

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1899

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER, 1899.

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.

VACANCY DURING RECESS.**SOUTH BRISBANE.**

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) reported that, since the termination of the last session, a vacancy had arisen in the House by the death of Abraham Fleetwood Luya, a member for the electoral district of Brisbane South. That, upon the occurrence of such vacancy, he had issued his writ for the election of a member to fill the same, and that such writ had been returned with a certificate endorsed thereon of the election of Henry Turley as a member for that electorate. The writ not having been returned on the day named therein for its return, a proclamation of His Excellency the Governor in Council, dated the 3rd day of August last, had been issued in the *Gazette*, validating the return notwithstanding the delay in transmission of the writ. The Speaker then laid upon the table copy of the proclamation referred to.

NEW MEMBER.

Mr. HENRY TURLEY took the oath and subscribed the roll as member for the electoral district of Brisbane South.

AUDITING OF GOVERNMENT SECURITIES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of letters—

From the Agent-General stating that the Government securities held on account and in trust for the Government Savings Bank in London had been audited and found correct.

From the Auditor-General stating that the Government Savings Bank securities in Queensland had been inspected, counted, and audited, and found correct.

From the Auditor-General, forwarding his report on the public debt reduction fund.

From the Auditor-General, forwarding his report on Treasury bills and Treasury notes.

QUEENSLAND NATIONAL BANK.

REPORT ON BALANCE-SHEET.

The SPEAKER also announced the receipt of a letter from the Auditor-General, reporting on the general balance-sheet of the Queensland National Bank of the 6th August, 1899.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT.

The SPEAKER further announced the receipt of a letter from the Auditor-General, forwarding his annual report on the revenue and expenditure of the colony for the year ended 30th June, 1899. Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*) laid on the table the following papers :—

1. Despatch, dated 31st May, 1899, respecting the withdrawal of Montenegro from the International Copyright Convention.
2. Despatch, dated 6th June, 1899, transmitting Order in Council applying the provisions of the Colonial Probates Act, 1892, to the colony of Queensland.
3. Despatch, dated 19th May, 1899, transmitting a copy of the Army Annual Act, 1899.
4. Despatch, dated 14th July, 1899, respecting the change of designation of the Permanent Artillery of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.
5. Despatch, dated 21st July, 1889, transmitting Order in Council assenting to the Bill to amend the Pearlshell and Béch-de-mer Fishery Acts.
6. Regulations for the examination of candidates for admission to the classified divisions of the Public Service, dated 10th August, 1899.
7. Additional regulation for the Land Force under the Defence Acts, 1884 to 1896, dated 9th June, 1899.
8. Regulations under the Australasian Federation Enabling Act (Queensland), 1899, dated 5th July, 1899.
9. Report by the Melbourne Conference of Naval Officers on the naval defence of Australia, dated 5th August, 1899.
10. Report of the Acting Naval Commandant of the Queensland Marine Defence Force for the year 1898-9, dated 25th July, 1899.
11. Report of the trustees of Queensland National Art Gallery for the year ending 30th June, 1899, dated July, 1899.
12. Report of the Government Printing Office Commission, dated 15th August, 1899.

Ordered to be printed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*), laid on the table the following papers :—

1. Annual return of Curator of Intestate Estates.
2. Report of Official Trustee in Insolvency, Brisbane, for the year 1898.

Ordered to be printed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*) laid on the table the following papers :—

1. Annual report of the Under Secretary for Mines.
2. Report upon the working of the Queensland Government Savings Bank for the year ended 30th June, 1899.
3. Fourth report of the Auditor-General under the Supreme Court Funds Act of 1895.
4. Fifteenth report on the Creation, Inscription, and Issue of Stock under the provisions of the Queensland Stock Inscription Act (47 Vic. No. 1).

Ordered to be printed.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. F. G. Foxton, *Carnarvon*) laid on the table the following papers :—

1. Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons for 1898.
2. Report of the Government Printer for 1898.
3. Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the year ending 31st December, 1898.
4. Report of the Inspector of Hospitals for the Insane for 1898.
5. Report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1898.
6. Report of the Registrar-General on Agricultural and Pastoral Statistics for 1898.
7. Statistics of the Colony of Queensland for the year 1898.

Ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGE IN THE MINISTRY DURING RECESS.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. R. Dickson, *Bulimba*): I desire to inform the House that during the recess the following change has occurred in the constitution of the Ministry :—On the 11th September instant the Hon. Andrew Henry Barlow tendered his resignation as a member of the Executive Council, and I now lay on the table a copy of the *Gazette* announcing the acceptance of such resignation.

Mr. DAWSON: Has anybody been appointed in his place?

Mr. KEOGH: Very honourable on his part, I think.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL ACT.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS.

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of the Elections Tribunal Act of 1886, I now lay on the table my warrant nominating the panel of assessors for the trial of election petitions during the present session.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

POLICE COMMISSION.

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*): I desire to ask a question without notice—Is it the intention of the Government that the present Royal Commission sitting to inquire into the organisation of the Police Force shall take evidence outside of Brisbane, in the Central and Northern districts of the colony, before they terminate their labours?

The PREMIER: The Government have no intention of limiting the investigations of the present Commission, provided they show that real benefit will accrue from their itinerating. If

they represent that further important evidence can be obtained and the value of their recommendations increased by travelling, facilities will be afforded to them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAWSON: They are bringing witnesses down here.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It has been said in the Press that they are not going to travel.

CAIRNS RAILWAY WHARF.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Railways a question without notice—Have the papers in connection with the Cairns Railway wharf been copied yet, and is it his intention to lay them on the table of the House?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*): It is my intention to lay the papers on the table of the House. There is no intention to avoid it.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that the House this day attended the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, when His Excellency delivered his Opening Speech, of which for greater accuracy I have obtained a copy, which, with the permission of the House, I will ask the Clerk to read.

Speech read accordingly.

[*Vote* Council Proceedings, page 1.]

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): I move that the following Address be presented to the Governor, in reply to the Speech of His Excellency on the opening of this, the second session of the thirteenth Parliament of Queensland:—

“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 all such matters as may be brought before us, and it will be our anxious endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may be conducive to the permanent prosperity of this portion of the Empire.”

In moving this Address I wish to say a few words with regard to His Excellency's Speech. I am intensely conscious of the high compliment the Premier has paid me and the electorate which I have the honour to represent by choosing me to reply to His Excellency's Speech.

Mr. McDONALD: Are we not going to get a copy of the Address?

Mr. STORY: That is not for me to supply. You had better ask the messenger.

Mr. McDONALD: We always get a copy.

Mr. STORY: That is not my business. I don't suppose that any Speech has ever been delivered by any former Governor involving such large, momentous, and important issues as the one that has been delivered to-day.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STORY: I only regret that the short time I have had for the preparation of my Speech prevents me dealing with the Address as I should wish. The Speech itself is most voluminous. The all-embracing energy of the Government is so great that I will only have time to just glance briefly at their good intentions. I trust that I shall live long enough to see all

these good intentions accomplished. We have thorough faith in the intentions of the Government to do their best to carry these things into completion. That goes without saying. I trust, although this session will be a short one, that such attention will be given to business that the greater part of this programme will be carried into execution. The first thing His Excellency deals with is the great and important matter of federation. Of course, it is quite unnecessary for me to make any speech on this subject—so many have already been made upon it. We know that the referendum has been taken, and that the majority are in favour of Queensland federating with the other colonies; and I am pleased to read this paragraph in the Speech—

I am glad to say that the returns already received are sufficient to prove that the electors have pronounced emphatically in favour of federation. The first business to be brought before you will accordingly be that of considering an Address to the Throne based on the expressed will of the people, and I have every confidence that this all-important question will be dealt with by you in a broad and enlightened spirit of patriotism.

That is the gist of the whole question—whether we are to deal with this question in a broad and enlightened spirit of patriotism, or whether it is possible that some people will try and upset the result of the referendum. I think that if any such action were attempted, it would be a most unfortunate thing at this particular moment. The referendum has been tried. For the first time in the history of Queensland the people have spoken out their own will, and I think it will be most unfortunate if there is any objection to the spirit of the referendum that is embodied in the Commonwealth Bill, both for Queensland and Australia.

Mr. BROWNE: And for the people who take the objection.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Was it a real majority?

Mr. STORY: The question was referred to the people, and the people have spoken. In the matter of the referendum, I do not know that any man posed as a member of Parliament; he was simply an elector amongst electors, and the majority having decided in favour of federation, I hold that we are here to give effect to the voice of the majority.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STORY: When we consider what this federation means—what the election of members to the Senate and to the House of Representatives means—we understand that we have made a new departure as far as this colony and others are concerned. There is no charm in the word “federation” itself. There is no security even in federation itself. The whole thing has been put into the hands of the people. Either the good or evil of federation belongs to the next election. It was so arranged that every man should vote, and vote only once. Every man, nevermind how poor, has a chance of being elected to one House or another, and I cannot see how there can be any party government in the Federal Parliament, when all the members are elected from different colonies. It seems to me that they are there for the good of Australia. I hope, and I think, that the people by-and-by—when they are wakened up to the wonderful power put in their hands—will set aside all party feeling, and take the best men Queensland can produce, and send them to represent them in the Federal Parliament. It may be that Queensland as a whole may supply some Washingtons, some Franklins, some men of noble aspirations, who will not be mere party politicians, such as we see in our local Parliaments, but men who will be an honour to the colony and to Australia. One of the natural offsprings of federation, and one

that I think could not possibly exist without federation, is the alteration of the franchise. And His Excellency says very truly—

One of the results directly following upon the adoption in this colony of the Commonwealth Bill will necessarily be an alteration of our electoral law.

Anyone who has listened to the discussions on federation will easily recognise that if it was carried the alteration in our electoral laws in the direction of one man one vote follows as a natural consequence. In our former elections in Queensland—as well for parliamentary elections as for divisional board, rabbit board, marsupial board, and other elections of that kind—property was considered. Property had its vote; according to the amount of rates paid or the amount of stock owned, so the voting power was given. It is quite understandable that our parliamentary voting was consistent to a certain degree with the rest of the voting in our own colony, but now we have made an advance in the direction of a more liberal franchise, it is quite consistent that the franchise should be so altered that our local Parliament will stand at any rate on the same plane as the Federal Parliament. If it happens so, I take it for granted that our local Parliament, which loses nothing of its own importance, will lose nothing of its dignity by following the lead of the Federal Parliament. I can only go rapidly over the numerous matters dealt with by His Excellency. One of the most important is the matter of immigration, and on that subject His Excellency says—

In our sparsely settled but fertile territory the question of population must always be of importance. There have been some objections taken to the effect that more labourers than any other class of people are brought into the colony, and that to a certain extent they have interfered with the labourmarket. Now, in a new colony like this, the very first immigrants we want are labourers—not labourers to labour for other people and be taught, but labourers who will come here, bringing their skill and knowledge with them, and who, after working here for a certain time for wages, from labourers become employers in a remarkably short space of time. I do not see why a man in this colony should remain a labourer any one hour longer than he thinks fit, with our most liberal land laws and the assistance given to men to take up land for themselves either as farmers or selectors. I cannot see that because a man comes here as a labourer he need remain so. The fact of him being a labourer is almost a guarantee to us in favour of the immigrant that he understands the work he comes here to perform, and therefore I think that when you bring labourers you bring a class that are going to be in a very few years employers of labour. On the question of aliens His Excellency says—

Recent events have rendered it necessary to decide that Asiatic aliens, other than those in respect to whose introduction special legislation or treaty obligations exist, shall not be allowed to land in the colony, and this decision will be rigidly enforced.

Now, Sir, our voice will be more authoritative on that matter when we are federated than it is now. I think the time has come, or will have come when the Address to Her Majesty is passed, when the voice of a united Australia will deal with this matter, and in a way that cannot be ignored by any Power, never mind how powerful they may be. I understand from His Excellency's Speech that the Imperial Government have agreed to the proposals with respect to the Pacific cable; that it is likely to be constructed before very long, and we shall have direct and unbroken communication with England throughout English territory, to the great advantage of Australia. I think we will never find out wholly what an advantage that will be until war

or trouble of that kind arises, when it will be necessary for us to communicate directly, and without any danger whatever, with the mother country. The matter of defence is of great importance, and His Excellency says—

The question of defence will be taken in hand by the Federal Parliament.

That, of course, we knew, but I should like to say that defence will never be completed in any degree until there is a factory established in Australia for making ammunition. It is inconceivable to me that Australia should remain in that position that in case of war it is dependent for a supply of ammunition upon some other country.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We will capture it from the enemy.

MR. STORY: We may capture it from the enemy, but the enemy has a novel way of capturing us sometimes, and we cannot always depend upon the enemy doing just what we wish him to do. But if we have an ammunition factory established in our own colonies—and I take it that in time we will have our own factories—we shall be almost independent of outside help in case of trouble. The Speech next deals with the condition of things in the Transvaal. It says that—

The treatment meted out by the Boer authorities to our fellow-subjects resident in their territory cannot but excite sympathy in the breast of every Australian lover of liberty.

I am not by any means a bloodthirsty individual; I think nothing is more dreadful than war, and even the contemplation of it; but, Sir, if war does break out I trust that not only the Transvaal but the world at large will receive a lesson which will convince them that English subjects, no matter how humble or poor they may be, cannot be insulted with impunity.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAWSON: Who do you call "English" subjects?

MR. STORY: I know something about it, not from personal residence, but from a friend of mine who lived for years in South Africa. I understand that no gibe, no jeer, and no insult that could be heaped upon a blackfellow by a man of degraded nature that is not heaped upon an Englishman in the Transvaal; and if the war breaks out I trust, at any rate, that the recollection of Majuba Hill and Laing's Nek will be swept away, and that it will be learnt that England in the hour of extremity can protect her own subjects.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Jingoism!

MR. DAWSON: Who do you call "English" subjects?

MR. STORY: It is not "jingoism." Those gentlemen who like to recollect a disgrace to English arms find some comfort where I do not look for it. There is no "jingoism" in it, for I am telling you what I know from almost personal knowledge of what the English have to put up with in the Transvaal.

MR. FINNEY: The "English"?

MR. STORY: The British, I mean to say.

MR. DAWSON: Then it is about time you said it.

MR. STORY: It is a most astonishing thing that exception should be taken to what I say when we know that when a man in these colonies talks about "Englishmen" he means Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen. (Laughter.) I do at any rate, because they are all one nation. It is all very well to quibble about words, but when we talk about the English army we include the different parts of it. We speak of the English army as composed of our own blood and relations—our own kin—we know very well

what we are talking about, and it is all very well to take objections which mean nothing at all.

Mr. McDONALD: What about the Indians?

Mr. STORY: I certainly beg the pardon of the hon. member for Toowong, but if I leave out Irishmen when talking of good qualities it will be my fault but not my intention, at any rate after having known him. Another question dealt with in His Excellency's Speech is the development of New Guinea. I have not a very great deal to say about that. We have got our work cut out to develop our own part of Australia, and that may come later on. Now, with regard to finance, I understand that in spite of the drought we have had, in spite of the ticks, the bad seasons, and everything else, our country is so wonderfully productive and so magnificently managed that there was a surplus at the end of the financial year of £149,916. That speaks for itself; it wants but few remarks from me. I will say, at any rate, that I hope that when federation is accomplished it will leave us one thing—that it will leave us our Treasurer and our Government that have brought the colony through the troublous times since 1893, and with a result like this! There is a surplus year after

[4.30 p.m.] year, which is applied to the reduction of the national debt, and this year I think the surplus is bigger than any we have had for a number of years.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Federation didn't bring it about.

Mr. STORY: No, and there are other things which did not bring it about, but still it came. There is another question, and it is of very great importance—if I were allowed I could dilate upon it at length, but my good sense tells me not to do so—and that is pastoral matters. It is suggested in the Speech that "a Bill to authorise the granting of new leases in certain remote parts of the western district of the colony" will be introduced. Last year a Bill was introduced which dealt with leases out in the far western part of the colony on the boundary of South Australia. But there are other lands, and until members in this House understand there are lands of wonderfully varying quality all over the colony, the infinitely good and the infinitely bad being found almost within a day's ride of each other, they will never understand how necessary it is to legislate for the coming termination of pastoral leases. In speaking on the matter last year—I do not know how I am to condense my remarks on this question if I am to explain myself—in speaking on this question last year I called attention to the fact, that on a certain date the leases of immense areas of country would terminate. All that country, the good, bad, and indifferent, will then be thrown on the hands of the Government. If that is so, and the land is thrown open to selection there will be a great rush for the good country, and there will be such immense areas of good country that it is not likely that we shall get men to take up the whole of it; and until the whole of the good country throughout the whole of Queensland, so far as those leases are concerned, is selected, not one bit of the second-class country will be touched, and until the whole of the second-class country is gone not one bit of the third-class country will be touched. My suggestion—whether it can be put into a workable shape or not I do not know—but my suggestion is that there should be an advisory committee appointed in each district, composed of lessees—that is squatters and selectors—with the land commissioner as chairman. Those men would know every paddock, we might say, of the district in which they lived and had lived for a number of years, and I can imagine that when a number of leases fell in, say within a year or six

months, in their district, you have only to mention the names of the different stations, and they would know whether the land was likely to be selected or not. In the case of good land close to railways with a good water-frontage, they would say that it would be required for selection, and when they say that I take it for granted that the Government will give every facility for that land to be selected. If they say that country is not good enough for selection, and that it is not likely to be wanted for years to come, then the lessee should be given a further lease of that country for, say, five years. At the end of that period the country would again come before the advisory committee, and they would make such recommendations with respect to it as the circumstances justified. I am sure that if we could get a good, honest, upright committee of that kind, the good country would go into the hands of selectors, and the second-class country would remain in the hands of the Government.

Mr. DAWSON: Haven't you got a good honest committee now?

Mr. STORY: We have no such committee now. The grazing farmers, as well as the squatters, have suffered tremendously through losses from drought. On stations where they counted their cattle by thousands, I can assure you they can only muster hundreds now, and where they counted their sheep by tens of thousands they can now only muster thousands. The lessees have spent large sums of money in travelling their stock, in paying for agistment, and in falling scrub in order to preserve their stock, and even after all that expenditure their stock have died. I know one station where their herd numbered some 7,000 or 8,000 cattle, and when they came to muster them the other day for delivery, they could only muster 490; there were no more. On another station where their herd was 13,000, I am sure they could not muster 600 head of cattle at the present moment. Unfortunate selectors who had their 10,000 or 12,000 sheep have now but a very few hundreds, notwithstanding that they have paid a very large amount of money for the purpose of preserving their stock. Under circumstances such as those I think the Government should take into consideration the awful losses which those men have suffered through drought, a thing which no man of any foresight could contend against. In years past, when the country was first taken up, an immense amount of money was spent in making tanks and dams for the purpose of supplying the stock with water, but even then, with a season like that we are now having down here, with light rains, although they had any quantity of grass for their stock, they had no water; they had to travel their stock in order to get water, though they could mow the grass for miles with a mowing-machine. After that they discovered artesian water, and then they thought they had found salvation. But what was the result? The stock did not die of thirst, but they died of hunger. We have a hot summer followed by a dry hard winter, followed by a hot dry spring, and then a hot dry summer again. And that goes on year after year, until those who have to stand the strain are driven nearly mad with anxiety. I think the Government could easily find some method by which they could relieve the men who have suffered in that way, both squatters and graziers. I may say in connection with this that the late decision of the Land Court does not pass by the men in the country "like an idle wind." The Government are irresponsible in this matter, I know—they are not to blame at all; but we have certain commissioners whose mania seems to be to increase the rents of land under any circumstances. Even if the stock were dying as they rode over the place,

and there was not a bit of anything to eat or a drop of water to drink, some of those men would think they were sent out there on purpose to increase the rent. I was sorry to see that there was such a long trial over the question of the rent of Norley, Thargomindah, and Bulloo Downs. Those men were paying 19s. per square mile for their country, and would have been content to pay that rent for years, but a commissioner went out there, and, without the slightest justification for raising the rent a fraction, suggested that it should be raised to 25s. and 28s. a square mile. I do not know why he suggested such a thing, but it brought about a long lawsuit, which resulted in the rent being reduced to 10s. on two stations, and to 5s. on the other. And other Crown tenants, both squatters and selectors, having seen that, will argue that either the decision is altogether unjust or that they are extremely over-rented. I gather from some information I have that the brands fund is almost exhausted, and that it is contemplated to put on the taxes again. The diseases in stock tax is 2s. 6d. per 100 head of cattle, and 5s. per 1,000 head of sheep; and the brands tax is 1s. 6d. per 100 head of cattle. Now, I trust that the Government will not impose this taxation. If they had spent their £1,200 in trying to do away with the tick disease, and in paying inspectors, and they are £40,000 in debt—as I believe they are—I trust they will find some other means of raising the money than by putting these taxes on a community that is already broken-hearted at the prospect. The next subject in the Governor's Speech is advances to farmers. His Excellency says—

Nevertheless, in a young country such as this settlers have many difficulties to encounter, and a Bill to enable them to obtain financial assistance will be submitted to you.

In theory that is very fine, but in practice we must consider the effect it will have on the people, as well as the effect it will have on the Treasury. The matter of money is not of very great moment, but we know perfectly well that if money is lavishly and carelessly spent—that people can depend on their power of borrowing when they are in difficulties—men will not exert themselves as they did in the old days, when they had to depend upon themselves. I am not going to say a word against advances to farmers, for I think it is a fairly good idea, but indiscriminate advances to farmers or anybody else, or that they should think they can exercise political power for the benefit of individuals, perhaps, is a very dangerous principle; and I may suggest a capital idea, for which I am indebted to my hon. friend the hon. member for Logan, Mr. Stodart. When we were talking about it many months ago, he suggested that the advances to farmers should be made something like this—That the money should be placed by the Government in the hands of some manager of a bank, to be lent to the farmers on strict business lines—on proper security. The only thing the Government held in their own hands was the right to settle the amount of interest. Now, we can imagine Government money going through the hands of a man who is altogether away from political influence, he lending it out to others at a low rate of interest, and being under the control of the Auditor-General. Under such a scheme the farmers would get the money at a low rate, and if a man was careless or wanted to “loaf” on the Government, that man would probably be sold up. Under circumstances of that kind I can understand that the money lent to farmers would be a wonderfully good investment; but if it was lent through a Government office people would think that they could depend upon the Government for their success instead

of upon themselves. Mr. Stodart suggested further that there should be no preliminary expenses at all—no fees for preparing a deed, no fee for stamp, no telegrams, no fees for consulting somebody else or for interviews. The man would get his money at first hand without these preliminary expenses. He would get it at a low rate of interest so long as he had the security, and so long as he was a man who was worth helping. If they do otherwise, the result will be that any man who wants to start will start without the necessary money or the necessary knowledge, and will depend entirely upon the Government to help him out of his difficulties.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: They do not find that in Victoria.

Mr. GLASSEY: Nor in any of the other colonies.

Mr. STORY: The next matter in the Opening Speech is the question of forestry. His Excellency says—

The necessity for taking steps to protect our native timbers has closely engaged the attention of my advisers.

Considering we are ringbarking hundreds of thousands of acres out West to improve the country, I do not know where this forestry is supposed to be inaugurated, or what timber they are going to plant, because in the Western districts they find that the best way of fighting drought is by ringbarking. I am credibly informed by men who have been at it for years that half an inch of rain on “rung” country is as beneficial as three inches on forest country. In one case the grass gets the benefit of the whole of the rain which falls, and in the other case all the roots of the great trees that are close to the surface take it, and the grass does not come. In districts in the West where the timber is thick they have been driven by dire necessity to ring the heavy box country, and then they get the very greatest possible benefit from the rainfall. The next question dealt with in the Governor's Speech is the Government Geologist. I am not going through every article in the Speech—I am not as conscientious as that—but this is my only chance of speaking on the Address in Reply, and other hon. members will have a chance later on, and I must speak at greater length than I should wish. I am not going to deal with the question of mining other than saying that I think the Government might easily keep a geologist who could go and inspect different fields—even different claims if it was necessary—and have a man who was entirely above suspicion.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Oh, oh!

Mr. STORY: I do not know how it is that whenever you speak about a man “above suspicion,” or of an honest man, there is a sort of a groan, as if such a man was as rare as a megatherium. I take it that an honest man can be found even without the aid of a lantern; and if you pay a man sufficiently well, and he is a geologist with a lot of experience, it would do a great deal towards elevating our mining industry. I daresay it would not suit gentlemen who are interested in wild-cat speculations at all, but under present circumstances, if you want a geologist to go out West you can get one from London for less money than you can get a man to go from Brisbane to Thargomindah. His fee is £5 5s. a day and all expenses. That is pretty stiff. How I came to know it was that I was trying to get a man who, by his report and his signature, would satisfy certain people in England that a thing either was good, so far as he knew, or that it was no good at all. I have no interest in it further than that. I do not know where it is, or anything about it; and I can quite understand that

the department does not care to send out a geologist to these places, and another thing, they do not care to take the responsibility of saying whether mining "shows" are good or not. Still I believe that for the country generally it would be a good thing if they had a man to do this work. The next question is a moderately large one. I am going to discuss it at greater length further on. I refer to the question of railways. The Speech says—

The extension of our main trunk lines, and the connection of the Southern, Central, and Northern systems, may be regarded as forming part of the settled railway policy of the country.

I think we are all agreed upon that. But in reference to that there are some lines that have been suggested, and the Premier in his manifesto to the electors of Bulimba told us that we should have an independent parliamentary railway committee. Although I am not like some hon. members on the other side, who groan at the want of honesty in the community generally, I do not see how you are going to get an independent parliamentary railway committee, because each man knows his own district better than any other man's district; his political salvation nearly rests on a railway, and if he becomes a member of the committee I can understand how in his mind—and perfectly justly, I assert—his own railway will be of more importance than anybody else's railway. Now in the Premier's manifesto he said that the parliamentary committee should "inspect, investigate, and carefully sift." There is only the one word "investigate" mentioned in this paragraph, and I hold that from maps of railway routes or anything else like them men cannot acquire the same information that can be acquired by travelling over the country. How the railway committee is to sit in this House attending to their ordinary work and at the same time investigate and inspect such lines I do not know. It is impossible for it to be done.

Mr. DIBLEY: They do it in New South Wales. They travel over the country.

Mr. STORY: They do things in New South Wales in a way of their own, but I know that when a man is sent here from a constituency, his constituents expect him to look after their interests. If members are going to travel during the recess it will take them all their time. I can imagine a committee quite independent of Parliament being appointed—a committee consisting of men of honesty of purpose, to whom these different lines could be referred, and who could report to Parliament. I can quite understand that their report would be ten times as valuable as any report coming from a parliamentary railway committee. Now, as to the question of light lines; I have held for a long while that the construction of light lines as feeders to the main trunk lines is going to be the railway policy of this country, because a light line can be run according to the necessities of a district. In busy times a lot of rolling-stock can be put on, and in slack times taken off, and the traffic on the main lines would not be interfered with. They would bring their quota from the different districts to the main trunk lines, and the produce would be taken away as the rolling-stock was available. But to run parallel trunk lines alongside of one another, going through an immense lot of bad country to reach a good spot, I do not think is going to pay as well as the construction of feeders to the main trunk lines. Reference is also made in the Speech to harbours and dredges. I am delighted to know that new dredges have been ordered, and I trust that when they come and get to work the next thing the Government will see fit to do, as they have promised to do, is to provide better facilities for handling our coal. I think it was mentioned by the hon. member for

Bundamba last session that one vessel came here to load coal, and it was found that the cranes were not sufficiently high to lift the trucks over the ship's side into the hold, and the consequence was that she had to go away half full, or load coal from lighters. I trust that the Government will do everything that can be done to make our ports attractive to shipping.

Mr. GLASSY: We want a better system altogether.

Mr. STORY: Well, I leave that matter to experts. I have only suggested further improvement. I now come to the question of endowment to local authorities, and a reduction in the rate of interest charged to them is a matter that might very well be dealt with. I call the attention of the Premier to this fact, that although when people come to borrow money from the Government they are as a matter of course looked upon with a certain amount of animosity and unfriendliness, yet we must understand that when a local authority comes to borrow money the Government are dealing with a number of men who are, as it were, their first lieutenants all through the country. The local bodies are composed of men who work year after year without pay, or any chance of it, and with very little thanks. So that when they come to borrow money for the purpose of giving increased facilities for getting produce to market by the construction of roads and bridges, and so forth, the Government, I trust, will look upon them more favourably than they have done heretofore. In reference to the question of dairy inspection, I think it is very necessary that it should be largely improved. The condition of some of the backyard dairies in the suburbs is simply astounding, and it would open the eyes of hon. members if they would inspect the sources of the town and suburban milk supply. It is therefore urgently necessary that legislation should be brought in to deal with this matter. The question of the establishment of a university is a matter that has been discussed before. I must confess that I would much rather have seen mention made in the Speech of the fact that some sort of provision was to be made for affording the means of education to our children who have none at present. I will not go into that matter now because it is a big thing and members know my views upon it, but I think really and honestly that before we go in for higher education these unfortunates should have a better chance than they have now got. There are a number of other promised measures which I will leave for discussion by members who follow me. In the concluding paragraph of the Speech His Excellency says it is a matter of personal regret with him that he will be away from Queensland when the address to the Queen on the subject of federation is passed. Well, we regret it, I am sure, equally with His Excellency, and I trust that as his name has been connected with this great forward movement in the colonies he will come back to us, and it is quite possible that he may be the first Governor-General of federated Australia. I trust at all events that in the years to come those who follow us may be proud of the title of native-born Australians. I beg to move that the Address in Reply be adopted.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

* Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): I am glad to second this Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech, and in doing so I would say that the hon. member for Balonne has gone so exhaustively into the question that there is very little left for me to say. Still there are one or two points that I should like to speak upon for a few minutes. The first is the question of the referendum. I think hon. members will agree with me that the matters of the referendum and federation are perhaps the largest and most important questions

that could claim our attention. The taking of the referendum on federation means that the will of the people must speak. I think the people have spoken in a most emphatic manner in connection with federation, and it is our bounden duty to respect the verdict which has been given. At present there is a majority for this great movement of over 6,000. I think that is a very fair indication of the opinions of the people, and we may yet possibly have as large majority as was obtained in New South Wales if we make allowance in the difference in the population of the two colonies and the number of votes recorded. I look upon the referendum as leading to finality on the matters to which it is applied. It gives the people the chance of saying "yea" or "nay" on any great question, and they having spoken, it is our duty to give effect to their wishes and pass federation through. Now, it appears to me that there is a natural corollary to federation under the Commonwealth Bill in the shape of one man one vote. I happened to be at a meeting held in the Exhibition Building some few weeks ago, when my hon. friend, the leader of the Labour party, spoke, and at that meeting he said that his party had failed in connection with that particular object. I believe that that gentleman, with that inherent instinct which characterises him, saw that if it had not been for federation some of the democratic measures that he and his party believe in would not have been brought forward. But the question

[5 p.m.] of one man one vote has already been brought before the people of Queensland, and I believe a large majority of the House will pass it. I believe that if it is brought up by the Government, or by a member of the Opposition, it will be passed; and I hope that when the House does pass it, it will pass it by such a majority that the other House may see no reason to return it to this House. I should like the measure to go a good deal further. I believe in going down to bedrock as far as electoral reform is concerned. I would not have the slightest objection to having adult suffrage, instead of one man one vote.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

Mr. FORSYTH: I believe it will come in good time. Whether it will come now or not, I cannot say; but if we are to have it, we might as well have the benefit of it as soon as possible. I believe the women will vote for good government; that they will vote for what is right and just; that they will go in for moral principles as far as they know them, and that the proposals they adopt will be such as will meet with the good opinion of the whole of the colony. So, I do not think it would have been a bad idea for the Government to have given the women a vote as well as the men.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That would be too sudden.

Mr. FORSYTH: It might be too sudden, but my impression is that it must come later on along with other matters we often hear about. In connection with the Governor's Speech, we have the question of immigration. I believe there are some gentlemen in this House who do not believe in immigration. I have heard some people say we have quite enough people here already; but I hold that we want more people here. I hold that we want more capital and more people to develop our great resources. Therefore I, for one, believe in immigration to a moderate extent. As far as the numbers who came into Queensland the other day are concerned, they were readily engaged, and I believe that if we bring labourers and domestic servants of a similar class into Queensland they will receive employment, and, as the hon. member for Balonne has said, a

great many of them will soon become employers instead of being employees. That is the class of people we want in this country. We want the great resources of our country to be developed, and we cannot do it unless we have capital and people to do it with. There is another question introduced into the Speech, that of alien labour. We have had a great deal to do with that in other sessions, and I am very pleased to see that the Government have seen their way to stop the introduction of Japanese, and I believe they are absolutely sincere in their intentions to see that this class of labour is stopped. Of course, there is the question of federation. I think we may take it as one that is practically settled. I believe that when it does come it will do a great deal of good to the great colonies of Australia. There is one thing which will occur in connection with federation. That is defence. At present we expend between £80,000 and £90,000 per annum in connection with this particular department; but when it is handed over to the Federal Government, Queensland will only have to pay her share *per capita* of her population. I believe that when that takes place our proportion will be a great deal less than it is at present. With regard to the contingent to the Transvaal, I do not know if it is a particularly good thing for the Government to do—to promise to send 250 men there. There is no doubt, however, that it has had the effect of showing people in the old country that there is a large amount of patriotism in the Queensland people. Legislation in connection with the pastoral industry has been very strongly spoken of by the hon. member for Balonne, Mr. Story. With regard to extensions to those who have suffered from ticks, I believe that the members of this House, when that question comes before them, will give it their sympathetic consideration. I believe they agree with me that the pastoralists in Queensland have suffered to a very large extent in the last eight or ten years, not only in connection with the droughts and ticks, but also in the exceptionally low price of cattle. I believe that the legislation which will relieve them will receive the consideration of this House in every possible way. I had the pleasure of being present at a meeting the pastoralists had with the Premier this week, when they laid down certain suggestions in connection with the leases which expire in eight or nine years' time. It appeared to me that they were very liberal in what they suggested, and that they had not forgotten the question of settling the people on the land in connection with grazing farms and agriculture. In connection with this matter I find that in 1897, 977 agricultural farms, representing an area of 237,438 acres, were taken up, and 177 unconditional selections, representing an area of 22,406 acres. Then under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act 129 farms, representing 15,774 acres, were selected.

Mr. GLASSEY: Are they in actual use, or are they taken up with a view of using them in years to come?

Mr. FORSYTH: I believe they are using them now. In connection with grazing farms, over 3,000,000 acres was taken up. Last year the quantity of land taken up was 3,436,042 acres. It appears to me, from these figures, that the quantity of land taken up represents about 3,000,000 acres per year, and the policy the pastoralists are likely to pursue is to leave ample acreage for these various areas to be taken up in grazing farms and homesteads. I think they deserve some consideration as the original pioneers of settlement. With regard to the assistance to agriculturists, it is not necessary for me to say much, as I have not had much experi-

ence in that direction. It appears that the Government are trying to relieve the farmers, and if that can be done by giving them money at low interest, no doubt it will be for the good of the country. In connection with the reduction of interest under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, I think it will be as well for the Government to consider the large amount of money already advanced in connection with that particular Act. Already they have advanced nearly £500,000 to various sugar-growers throughout that country. I find that the total amount repaid represents only about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. As far as I can make out, they have paid only interest; some of them have paid very little of that, but others have paid a considerable amount. I think that before they advance any more money in connection with this particular industry, the Government should take every precaution to find out whether they are likely to get their money back or not. With regard to the question of railway extension, we all know that the Minister for Railways has been asked to build lines representing a cost of about £25,000,000. Of course we cannot possibly expect that these lines will be built for many years to come, and I presume the Commissioners to be appointed will take into consideration the lines mostly wanted, and at the same time the lines most likely to pay. With regard to our timber industry, it is a well-known fact that the timber merchants in Brisbane are unable to supply the orders they have in hand. The reason for this is that the teams have to travel such long distances to bring timber to the railway stations, and I think the Government should extend short lines into timber districts, so that teamsters should have a chance of getting timber to supply the requirements in centres of population. I believe if this were done, it would be the means of expanding the industry, and that the lines themselves would pay. There is no doubt that these short lines would materially assist the main trunk lines, but at the same time there are other important lines in the North, such as that from Croydon to Georgetown, which deserve the serious consideration of the Government. That line has been promised for a long time, but has not yet been carried out, although I believe it will be one of the best lines in the country, as it would develop a large mineral district. There is also the line from Normanton to Cloncurry, which was passed by this House in 1884, but still they are without it. I don't care whether this line is built by State money or by private enterprise, but there is no doubt that the depression which has existed for years in this district is likely to continue and become intensified unless some means of communication is provided by which produce can be taken to the markets of the world. We are all aware that it is utterly impossible for the mines in this district to pay unless they have cheap means of transit, and I am sure that a large number of miners will be employed in opening up the rich copper mines there if such facilities are given. I hope that when the railway policy of the Government comes before the House this line will be one of the first that will be submitted to the railway committee. With regard to our ports, the Government have shown their *bona fides* by ordering two dredges of the Lindon Bates type, which will cost something like £200,000. Although the question of dredging the river here is of paramount importance to the people of Brisbane, there are other harbours that I trust will not be neglected. We want a dredge at Normanton, Burketown, and also at Cairns, and I hope that when these matters come to be considered the Northern ports will not be over-

looked. With regard to the proposal to make provision for increased endowment to local bodies, I feel sure this measure will meet with the sanction of the whole of the House. We all know that some local authorities labour under great disabilities; that while they are sparsely populated, especially in the North, they have enormous tracts of country with hundreds of miles of roads and bridges to look after, and with the small amount of money at their command it is absolutely impossible for them to carry out their work satisfactorily. I am sure that the announcement that the endowments are going to be increased will be received with great satisfaction by all local authorities. With regard to mining, there is no doubt that the Queensland court at the recent exhibition in London has been a credit to the colony and has done much to bring our mineral resources into notice. But we must remember that while our increased output last year was about 112,000 oz., the greater part of that was the result of gold got from the cyanide works at Charters Towers, because the actual amount got from alluvial and reefs showed a considerable reduction. With regard to Charters Towers, my hon. friend, the leader of the Labour Opposition, is very much better able to speak about that particular field than I am, but I think he will agree with me that it is not turning out the quantity of gold that we should like. We know that in times past very large quantities of gold were turned out there. I should like to see those good old days return, and I believe that, with deep sinking to open up new ground, such prosperity will return to Charters Towers. Of course this means the expenditure of a great deal of money. I understand that a company has been formed for the purpose of raising capital to sink deep shafts on that field and in other parts of the colony, but still I think it would be a very good thing if the Government would help industries of this kind, because what we want is to get good gold at deep levels. That would prove of immense benefit to the colony. With regard to Gympie, we have had similar experience there as at Charters Towers, but I believe that the developments that are taking place there will ultimately lead to a very large increase in the output. Another mining industry here that is in its infancy is copper. I find from statistics that the largest quantity of copper ever exported from Queensland in one year was 9,000 tons, about thirty years ago. Last year the total only amounted to 62 tons, and the value only £2,166. Taking into account the large copper deposits in the Chillagoe district and other parts of the colony, I believe this will be one of the most valuable mining industries in Queensland, so that, although the output of gold may go down, the copper and tin industries will more than make up for the deficiency. When we consider that the total value of our imports and exports amounts to something like £17,000,000, I think it shows that the natural developments of the colony are going on very satisfactorily. But there is ample room for improvement, and I believe that this amount will be largely increased in the near future. What we want is more development, and to achieve that we want more people and also more money. The conditions of the country are prosperous, and I believe they will continue to be so. Last year we had a surplus of £150,000, and I am sure we all hope that the surplus will be much larger this year, and that our prosperity will be much greater than it has been in years gone by. I also hope that whatever legislation is passed will be of such a nature as to be of great benefit to this colony and its various industries.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question—That the Address in Reply, as read, be adopted—put.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the adjournment of the debate. It follows the usual custom, and we will be prepared to resume the discussion to-morrow.

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

The House adjourned at twenty-three minutes past 5 o'clock.