

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 25 JULY 1905**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.**

TUESDAY, 25 JULY, 1905.

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 Lieutenant-Governor, requesting the attendance of Mr. Speaker and hon. members in the Council Chamber.

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

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

**ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL JUDGE  
FOR 1905.**

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a letter intimating that His Honour the Chief Justice would be the Elections Judge for 1905.

**VACANCIES AND ELECTIONS.**

The SPEAKER announced that the following vacancies had arisen during the recess :—

1. For the electoral district of Mitchell—by the resignation of Arthur Charles Cooper.
2. For the electoral district of Burrum—by the death of the late George Martin.

That in each case he had issued his writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy, and that the writs had been returned severally endorsed as follows :—

For the electoral district of Mitchell—John Payne ;

For the electoral district of Burrum—Colin Dunlop Wilson Rankin.

The members named, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took their seats for the electorates mentioned.

**AGENT-GENERAL'S REPORT ON GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK SECURITIES.**

The SPEAKER announced that he had received from the Agent-General his report upon the Government securities deposited in London under the authority of the Savings Bank (Securities) Act of 1895.

Ordered to be printed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.**

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of the following reports :—

- (1) Dated the 17th February last, from the Auditor-General, transmitting his report upon the balance-sheet of the Queensland National Bank, Limited, as laid before the bank in general meeting on the 16th February, 1905.
- (2) Dated the 6th July, from the Auditor-General, on Government Savings Bank Securities, as at 30th June, 1905.
- (3) Dated the 7th July, from the Auditor-General, under the Treasury Bills Acts, 1893 to 1902, as at 30th June, 1905.
- (4) Dated the 12th July, from the Auditor-General, upon the public debt reduction fund to the 30th June, 1905.

Ordered to be printed.

## DESTRUCTION OF BALLOT-PAPERS.

The SPEAKER announced that, in pursuance of the resolution of the House passed on 7th December, the Clerk had caused the ballot-papers in his custody, the period for keeping which had expired, to be destroyed.

## PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

- (1) Additional regulation under the Public Service Acts, 1896 to 1901.
- (2) Despatches, dated 8th February and 10th February, 1905, respectively, conveying His Majesty's assent to Acts passed during the second session of 1904.
- (3) Additional regulation under the Public Service Acts, 1896 to 1901.
- (4) Despatch dated 14th March, 1905, conveying His Majesty's assent to an Act passed during the first session of 1905.
- (5) Additional regulation under the Public Service Acts, 1896 to 1901.
- (6) Blue Book for 1904.
- (7) Annual Report of Curator of Intestate Estates.
- (8) Regulations under the Succession and Probate Duties Acts, 1892 to 1904.
- (9) Annual report of the Under Secretary for Mines.
- (10) Timber and quarry regulations under the Land Act, 1897.
- (11) Annual report of the Chief Protector of Aborigines for 1904.
- (12) Twenty-ninth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction.
- (13) Return of schools in operation on the 1st January, 1905, with the attendance of pupils and the status and emoluments of the teachers employed.
- (14) Report of the Brisbane Board of Waterworks.

THE LIBUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S  
OPENING SPEECH.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that the House this day attended His Excellency the Lieutenant-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 the Legislative Council's proceedings.)

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL RANKIN (*Burrum*) who, on rising, was greeted with cheers, said: I have been requested to move the adoption of the following resolution:—

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

“We, His 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.

“The various matters to which Your Excellency has referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, shall receive our most careful consideration, and it shall be our earnest

[*Mr. Rankin.*

endeavour so to deal with them that our labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.”

In moving the adoption of this Address I wish to claim the indulgence of hon. members while I refer to certain matters which I have no doubt will appeal to all present in a spirit quite apart from any feeling.

The first matter to which I desire to allude is the loss that Parliament and the country have sustained by the death during the recess of the Hon. Sir Augustus C. Gregory. I do not say I think, because I am sure, that we have lost in that gentleman a man who has done much to make the geography of this vast continent well known, and whether we speak of him as an explorer, or as a surveyor, or as a man, he was one whom young Australians can look up to with pride and endeavour to imitate. (Hear, hear!) I desire also to refer to the loss we have sustained by the death of Mr. George Martin. I dare say it is well known to hon. members that I differed from Mr. Martin in many matters political. But at the same time I was fully able to recognise that he possessed many of those qualities which go to build up a good husband, a good father, and a good citizen (Hear, hear!); and while I may have differed from him in matters political, I could not help but recognise that he was a man who as a citizen assisted in no small measure to make his district well known to the country; and I take this opportunity of expressing to the House and to the people of Queensland my own feeling of sympathy with Mrs. Martin and her family in their hour of bitter sorrow. Passing from that—which is perhaps the saddest part of His Excellency's Speech—it is a very pleasant thing to be able to sound the first new note in the swelling chorus that we have a surplus. (Government members: Hear, hear!) Everything, when brought down to its level, is a matter of finance. I know that there are people who will say that this little surplus is not the result of administration, but that it is the result of the good seasons we have had. [*Mr. J. LEAHY: And the land sales?*] I think that is a very mean view to take of the matter. There is undoubtedly a feeling in the country districts that those men who have brought about this state of affairs are men who are actuated by the highest feelings, and who are prepared, as they have shown in their attitude, and in their work, and in the policy they have adopted, to run counter even to public opinion, in order to bring the finances of the State into line. Speaking purely as a business man—and I dare say most hon. members are business men—I believe it will be admitted that the policy that is sound is the policy that makes expenditure keep within the limit of revenue. The present Government have succeeded in doing that, and I know perfectly well that the fact that we have a surplus has inspired fresh confidence, not only in countries overseas, but also in this State. I know that we have suffered a great deal in the past from drought, and I take this opportunity as a new member—probably the youngest in years as well as in membership—to extend to the leader of the Opposition my sympathy with him in the difficulties which he certainly had to contend with during his regime. He had a big battle to fight, and he fought it well. Still I think we may pat our own friend, the present Premier, on the back and say “You have done better.” (Government members: Hear, hear!) There is matter for a good deal of thought in His Excellency's Speech. It is not, however, my intention to deal with the various matters referred to therein *seriatim*, because I do not desire to claim your attention long, nor am I, as a matter of fact, sufficiently conversant

with the details of the various matters mentioned to lay down a policy which ought to be adopted. With regard to the mail service, I wish to say that the present Government have done much to place us in closer communication with the markets oversea, and that is one of the things we want to work for more actively. I am a farmer—a sugar-grower—and I know the difficulties we have had to contend with in this connection. I hope that this Parliament will express some opinion on this question, so that when we have to do away with the 6,000 kanakas at the end of 1906 there may be such a modification of the Immigration Restriction Act as will enable us to bring to our shores some farm labourers to take the place of those who have left. Most closely associated with my own work in the district I represent is the coal industry. That industry might receive a good deal of assistance at the hands of the Government. We have in my own electorate perhaps one of the most fertile districts to be found in any part of Australia, both as regards its mineral resources and its agricultural wealth, and what we require to develop those resources is that assistance which any Government might fairly give. I was very pleased to hear the Premier, when speaking at Maryborough the other day, refer to his railway policy, and foreshadow a possible extension of the Gayndah and Nanango lines. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of good land between Gayndah and Nanango which would be connected with the sea if that railway were built. But I should like to see the hon. gentleman's railway policy go a little further. We have what is termed the Pialba Railway. At present it is not a paying line. (Opposition laughter). I should not advise hon. members to laugh at that line. [Mr. J. LEAHY: We are not going to cry about it.] If that line were extended a little further, to Urangan, it would connect with a good deep-water port, and greatly assist in opening up the coalfields in that district, so that it would play a very prominent part in the development of the local industries. There is no reason why the wheat country on the Murray plateau and in the Gayndah and Murray districts should not be put in communication with the markets oversea. There has been a good deal of enterprise shown by the Government in the appointment of Mr. Jones as commercial agent in the East, but I think they might have afforded further assistance in a similar direction. Mr. Jones has certainly worked very hard in advertising Queensland, and it is highly desirable that we should establish a good footing in the markets of the East. It is gratifying to note from the Opening Speech that we have done something in the Philippines, and that we have secured a contract for supplying meat to the United States forces in those islands. [Hon. R. PHILP: We had that five years ago.] But this enterprise might be carried further by giving producers those facilities which I think they should have in a young country. We should not only advertise the country, we should also establish markets in the East and other places oversea, which would enable us to make the country more prosperous than it is at the present time. There is foreshadowed in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech some liberalisation of the land laws of the State. It seems to me that the land laws, like the poor, "we have always with us," and I should think that the number of land laws at present on the statute-book are almost a puzzle even to the Minister for Lands. But if we can, by offering some liberal terms, somewhat on the lines of those adopted in Canada, attract people to our shores, we should get a number of Germans, Danes, English, Irish, and Scotch, who would add to the prosperity of the State. There is a great deal of room for improvement

in this matter, and I hope that whatever Land Bills are brought down to the House they will be calculated to establish a healthy, sound, and prosperous yeomanry in our midst. I notice that reference is also made in His Excellency's Speech to hospitals. There seems to be a good deal of difficulty in the administration of charitable institutions—it is so hard to get many who have the funds to put their hands into their pockets and do something for their brethren who are in poorer financial circumstances; and if the Government can by some means compel those people who refuse to do it voluntarily to contribute towards the maintenance of those institutions, then they will be doing a good service to the State. I observe that a measure entitled a Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Bill is promised. I may tell the House that what is aimed at by that measure has practically been accomplished by most of the large employers of labour in my own electorate. We have recognised that it is essential that the men whom we employ should be comfortably housed, and that they should have those arrangements for their comfort which appeal to any civilised, and certainly to any humane man. That has been done by most of the large employers in my district, and this Bill may compel others to carry out what we think ought to be done, so that the measure is one which need not meet with any great opposition on the part of hon. members on the other side of the House. [Government Members: Hear, hear!] It is to be regretted that the efforts of the Premier to get Brisbane made a port of call for the Orient and Pacific boats have not been successful, but I hope that those efforts, in which the Premier has displayed a good deal of courage and energy, will be pursued until Brisbane is made a port of call for those vessels. I think we have not been treated by the Federal Government in a kindly manner. They might have done a great deal more for us than they have done. As Queenslanders we seem to have sacrificed much for federation and to have got very little in exchange, and at that conference of Premiers at Hobart—I say it with all due deference to the Premier—we did not score as much as we should have done. I am very pleased to see that our new Governor has been appointed. He is a gentleman who bears a name honoured throughout the British Empire, and I have no doubt he will do much to knit together with stronger bonds the thin red tie which binds Australia to the mother land. The gentleman himself is known to me, and I think he will not prove a disappointment to the people of Queensland when he takes up his post here. Dealing with the timber question, I should like to have seen some measure promised in His Excellency's Speech for making our timber laws more liberal. We have in our pine a timber which will compete successfully with Victorian timber for butter boxes; but, so far as I can see, we have carefully left that alone, and done little to foster what might be made a most important industry. I hope there will be some movement set on foot still to assist this great industry. I am pleased to note that some provision is to be made for amending our Mining Act. There is a great deal of room for amendment. Speaking as one who has been associated with mining for many years, I can assure the House that many of the clauses in the Act are quite impracticable, and any measure that will make it more workable will be conducive to a further improvement in our mining industry. I do not know that I have anything more to say. I thank hon. members for their very kind hearing, and formally conclude by moving the adoption of the Address in Reply. (Cheers and applause.)

*Mr. Rankin.]*

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*), who, on rising, was received with cheers and applause, said: In rising to second the Address in Reply, I expect it is hardly necessary for me to ask the indulgence that is usually given to a new member. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] The mover of the Address in Reply has spoken rather fully of the matters referred to in the Governor's Speech. I do not intend to keep the House very long, but there are a few matters mentioned in the Speech which I wish briefly to touch upon. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Government and the country upon the fact that the period of deficits has passed away, and that the Treasurer is able to show a surplus. (Hear, hear!) Speaking of the pastoral industry, the remark is made in the Speech that it is gradually emerging from the effects of the drought. The pastoral industry is the principal industry in the electorate which I have the honour to represent. It is not as bad as it has been, but it is capable of great improvement yet. In some cases pastoralists have not recovered from the effects of the disastrous drought, and further out in the Gregory district things are very much worse. I hope that, with a little more rain, the pastoral industry will recover. (Hear, hear!) I also notice that a reference is made to closer settlement. Well, that is a matter for serious consideration. (Hear, hear!) I am pleased to see that a Bill is to be introduced having for its object the bringing about of closer settlement. There is a difficulty at the present time in connection with taking up land which I wish to mention. A man applies for a selection, but very often he has to wait nine or even twelve months before he can get his license to occupy. [Mr. LESINA: Eighteen months in my district.] I really think that is wrong. If we really mean to place people upon the land, it is highly necessary that that kind of thing should be put an end to. When a man lodges his money upon making his application, he should be entitled to get the land as soon as possible. And, in addition to the length of time he has to wait before he is allowed to go upon the land, it is very often useless to him when he does get on it. It often happens that when a pastoral lessee finds out that land is going to be thrown open to selection he turns his sheep on it to eat off the grass, and when the selector comes along, it is quite useless to him. This is a matter that I have a personal knowledge of. [Mr. KERR: Hear, hear!] I know of more than one case in my own electorate where that has taken place. If we desire to get closer settlement it would be wise to do something to prevent that sort of thing. I also notice that it is intended to bring in a Bill to attempt to deal with the unemployed. I fully recognise that the present Government have done their best to cope with the unemployed question. (Hear, hear!) It is not a nice thing to see numbers of men roaming about the country looking for work. I do not know whether it will be possible by legislation to prevent what I am now about to allude to. Practically, the pastoral industry is the only industry in my electorate, and I notice that there are southern men brought up there to take away work from the local men. It is miserable to see that. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I do not blame any man for putting on any particular man. I do not say the pastoralists are under a legal obligation to give the preference to the local men, but, all things being equal, they are under a moral obligation to do so. [Government members: Hear, hear!] This has had a very disastrous effect in the Mitchell electorate, and business people there have felt its effects very much. It is hardly necessary for me to say that business men in the West do not run their business strictly on cash lines like they can do in the

[*Mr. Payne.*

cities. In nine cases out of ten, if a working man is known to them, he gets credit. He has his wife and family to support, and he depends upon shearing or something connected with the pastoral industry to make the money to enable him to pay those business people who gave him credit, and it is altogether too bad to see southern men coming up and taking away his bread and butter before his eyes. The industry is practically distributing no money in the district. I do not blame the southern man for taking his cheque home to his wife and family. He has a perfect right to do so. But I blame the pastoralists in the West for giving preference to outsiders. There is no getting away from the fact that preference is given to men belonging to the Machine Shearers' Union. To say the least of it, that is wrong. I have been twenty-five years in the West, and I assert that men are being victimised there simply because they belong to a certain organisation. [Mr. CAMERON: No.] I have been too long in the West to say what I cannot substantiate, and I would not do so at my first attempt to address this House. I would not make such a statement unless I knew it to be a fact, and later on, if hon. members wish, I will prove what I say. I know it is difficult to deal with such a matter by legislation, but if the Government can see their way to make the pastoralists give the local men the preference (all things equal), I shall be very pleased. If they are able to do this, the Government will do a great deal to relieve the unemployed difficulty in the West. With reference to the hospitals, I have had the honour of being a member of the committee of the Longreach hospital for a number of years, and I recognise that the hospitals in the West do a great deal of good. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!] I do not know what legislation is going to be brought in to deal with the Brisbane hospitals, but I would like if the Government could, in the near future, see their way to assist the hospitals in the West more than they have been doing. I know the country has been financially in a bad way, and that the Treasury was not in a very flourishing condition when the Government took office, but I should very much like to see them assist the hospitals when the opportunity comes along. [Mr. LESINA: Take them over altogether—nationalise them.] Another matter which is referred to in the Governor's Speech is a Shearers Accommodation Bill. I have been a shearer for a number of years and I think it is highly necessary that some legislation should be brought in in that direction. [Mr. KERR: It is badly enough wanted.] I am happy to say that many pastoralists in my electorate do provide decent accommodation, but in the majority of cases it is not fit for the commonest animal to live in. The Government showed great wisdom in proposing to bring in such legislation. I shall not detain the House much longer, but there is another question to which I wish to allude—the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill. I think that is really one of the most necessary things in the whole Speech. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I may tell you that I have been in the West, as I said before, and I have seen the effects of strikes there, and I shall heartily welcome any legislation that will settle disputes between employers and employees in a peaceful manner. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I can see men on both sides of the House who I know must remember the 1891 strike, and I say that any measure that would prevent the repetition of such a strike must be beneficial to the community as a whole. [Government members: Hear, hear!] I am not saying that a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill should be brought in solely in the interests of

one particular class, but it is highly necessary that such legislation should be placed on the statute-book to prevent anything in the nature of the 1891 strike. I am speaking from practical knowledge, for I was on the spot all through the strike, and I am quite certain that if there had been a Conciliation and Arbitration Act in existence in Queensland at that time a great deal of misery would have been prevented, and a considerable amount of expense rendered unnecessary, and the country as a whole would have reaped a great benefit. I have great pleasure in seconding the Address in Reply. (Cheers and applause.)

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 5 o'clock.

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