one in many respects. Although we may hold different views, we are one corporate entity; and I believe that this House will take its place amongst the Houses of any of the British legislatures, both for despatch of business and for the decorum with which that business is transacted. It will be my duty to endeavour, as far as possible, to assist in maintaining our hitherto high standard, and I do think that all members have an interest in such procedure, because they each and all have a share in any of the triumphs that the House may achieve, and in the same way they must all suffer somewhat if Parliament falls short of what the country legitimately requires in the way in which its business is transacted therein. I beg to lay on the table the *Gazettes* containing these announcements.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GLASSEY: Perhaps I may be pardoned for making a few observations on the present occasion. I have listened with interest to the statement which has been made by the Chief Secretary and leader of the House, but I am not prepared to say at this moment how far this party is prepared to support the hon. gentleman. I entirely reciprocate his sentiments with regard to the necessity of at all times maintaining the dignity and decorum of the House, and as far as this side is concerned I am satisfied the hon. gentleman will have every assistance in that direction. I can fully endorse what he has said with regard to the high standard of conduct and decorum manifested in this House. It will bear favourable comparison with almost any House in the world. It has been my good fortune to have visited a few houses of legislature in other parts of the world—in Great Britain, the United States, and various other countries and colonies—and I may say, with some degree of pride, that in no Legislative Assembly have I seen more decorum or a greater desire to conduct the business in a generous spirit, as between one member and another, than has been exhibited in this Assembly, and I can only hope that that high standard will be maintained. I will not attempt to say anything further with regard to what the hon. gentleman has said except that I share to some extent his remarks regarding the retirement of some hon. gentlemen who have long held official positions in this Chamber. I sincerely hope that they will be spared for many years to fill the responsible positions to which they have been called—namely, the Agent-Generalship and the Presidency of the Legislative Council, and that they will be able to render signal service to the country of their adoption. I may also add at this particular juncture that I am sure most persons will regret the cause of the retirement of the late Chief Secretary to the position of President of the Council—a position which was long held by a gentleman who played an important part in the political history of the colony, Sir Arthur Hunter Palmer. I may perhaps say something more

fully to-morrow on that subject, but in the meantime I will content myself by reciprocating to some extent the sentiments expressed by the leader of the House in the remarks he has just made to this Chamber.

THE OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that the House this day attended the Governor in the Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered an Opening Speech to both Houses, of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy, which I shall now read to the House.

[Vide page 1 of report of Council's proceedings.]

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. STEPHENSON, in moving the adoption of the following Address in Reply to the Opening Speech:—

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

“We will give our most careful attention and consideration to the several measures which Your Excellency has specially mentioned, and to all other matters that may be brought before us, and it shall be our anxious endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may be conducive to the material and moral advancement and prosperity, and to the good government, of the colony.”—

said: In moving the adoption of the Address in Reply it is customary, I believe, for the member entrusted with that duty to submit a few remarks of his own on the contents of the Speech. It is not my intention to detain hon. members at any great length this afternoon, more especially as I understand that it is the desire of hon. members on both sides that an early adjournment should take place; and as I am among those who desire to get away as early as we can, it will naturally follow that I shall not be any more diffuse than I can help in submitting my few remarks to the House.

Mr. GLASSEY: We are willing to wait to listen to you.

Mr. STEPHENSON: I am exceedingly thankful to the hon. member for Bundaberg for that interjection, which, under the circumstances, I must regard as very encouraging. I have not been accustomed to regard the hon. member as among those who are very anxious to hear my voice hitherto, and I am pleased to hear that a change has come over the spirit of his dream. Whether it will continue to the end of the session I do not know; but, under the circumstances, seeing that I am performing this duty for the first time, it is encouraging to me as a comparatively young member of the House to have such a complimentary remark passed by a member of the hon. member's experience and occupying so prominent a position in the House. I think the country generally will be with His Excellency in offering his congratulations upon the decided progress of which we have evidence in all parts of the colony at the present time. It is admittedly “a long lane that has no turning,” and I think we may safely congratulate ourselves that we have at all events arrived within measurable distance of that turning. I said in a few remarks which I addressed to the electors of Ipswich some three weeks ago that there was a distinct appearance of “a silver lining” to the cloud of depression which had so long hung over Queens-

land. That was contradicted, and contradicted in a very summary manner, by several gentlemen, but I am pleased to think that a similar expression of opinion occupies so prominent a position in His Excellency's Speech to-day, and I believe that all hon. members of this House who take a dispassionate view of the circumstances of the colony will be inclined to endorse that paragraph. Certainly the colony may not have made so much progress as many of us would have liked it to make, but that it is distinctly on the upgrade is beyond contradiction; and I am sure that whether we approve of the actions of the past and present Governments or not we shall be inclined to agree that they stated the case fairly when they put those words into His Excellency's mouth to-day. With reference to the paragraph relating to the death of Mr. Gladstone—for by that title he will be known to posterity as being more honourable than any that could be bestowed upon him by any potentate—although many of us may have at times disagreed with that gentleman's politics, yet I think we all feel proud that so great a man as Mr. Gladstone should have been allotted to the British nation; that is hardly the word I should have used, but we all feel proud, whether we agreed with him in his political views or not, that we are able to claim so great a man as a fellow-countryman. The right hon. gentleman during the whole course of his life had a somewhat troubled political career; he had to encounter great opposition, and it is a pleasing thing to all of us to know that among those who attended his last obsequies were hundreds and thousands of those who had been politically opposed to him all his life, showing how high an opinion they had of the man, and how firmly convinced they were of his sincerity, however much they may have disapproved of his opinions. With regard to the death of Sir Arthur Palmer, I had not the privilege of knowing that gentleman during his lifetime—not very intimately at all events—but he was a man who made a distinct mark upon the politics of Queensland, and he was a man of whom we all to a considerable extent feel proud. He used at times very expressive language on political matters, and was very fond of calling “a spade a spade,” and although we may have differed from him we all admired him for his candour and outspokenness, and for his political consistency. A paragraph in the Speech points out how essential it is under the conditions of modern warfare that the country should be prepared to the utmost extent of its ability to cope with any emergency which circumstances may bring about. Well, those gentlemen and ladies throughout the community who are known as “the Peace-at-any-price Party” will be prepared to endorse this. We have had so much in evidence during recent years the necessity of preparedness—and we have had ample evidence of it during the past few months—that none of us will be disposed to be niggardly in placing at the disposal of the Government, so far as we think the financial position of the colony will allow, the requisite funds to make such provision for the defence of the colony as they and Parliament may deem fit. At the same time I fervently hope, as a humble member of the British community, that this preparedness, so to speak, for defence will be undertaken entirely in conjunction with the great British nation to which we are all so proud to belong. I do not think that the time has by any means arrived when we are able to, what is called, “launch out for ourselves.” I believe that all the defence we require is much more likely to be effective, and much more likely to be speedily secured, if we adapt our circumstances to those which prevail throughout the nation; and if we give evidence to the great British nation and to

the Imperial authorities that Queensland at all events is quite prepared to bear its share of the burden of seeing its own shores defended, the lesson will not have been lost which was taught to the nations of the world by the great Jubilee demonstration in England last year, and at which I am pleased to think the hon. the Premier was present, that our safety lies not in endeavouring to cut ourselves adrift from the nation to which we belong, but in drawing closer the bonds and in endeavouring to work on more amicable lines with Great Britain. The paragraph with regard to federation states the case very clearly, but I do not feel any more enthusiastic in the cause at the present time than I did when addressing hon. members in this House on the question some eight or nine months ago. I believe—and I suppose everyone of us believes—that federation will eventually come about; but I believe now, as I believed then, that it will be more satisfactory if it comes about by methods of evolution rather than those of revolution. I believe that we can do all that is required, and act cordially in connection with the other colonies which desire this federation, if enlarged powers are given to the Federal Council rather than if we endeavour to establish a federal Parliament straight away. I know that this cry for federation is a very taking one. I know there is a lot about it which is calculated to arouse a great deal of enthusiasm; but, all the same, I venture respectfully to submit that in the long run we shall have a more satisfactory system of federation if we go about it steadily and by degrees than if we run into the matter blindfolded, determined that we will have some system of federation without thinking very much about the lines on which it is to be effected. Of course we can readily understand the enthusiasm evinced in two, at all events, of the southern colonies. Those colonies have everything to gain—or at least they think they have everything to gain and nothing to lose—by bringing about this system of federation and going in for it—to use a somewhat vulgar expression—“baldheaded”; but I do not think that Queensland has up to the present lost anything through not having been more closely connected with her sister colonies in this matter, and I think we may safely assume, after the vote taken in New South Wales on the referendum with regard to the Commonwealth Bill, that New South Wales will be equally anxious to do everything she can to conciliate Queensland in order to have her entire support. If they do so, that is one more reason, I take it, why we should study this matter carefully before we commit ourselves to the occupation of any irrevocable position in the matter.

With regard to the future administration of New Guinea, events which have occurred during the past few months will, I take it, have emphasised the necessity for that. There has been a very great deal said about a concession granted or which is likely to be granted, or which is sought to be obtained, by an English syndicate. Without going much into that question now—doubtless there will be fuller opportunities of discussing it in this House at a later period of the session—I only desire to say that there is something about the whole affair which bears an exceedingly mysterious air, and which is calculated to make a man decide to carefully investigate the whole of the surrounding circumstances before he gives his opinion on the matter.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEPHENSON: But at the same time when we find this excessive eagerness to secure so large a proportion of the territory of New Guinea, we may safely assume that those gentlemen who are showing this excessive eagerness are not actuated by altogether disinterested motives

in the matter. Assuredly they expect the whole speculation, so far as they are concerned, to be successful. They do not go in for an affair like that for purely philanthropic reasons, and I trust that if the granting of the concession has not gone too far to be revoked the Government of Queensland will take every step to prevent its being consummated.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STEPHENSON: With regard to the influx of aliens, that is a paragraph which will undoubtedly commend itself to hon. members on the other side of the House, and with equal force, I believe—

Mr. TURLEY: We have heard it so often.

Mr. STEPHENSON: Well, you cannot hear a good thing too often. I say it will commend itself to the good opinion of hon. members on the other side of the House, and I believe to the bulk of those—if not to the whole of those—on this side also. We none of us desire that the alien races of Asia should obtain any great footing on the continent of Australia, and if any means can be devised by which this can be prevented—and be prevented eventually in its entirety—I am sure we shall be only too happy to support those means. Meanwhile it is satisfactory to know, with respect to the Japanese—referring especially now to the Japanese who are on our territory in considerable numbers—it is satisfactory to know that the treaty of commerce and navigation entered into by Great Britain and Japan is calculated to restrict the introduction of labourers and artisans from that kingdom. Those are the class of men who would of necessity largely enter into competition with those of our own race who are here; and the fact that we are able to preclude them from coming is at all events a satisfactory beginning, and leads us to hope that we shall be able, in the near future, to devise some means by which this system of immigration may be discontinued altogether. I am sure hon. members on both sides of the House will gladly welcome those means, and will afford the measure all the support in their power. With regard to the sugar industry, of course hon. members will be pleased to learn that the industry has attained such dimensions as it has in Queensland during the past few years, and it is satisfactory to know that a much-maligned measure—the Sugar Works Guarantee Act—has probably had a great deal to do with that success. But whether the Government will find any satisfactory means to enable the Queensland-grown article to compete with the bounty-fed sugars of the continental nations of Europe is very much open to question. It is certain that the report of the Royal Commission which was appointed to investigate into the matter of sugar-growing so far as the West Indies are concerned—and of which Sir Henry Wylie Norman, a former Governor of this colony, was a prominent member—does not lead one to feel over-much enthusiasm with regard to it; but if this method of subsidising beet sugar can be minimised and the markets for our own production can be largely increased—as they would of necessity be—then I am sure we shall all be pleased to do what we can to foster the continuance and increase of the industry as far as legitimately may be done with men of our own race, and with a desire to do away as early as possible with the alien labour which is considered necessary at the present time. With regard to the comparative success of the farming industry and the great success of the grazing farm industry, as compared with that of the huge squattages which were formerly so very much in evidence, I think that the Government, and especially the Secretary for Lands, who introduced the Bill of last year and the year before, are to be heartily congratulated on the

success of their efforts. No member of the House since I have been in it has shown more earnestness than the Secretary for Lands in endeavouring to pass a land measure through the Assembly. I am quite aware that the Act has its defects. There were one or two clauses which I voted against myself, but which unfortunately had to be submitted to rather than jeopardise the passage of the Bill, but I venture to think, from what I have heard during my travels in the Northern and Western parts of the colony, that no better Land Act has ever been placed on the statute book in any of the Australian colonies. It unquestionably is a feather in the cap of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Lands Office after the amount of labour, and worry, and anxiety he had to undergo.

MR. BATTERSBY: From Ipswich.

MR STEPHENSON: I wish the hon. member for Moreton would keep quiet. I am endeavouring to keep close to the question. I am not so practised a speaker as the hon. member, but I do not desire to have my remarks confused by what I was going to call the insane interjections of the hon. member, but as that expression would not perhaps be parliamentary, I shall not use it. I join with the Government in saying that the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act has been a great success. Of that we have had ample evidence on the Darling Downs, a statement I am pleased to hear echoed by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba. I hope the Secretary for Lands will be enabled to see his way clear to repurchase other estates and so promote that class of close agricultural settlement that we all desire to see. The members of the Government may rest assured that they will have Parliament heartily with them in their desire to foster the agricultural interest. They deserve an immense amount of credit for what they have done in the past, and by introducing further measures they will be enabled to show that those gentlemen who have been so persistent in declaring that the present Ministry and some of their supporters were antagonistic to the farming industry, were speaking entirely without knowledge. I sincerely hope that the Government ere long will see their way clear to granting facilities for the export of farm and dairy produce to the North—that in any contracts they may enter into they will be enabled to make provision not only for the safe export of products but that they will see that they are landed in a marketable condition. The paragraph relating to the yield of gold is exceedingly satisfactory, especially to those representing mining constituencies, and I heartily congratulate those hon. members on the improving tendency of the various mines on the larger fields of the colony. I trust in introducing the measure which the Government intend to bring forward to deal with mining generally, they will have regard to the fact that there are other forms of mining than for gold, and that the same close and careful attention will be given to coal and silver mining as is likely to be given to the winning of gold. Of course it is natural that the report of the gentlemen who so satisfactorily dealt with this matter last year should largely run in the direction of gold-mining, and that they should be a little bit inclined, as I think they were, to overlook the other directions in which it is necessary to afford encouragement to mining, but I trust any shortcomings there may have been in the report of the Royal Commission will be amply atoned for in the Bill to be brought in by the Government. That portion of the Speech which refers to an increased endowment to harbour boards and local authorities will have cordial acceptance at the

hands of members on both sides. I have never been connected with any local governing body myself, and, therefore, I speak impartially, but those who have had experience of these matters have come to the conclusion that with the subsidies which they at present receive they are unable to maintain the roads in proper order. Landowners in the various divisions have had to submit to a somewhat heavy burden, and if the State sees its way, owing to returning financial prosperity, to give an increased subsidy to local governing bodies, I am sure the assistance of hon. members on both sides of the House can be relied upon to give effect to any measure in that direction.

The Hon. G. THORN: They want a land tax.

MR. STEPHENSON: I am not prepared to say what those gentlemen want, but I presume that when the hon. member for Fassifern says they want a land tax he is referring to hon. members on the opposite side. Of one thing, however, I am quite sure, and that is, that when they want a land tax or anything else they are quite capable of telling the House and the country so, and that they will tell it with a great deal more emphasis and effect than the hon. member for Fassifern. I do not know that I need detain the House by any further reference to the contents of the Speech. There are some of the Bills mentioned towards the end of His Excellency's Address which will commend themselves to hon. members generally if, as one clause in the Speech says, "time will permit" of their being discussed during the present session. It is generally understood, however, that the Mines Bill will be a somewhat bulky measure; at all events it will be a measure requiring a great deal of consideration, and if in addition to that the Government can see their way clear to bring in a Bill to amend the Local Government Acts at present in force it would be very acceptable to the country. Whether the time at the disposal of the Government and Parliament will enable them to do this before this session expires is, of course, a matter for the future to determine, but my own opinion is—judging from a somewhat limited experience, I confess—that it is not at all likely that a local government measure can be dealt with this session, though I hope there may be time for it. There was one other matter to which it was my intention to refer, but seeing that notice of a question has already been given regarding it by the hon. member for Woollongabba, and possibly some discussion may later on be provoked by that question or by the answer to it, I shall refrain from referring to it now, more especially as I understand that it is not regarded as being exactly the correct thing for the mover of the Address in Reply to refer to matters outside His Excellency's Speech. Before resuming my seat I should like to congratulate the Premier upon the position to which he has attained. I am sure we all feel that he will worthily fill that position, and those of us who occupy seats on this side of the House have every desire to do what we can to assist him in filling it with dignity, by giving him all the support we conscientiously can in the measures which his Government intend to bring forward. Believing as I do that the people of the country are desirous that the hon. gentleman and his Government should have a full and fair trial—and I believe that because of what I have read and because of my own personal observation during the past three months—I believe it is also the duty of the people's representatives in this House to adopt the same attitude towards the hon. gentleman and his Government, and decide to give them that full and fair trial to which the country by a large majority considers them entitled, and to which this House, I hope and

believe, will also by a large majority consider them entitled. I beg to move the adoption of the Address in Reply.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STODART: In rising to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I do so with a great deal of pleasure, and also with a full appreciation of the privilege afforded me in having had the duty placed in my hands. At the same time, after the lengthy and able speech delivered by my hon. friend the junior member for Ipswich, I feel somewhat dubious of my ability to earn for myself a share of the high encomiums which hon. members who have previously had this duty placed in their hands to perform have been able to earn. I can try my best, however, and in my remarks I shall be as brief as I usually am and shall not detain hon. members to any great length. I should like first of all to offer my hearty congratulations to the Premier on the high position in which he is placed, and I trust he may be long spared to continue that useful career which he has so ably begun in the interests of his native soil. I am sure if he is successful in carrying out a fair amount of the policy he has indicated in the speeches he delivered during his recent tour in the Northern parts of the colony, he will, at any rate, be deserving of the thanks and support of those who have the interests of this great colony at heart. In referring to the Speech, it must be very gratifying to hon. members and to the public also to know that we have again very strong assurances of the continued and increased prosperity of the colony. This prosperity has come about, not by leaps and bounds, but in a steady stable manner, and it has, I think, come to stay. I do not think anyone can think otherwise who moves about the country and keeps his eyes open. There is evidence of it on every side. Our steamers are full of passengers and fairly filled up with cargo, and the prospects are such as everyone could desire. There is every prospect of increased revenue, and I trust a hand will be kept on the expenditure in the way it has been in the past few years, and that the Government will not be led away into any very great extravagance. The principal measure indicated in the Speech from the Throne is a comprehensive Mining Bill. In this they will have the assistance of the labours of the late Royal Commission that went through the country, and I hope the Government will be able to bring down a very liberal measure and one which will do everything to encourage prospecting and allow those who go in for prospecting and embarking in that industry some fair prospect that they will be able to obtain a full reward for what they find. The local authorities measure hinted at in the Speech is not, I think, likely to see the light this session, but if we get through a good comprehensive Mining Bill we will have done good work without the Local Authorities Bill, though at the same time I trust the Government may find time to come down with such a measure. If they do not I think the increased endowment suggested for local authorities is really more urgently required than a general measure of local government itself, and it will at any rate in the meantime meet the case. I think the endowment has for some time been wholly inadequate—that is my experience in the case of divisional boards of my own and other electorates—to enable the divisional boardsmen to meet the wants of their several districts. I know one division in my own electorate which has an area of thirty-five square miles and a population of 600, with a roll of ratepayers of about 120 people, and rates amounting

to about £220 per annum; and with this money and the small endowment of between £60 and £70 which they get from the Government, the board have to keep in repair two bridges over the Logan River, three over the Albert River, and six bridges over tidal creeks, as well as sixty miles of public roads. It must be apparent to most people that that is somewhat beyond their means, and the consequence is that the residents have to put up with bad roads and dangerous crossings. I think the Government will be wise in bringing forward a measure which will enable them to further endow such boards as require it. There are some boards which are able to keep themselves on the right side of the ledger, and I take it that they will not participate in any increased endowment if it is not wanted. I am also glad to know that the Government intend to keep the commercial interests of the colony well to the front. They have already made a commencement in that direction by getting a reduction in the cost of telegrams between here and New South Wales. I trust they will go further and get rid of that absurd anomaly of charging 2d. for every word over the ten words, and that they will also be able to get Victoria into line on this matter. Their endeavours with reference to the Pacific cable were, unfortunately, not successful. Still I trust they will make further efforts in that direction, and that if they do not get the other colonies to come into line with them on this subject we shall be able to have a cable service for ourselves. I do not see why we should not. The fast mail service from Gladstone to the Northern ports is another evidence of the intention of the Government to do what they can for the commercial interests of the colony. There can be no doubt that quick and frequent communication between the different ports of the North is very much required. There are other matters in the Speech which will, no doubt, receive a share of attention from other hon. members, and I do not desire to monopolise the whole of them. I am sorry, to a certain extent, to notice the absence of any reference in the Speech to our railways. There are extensions of railways which might be gone on with, but no doubt we shall get them in time, and without making any further remarks I shall now content myself with seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

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

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

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