

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 1913

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QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.

SECOND SESSION OF THE NINETEENTH PARLIAMENT.

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JUNE, IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1913.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, 17 JUNE, 1913.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

Pursuant to proclamation of His Excellency the Governor, bearing date 29th May, summoning Parliament to meet this day for the despatch of business, the Council met at 12 noon.

The CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS read His Excellency's proclamation.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

At noon His Excellency the Governor came in state to the House of Parliament, was announced by the Usher of the Black Rod, and received by the President (Hon. Sir Arthur Morgan) at the bar.

The members of the Council being seated, a message was sent to the Assembly informing the members of that House that His Excellency desired the presence of Mr. Speaker and hon. members in the Council Chamber. The Assembly attended accordingly, and hon. members being seated in the place reserved for them below the bar,

HIS EXCELLENCY read the Opening Speech, as follows:—

“HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

“It affords me the greatest pleasure to meet you at the opening of this the second session of the nineteenth Parliament of Queensland.

“I have called you together earlier in the year than usual, in order that legislation seriously affecting the welfare of the

sugar industry may have your consideration. So important is this matter, and so desirable is it to allay as speedily as possible the anxiety of our sugar-growers in regard to the excise duty, that but for the Commonwealth general election I should have summoned you even earlier. The practice, however, has hitherto been not to have the State Parliament in session while a Federal election is proceeding, and it was not thought advisable to depart from that practice on this occasion.

“I am deeply gratified to be able to congratulate the country on the continuance of the good seasons with which it has been favoured for many successive years. In particular, the pastoral and sugar districts have been blessed with the indispensable condition of their prosperity—timely and abundant rains—and, with a few exceptions, the places in which dairying and general farming are the principal industries have been equally fortunate. This is a matter for profound thankfulness, as on the success of the primary producers depends the prosperity of the State.

“During the recess I added considerably to my knowledge of Queensland and its people by travelling extensively in the Central, Western, and Northern portions of the State. Throughout the entire journey I observed with pleasure the surpassing richness of the grasses, and the splendid condition of the sheep and cattle. There is ample scope for further pastoral development, for no part of the spacious and magnificent grazing country I passed through is stocked to anything approaching its full capacity.

“I was not less impressed by that rich and varied mineral area which stretches north, west, and south from Cloncurry, and I was glad to have the privilege of turning the first sod of the railway which, I am

confident, will make the coal resources of Mount Mulligan a potent factor in the industrial progress of North Queensland.

"On every side I found prosperity, contentment, and loyalty to the Throne, nor would it be possible for me to speak too gratefully of the courtesy and kindness I received from all classes during my tour.

"In July last, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the conditions of our meat industry, its scope being made wide enough to comprehend the meat reserved for home consumption as well as that intended for export. The commission was empowered to report on the available supply of stock, on the condition of our meatworks, slaughter-houses, and butchers' shops, and on the advisability of establishing abattoirs in populous centres.

"The commission is to be complimented on the thoroughness with which its work was performed, and on the value of its report, which is now in the hands of hon. members, who will have ample opportunity to discuss its findings. Its recommendations in regard to retail selling have already been satisfactorily carried out, and the slaughter-house inspection, the need for which is shown in the report, is now conducted so rigorously that the shortcomings and irregularities brought to light have practically vanished.

"Though the condition of things in private slaughtering-places leaves little to be desired, nevertheless investigations are being conducted with the view of ascertaining the best site, the cost, and other necessary information regarding the establishment of abattoirs in the metropolitan area.

"While it is pleasing to know that large additional meatworks are either just completed or in the process of construction on the Brisbane River and elsewhere in the State, it is discouraging to learn that, owing to the lack of direct steam communication between Queensland and America, much of our stock is being taken to Sydney to be slaughtered for shipment to Vancouver by a service subsidised by the Commonwealth. In view of the great market opened to us by the proposed reduction of meat import duties in the United States, my advisers have thought it incumbent on them to ask the Federal Prime Minister to take steps to have Brisbane, even now, included among the ports embraced by that service.

"On the eve of the recess of the Queensland Parliament, the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth informed my advisers of his intention to introduce legislation to repeal the Sugar Excise and Bounty Acts. The Bills were duly introduced and became enactments about a fortnight after this Parliament had been prorogued, but the measures do not come into operation except by a Proclamation of the Governor-General. As it is obvious that it would be undesirable to give tariff protection to sugar other than that grown and manufactured by white labour, a Bill will be immediately introduced to make sugar-growing and manufacturing in Queensland a white-labour industry.

"My advisers are of opinion that the abolition of the excise duty on sugar will be of much benefit to the growers of sugar

cane. To secure for them the full advantage of that abolition, a Bill will be introduced to provide that they will receive direct an amount equal to the present excise, without any deduction being made in respect of any lien on their crops, or of any other encumbrance.

"In consequence of this concession, which will place our greatest agricultural industry on a more prosperous footing, and of the prospect of an increased import duty, as recommended by the Commonwealth Royal Commission, my advisers consider themselves justified in proceeding with the erection of additional sugar-mills.

"You will be asked to amend in certain particulars both the Elections Act and the Elections Tribunal Act. The amendments to be proposed in the former will ensure greater accuracy in compiling the electoral rolls, and, by restoring the postal vote under prudent limitations, a fuller exercise of the franchise.

"If personation, plural voting, and other illegalities were not rife at the recent Federal polling, it was not, in the opinion of my advisers, because existing arrangements do not encourage and facilitate such practices. Therefore it is their intention to request the Commonwealth Government to appoint a commission, consisting of the Chief Electoral Officer, his State deputies, and the principal State electoral registrars, to devise some means whereby the Federal electoral rolls and the conduct of the Federal elections will be above suspicion. My advisers are aware that under the Constitution all that pertains to Commonwealth elections is of purely Commonwealth concern; but the State, as a State, is vitally interested in amendments proposed in the Constitution, and has a right to expect that matters of such supreme importance to her are submitted only to those legally entitled to vote, and under conditions that will make fraudulent voting as difficult as possible, and, if resorted to, easily traceable.

"Believing that mineral oil exists in abundance in the Maranoa district, my advisers despatched all available data to the Agent-General for Queensland, who, with characteristic promptitude, forwarded the same to the leading authorities on the subject, and they, I am glad to inform you, are favourably impressed by the particulars supplied to them. Boring for mineral oil being an occupation quite distinct from that of boring for artesian water, the services of an expert employed in one of the great oil regions of the world are being sought with the view of ascertaining the extent and value of our oil resources and the most effective means of developing them. If it be clearly proved that we have oil deposits in considerable and payable quantity, a new industry, of which the importance cannot be overrated, will be established. When we consider the great and ever-increasing demand for mineral oil, the investigation is justified, whatever be the cost or the result.

"Under the powers conferred by recent legislation, an agreement has been entered into for the freeing from prickly pear of 100,000 acres of land near Dulacca. It is in contemplation to make other similar agreements under the provisions of the Prickly Pear Destruction Act of last year, which it is hoped will prove a useful instrument in combating what must be regarded as a

serious national danger. Scientific investigations are now proceeding at Dulacca, and a travelling commission is pursuing inquiries on the matter in America, Africa, and India.

"To the all-important subject of education my advisers are giving constant attention. Our national system of free primary education is established on a broad and comprehensive basis, admirably suited to the varied requirements of the State; and such a further development of our system of free secondary education is now contemplated as will enable a larger number of boys and girls to avail themselves of it. The question of obtaining from local sources a continuous and adequate supply of well-educated and well-trained probationers for the classified ranks of the teaching service has also received consideration, and a scheme to achieve that object is being evolved.

"The question of the construction of certain extensions of the metropolitan tramway system, which are essential to public convenience, is engaging the attention of my advisers, and, possibly, legislation will be needed this session to ensure that such extensions are made without avoidable delay.

"The increased and increasing cost of government calls for the close scrutiny of expenditure. Happily, in consequence of the general prosperity the revenue has been equal to the public needs, and my advisers have good reason to think that the financial year will end with a surplus. In order to carry our railway policy to realisation, recourse was had to the London money market early in the year. The ambitious railway policy of 1910, as well as the construction of lines into agricultural and mineral districts, is being prosecuted in accordance with the expressed wish of Parliament.

"In the matter of public borrowings, the London market has been, and is now, in a very disturbed and unsatisfactory condition, the demands upon the capital seeking investment being far in excess of the supply. Queensland was fortunate in getting on the market before the present acute stage had been reached. We are not unmindful of the large loans maturing in July, 1915, and already our financial advisers in London are being consulted in respect to the matter. It will be prudent to seek during this session parliamentary authority to provide for our obligations of 1915, but, in any negotiations to redeem maturing bonds, consideration must also be had to current requirements if public works are to be continued.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"The Estimates for 1913-14, which are now in course of preparation, and will shortly be laid before you, will be found to have been framed with due regard to economy and to the public requirements.

"HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"Among the Bills to be submitted for your consideration will be the following:—

- Sugar Growers Bill;
- Sugar Cultivation Bill;
- Friendly Societies Bill;
- Criminal Code Amendment Bill;
- Matrimonial Causes Acts Amendment Bill;
- Railways Bill (a consolidation);

A Bill to authorise the raising of a loan for the retirement of the loans raised under the Government Loan Act of 1875, the Government Loan Act of 1876, the Government Loan Act of 1877, the Government Loan Act of 1878, the Government Loan Act of 1879, the Government Loan Act of 1881, and the Government Loan Act of 1882, and for other purposes;

A Bill to amend the Queensland Fisheries Act of 1887;

Elections Act Amendment Bill;

Statistics Bill;

Factories and Shops Acts Amendment Bill;

Stock and Produce Agents Bill;

Pure Seeds Bill;

A Rabbit Bill.

"I invite your attention to these and all other matters that may be submitted for your consideration, and I devoutly pray that, with the help of the Almighty, your labours may conduce to the well-being and prosperity of Queensland."

His Excellency and suite then left the Chamber, and the members of the Assembly withdrew.

The Council adjourned at twenty-two minutes past 12 o'clock until half-past 3 o'clock, resuming at that hour.

DEATH OF MEMBERS.

HON. F. CLEWETT AND HON. L. THOMAS.

The PRESIDENT said: It is my melancholy duty to inform the Council of the death of the Hon. Felix Clewett and the Hon. Lewis Thomas, whose names I have directed to be removed from the list of members.

NEW MEMBERS.

HON. E. B. FORREST, HON. T. B. CRIBB,
AND HON. R. M. COLLINS.

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received from His Excellency the Governor a letter dated 16th June, intimating that His Excellency had been pleased to summon to the Council the Hon. Edward Barrow Forrest, Thomas Bridson Cribb, and Robert Martin Collins.

Hon. R. M. COLLINS, who had previously been sworn in before His Excellency the Governor, then took his seat and subscribed the roll.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of letters from His Excellency the Governor granting leave of absence from the Council to the following members:—

Hon. A. H. Parnell, for ten months, from 1st March last;

Hon. E. W. H. Fowles, for twelve months, from 1st April last;

Hon. A. H. Whittingham, for the current session.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of a report with reference to the investment of the Government Savings Bank funds on 31st December, 1912; and of a report showing the face

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value of the Treasury notes in circulation at the same date, and the disposal of the gold received in exchange therefor.

Ordered to be printed.

The PRESIDENT further announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of a letter dated 14th February last, covering his seventeenth half-yearly report under the provisions of the Queensland National Bank, Limited (Agreement), Act of 1894, which had already been printed and circulated during the recess.

INVESTMENT OF GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK FUNDS.

REPORT FROM UNDER SECRETARY TO TREASURY.

The PRESIDENT said: I have received from the Under Secretary to the Treasury the following report, which the Clerk will read.

Report read by the CLERK, as follows:—

“The Treasury,

“Brisbane, 10th March, 1913.

“Sir,—I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the Lieutenant-Governor, acting as deputy for and on behalf of His Excellency the Governor, and with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased, in pursuance of the provisions of the Government Savings Bank Act of 1870, to direct that the Government Savings Bank funds amounting to £400,000 be invested in the purchase of the undermentioned Government securities, viz.:—

“The Government Loan Act of 1908 and the Government Savings Bank Stock, Loan, and Treasury Bills Acts Amendment Act of 1912.

“Debenture Series J3, No. 2, at £100 per centum, for £200,000.

“The Treasury Bills Act of 1911 and the Government Savings Bank, Stock, Loan, and Treasury Bills Acts Amendment Act of 1912.

“Treasury Bill Series G1, No. 2, at £100 per centum, for £135,200.

“Treasury Bill Series G1, No. 3, at £100 per centum, for £64,800.

“The abovementioned Treasury bill for £64,800 has been issued in lieu of debentures for that amount held by the bank, which matured on 1st January last.

“The abovementioned securities have been lodged in a safe in the Treasury strong-room in the joint custody of the Under Secretary to the Treasury and the manager of the Government Savings Bank, as directed by Executive minute of the 6th February, 1913.

“I have, etc.,

“W. L. FOWLES, Under Secretary.

“The Honourable

“The President of the Legislative Council, Brisbane.”

Ordered to be printed.

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PAPERS PRINTED DURING THE RECESS.

The PRESIDENT said: I have to report that the following papers were ordered to be printed and circulated during the recess, in accordance with the resolution of Parliament passed by both Houses of Parliament during the session of 1901:—

Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into certain matters relating to the meat industry of Queensland.

Return of all schools in operation on the 1st January, 1913.

Blue Book, 1912.

Report upon the Government life insurance and annuity business for 1912.

Report of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board for 1912.

DEATH OF MEMBERS.

HON. L. THOMAS AND HON. F. CLEWETT.

HON. A. H. BARLOW said: Before making a Ministerial statement, it is my painful duty to refer to the vacancies which have taken place in our ranks. The Hon. Lewis Thomas and the Hon. Felix Clewett were both men who gave good service to the country, and they were men who worked themselves up to a position in this House by their own unaided exertions. I am afraid that the Hon. Lewis Thomas gave up his life in the service of the country. He attended this House when he was not well, and, instead of remaining in Brisbane, he went to his home in Ipswich, where he contracted the illness which terminated fatally. I am sure I voice the feelings of hon. members in expressing regret at his loss.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. H. BARLOW: The Hon. Felix Clewett was also for many years a useful member of this House. He died after a somewhat long illness. I feel sure I express the feelings of hon. members when I say that we all regret his death.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I have to report the following changes in the Government: On 11th December last the Hon. E. H. Macartney resigned his position as Secretary for Public Lands and as a member of the Executive Council. He was succeeded in the Lands Department by the Hon. James Tolmie, who was then Secretary for Agriculture, and the vacancy in the portfolio of Secretary for Agriculture was filled by the appointment of the Hon. John White. I beg to lay on the table the “Gazette” containing these notifications.

PAPERS.

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

Regulation, dated 23rd January, 1913, under the Explosives Act of 1906.

- Regulation, dated 19th December, 1912, under the Navigation Act of 1876.
- Regulation, dated 29th May, 1913, under the Navigation Act of 1876.
- Regulations, dated 12th December, 1912, under the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act of 1910.
- Regulations, dated 29th May, 1913, under the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act of 1910.
- Regulation, dated 23rd January, 1913, under the Government Savings Bank Act of 1864.
- Regulation, dated 6th June, 1913, under the Government Savings Bank Act of 1864.
- Report of the University of Queensland for the year 1912.
- Statute of the University of Queensland (as published in the "Government Gazette" of 17th May, 1913), relating to the diploma course in engineering.
- Amended statutes of the University of Queensland (as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 17th May, 1913), relating to the faculties and the Board of Faculties.
- Despatches conveying His Majesty's assent to Acts passed during the session of 1912.
- Report of the Immigration Agent.
- Regulations, dated 17th May, 1913, made under the Public Service Superannuation Act of 1912, regarding the method of election of elective members of the Public Service Superannuation Board.
- Further Regulations, dated 22nd May, 1913, made under and for the purposes of the Leases to Aliens Restriction Act of 1912.
- Rule of Court as of 13th December, 1912, numbered as 1A of Order XL, of the Rules of the Supreme Court, providing that the judge may, in his discretion, direct that evidence, etc., shall be taken down in shorthand by any person who may have been appointed by the Governor in Council for that purpose.
- Rules of Court as of 13th December, 1912, amending Rules of Court of 27th November, 1896, relating to admission of barristers of the Supreme Court of Queensland, providing for reciprocity in the admission of barristers of Victoria and Queensland.
- Rules of Court as of 5th December, 1912, being the Law Calendar for the year 1913.
- Rule of Court as of 11th March, 1913, amending Rule of Court of 27th November, 1896, relating to the admission of barristers of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

The following paper was also laid on the table:—

Statements of various insurance companies deposited in the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Brisbane, during the year 1912, in accordance with the provisions of the Life Insurance Act of 1901.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT ON MAIN RANGE.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF BOARD OF INQUIRY.

HON. A. H. BARLOW laid on the table the report of the railway board appointed to inquire into the circumstances relating to the railway collision at 84 miles on the Main Range on 30th January last.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I would like if the leader of the Government in this Chamber would endeavour to get instructions to have the report printed. It is very necessary that we should have an opportunity of reading the report. It was a very serious accident, and I am sure hon. members will agree with me that we should have a copy of the report in our hands as soon as possible.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I have had no instructions to move that the paper be printed, but I will communicate with the Secretary for Railways on the subject.

At a later stage of the sitting, HON. A. H. BARLOW moved that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

BILL PRO FORMA.

HON. A. H. BARLOW presented, pro forma, a Bill to restrict the exportation of aboriginal weapons and curios, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I beg to move that the Council, at its rising, do adjourn until 3 p.m. to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT said: For greater accuracy I have obtained a copy of the Speech with which His Excellency was pleased to open the present session of Parliament. According to the strict interpretation of the Standing Orders I should read that portion of the Speech which is addressed to members of the Council, but of late years it has been the practice to take it as read. Is it your pleasure that that practice should be observed to-day?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

HON. R. M. COLLINS, who on rising was greeted with "Hear, hears!" said: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move that the

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following address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech:—

"To His Excellency Sir WILLIAM MACGREGOR, Doctor of Medicine, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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

"We will give our most careful consideration and attention to the several measures mentioned by Your Excellency, and to all other matters brought before us; and we sincerely trust that our deliberations will tend to the promotion of the good government and the welfare of the State."

The Speech of His Excellency which we had the pleasure of hearing him read at noon to-day explains the reason for calling Parliament together at this early period of the year, and enumerates the various measures that are to be submitted for the consideration of Parliament. To me has fallen the honour of moving the adoption of the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech. I shall refer to a few of the most important subjects which it is proposed Parliament shall deal with, commencing with the proposed legislation concerning the sugar industry. You will remember that this industry is protected by an import duty of £6 per ton, and that on the other hand an excise duty to the extent of £4 per ton is levied, out of which £3 is given back by the Federal Government to those growers who employ white labour only. The remaining £1 is a deduction from the protection afforded by the import duty, so that practically the protection amounts to £5 per ton only. Mr. Fisher promised to pass a Bill abolishing the excise and bounty, if Queensland would pass a measure abolishing black labour in the industry. In due course Mr. Fisher did pass the promised Bill. In that Bill it is provided that it shall take effect by proclamation, but such proclamation is not to be issued until Queensland has passed the necessary legislation: hence the necessity for further legislation without delay. With regard to other leading topics mentioned in the Speech, before referring to them I should like to congratulate His Excellency the Governor upon the energy he has displayed in extending his knowledge of the State generally by a long tour in the Central, Western, and Northern portions of the State, right up to the Gulf of Carpentaria. One of the most important questions alluded to in the Speech is that of the meat export trade. Reference is made to a Royal Commission which was

appointed to inquire into the matter—to report on the available supply of stock, and the best means of supplying the public of Queensland with meat from public abattoirs. Commissioners are not always unanimous in their findings, but there is no doubt that this commission obtained a great deal of useful information. The question of establishing abattoirs was a very important part of their mission, and it is still a matter for consideration whether public abattoirs should be established in the various cities of Queensland. Probably this matter will be brought before us at an early date for decision, and we shall then be in a position to discuss it in detail. The matter of the available supply of stock was not, in my opinion, as thoroughly investigated as it might have been, and it is a question whether further attention should not be given to that aspect of the subject. A still more important matter is that of the spread of prickly pear. It is impossible to over-estimate the danger that is likely to result to the State if effective measures are not taken to prevent the further spread of the plague, and I am glad to observe that it is the purpose of the Government to adopt further measures with the view of dealing with the prickly-pear pest in an effective manner. As a native of Australia who has spent most of his life in Queensland, I have had every opportunity of studying the progress of the prickly-pear pest, and it seems to me that it is entirely beyond the resources of ordinary individuals or the State to exterminate it from the vast areas now heavily infested. The most effective work can be done in localities where there is no great quantity of pear, but which will soon become thickly infested if neglected. A small amount of work in the beginning when the pest appears is sufficient to keep it down, but if the pest is neglected and it gets a hold of the country, the cost of clearing that country is, for pastoral purposes at all events, beyond the resources of the persons who wish to utilise the land. The steps taken should be directed towards preventing the spread of the pest rather than in endeavouring to stamp out the evil where it has taken a strong hold. That prickly pear is capable of ruining a great part of Queensland is clear to anyone who has looked into the matter, and the problem is one which we should grapple firmly and resolutely. Another very important matter alluded to in the Governor's Speech is that of public borrowings. The Government inform us that they are preparing to meet their obligations with respect to loans which will mature in a couple of years' time. I cannot flatter myself that the moneys borrowed from the Government by shire councils and other local bodies have been always spent judiciously, and I am very glad to note that measures are being taken to deal with such matters. It is necessary to make provision for the development of the country. A country possessing the resources that Queensland has can well afford to borrow for the legitimate development of its resources, but I think a great many of the loans to local bodies are not justified, and I am pleased to learn from the Opening Speech that legislation dealing with this matter is to be submitted to Parliament. The Sugar Growers Bill I have already referred to, and it is unneces-

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nary to say more about it than that, as I understand it, the object of the measure will be to eliminate black labour from the cane-fields altogether, and I think such a proposal will meet with public approval. I do not propose to detain hon. members by any detailed reference to a number of other Bills mentioned in the Speech. There are many subjects alluded to with which I am not very familiar, and I shall not take up your time in discussing them. I can only express the hope that with the cordial co-operation of various sections such legislation will be passed as will tend to the protection and development of the best interests of Queensland. We have had quite enough of antagonism between classes. I think far more is to be achieved by co-operation than by conflict. I am satisfied that if the parties concerned endeavoured to meet one another we should not have many disputes, and that more practical good would be achieved than by other means. Co-operation is essential to the success of any undertaking, and whatever I may be able to do in that direction I shall do it most willingly and heartily. In my judgment employers and employees get on year after year without

[4 p.m.] any trouble if they only endeavour to meet one another and discuss matters that appear to either side to require adjustment. (Hear, hear!) I have dealt with all the matters which my limited parliamentary knowledge enables me to deal with, and I now beg to move the adoption of the Address in Reply.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. STEPHENS: It has fallen to my lot to second the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I believe it is the custom in this Chamber to be brief and to the point, and to talk intelligently. My experience during the last twenty years has been nearly all in the other Chamber, where the atmosphere is very different to that which is to be found here, so that, if I should somewhat fail in those particulars this afternoon, I hope hon. members will put it down to my education at the other end of the building. (Laughter.) I congratulate the Government on calling Parliament together as early as they have done this year. I think we should be called together as early as this every year, so that the business might be got through with despatch and let us get to our homes before the hot months come round. I understand sugar is the excuse given for our being summoned early this year, but I hope, now that a start has been made, that Parliament will meet early every year. I admit that it is sometimes difficult to get the business through the other Chamber with despatch, but I think that there is a feeling even in that end of the building to get through the business and let us get to our homes as soon as possible. I am glad that the Speech which His Excellency's advisers have induced him to read to us to-day is chiefly a primary producer's Speech. The primary industries are dealt with more largely in it than anything else. We have references to the sugar and the meat industries, and I understand we are to have a new industry—oil—and even fish and oysters are to be dealt with and are to be made more valuable to the State. Of course we cannot deal with the sugar in-

dustry in this Parliament as we used to do now that the Federal Parliament has control of the Customs; but I am glad to see that Ministers are prepared to build the sugar-mills which have been promised, rightly or wrongly. Effect should be given to the promises which have been made, but I do not think the Government should build any more mills. They ought to go steady. When an industry requires a 50 per cent. duty to make it a success, we should hesitate before we spend much more money on it. It is all very well to say that Australia is prepared to pay for its own sugar, but I think the time will come when the people down South will decline to pay a 50 per cent. duty on a product which can and which ought to be grown in this country. We have lots of other products which we can export, but, if we are going to pile up the cost of living by imposing such heavy duties, it will be found that some of those other industries will have to ease off, as it will not be possible for them to be worked at a profit. I do not wish to say a single word against my friend, the Hon. Mr. Gibson. I do not say that the sugar industry is not a good one, but, when an article has to bear such a heavy duty as sugar, it is the duty of the Government to go steady in the matter, because Australia is not going to continue for all time to pay that duty on a tropical product which can be successfully produced in Australia.

HON. A. GIBSON: She does not pay a 50 per cent. duty.

HON. W. STEPHENS: It comes close to it. I had the pleasure of being managing director of a sugar company at one time, and we got £14 per ton for our raw sugar, and there was a duty of £7 a ton on imported sugar; and, if £7 is not 50 per cent on £14, I do not know what is.

HON. A. GIBSON: It is not 50 per cent. on £22.

HON. W. STEPHENS: Sugar is not bringing £22 per ton in other parts of the world, and I venture to say that £7 is 50 per cent. on the price of sugar in other countries.

HON. A. GIBSON: They pay a duty of £9 per ton in America.

HON. W. STEPHENS: They may pay £29, but if they are foolish that is no reason why we should be foolish. I say distinctly that, if our industries have to stand duties like that, we will have to go out of some of them altogether. The dairying industry, for instance, has to export its products, and surely those engaged in that industry are entitled to consideration as well as those engaged in the production of sugar. However, seeing we are in the sugar business and the industry is in the state it is, we should build those two mills; but, if my advice is worth anything, I would advise the Government to go steady or they may fall in. The next thing referred to in the Speech is the meat industry. There was a Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the meat business, and they went into the question pretty exhaustively and made certain recommendations, some of which the Government are prepared to adopt and some of which they have adopted. I think the commission did a lot of good. Of course there are always

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two sides to a question. Public abattoirs would be a good thing in many ways, but I am absolutely certain that their establishment will have the effect of increasing the price of meat to the consumer. The money which has been made by many of the master butchers in the metropolitan area has not been made from the sale of meat. They have bought large paddocks, and the bulk of their money has been made by the subsequent sale of those paddocks. With regard to the American meat company which has made a start here, a great deal has been said about the monopoly they are going to create, and it has been said that all sorts of abuses will occur. I am glad that the Government do not intend to interfere with this company until it is shown that they are interfering with the rights of the people living in Queensland. As soon as the rights of our people are interfered with, then is the time for the Government to step in and assert their authority. (Hear, hear!) In the meantime the Government ought to encourage any company which has up-to-date appliances and methods, and which is prepared to spend its money here in developing our primary products, because, after all, meat is a primary product. The works which this company is putting up will be one of the most modern and up to date in the world, and they are prepared to spend £200,000 or £300,000 in those works, and we can congratulate ourselves upon their coming here, because it means that our sheep and cattle raisers are going to get better prices for their stock than they have ever got before. In America, where the meat companies own the railways, there may be a monopoly; but in Australia, where the Governments own the railways, and where there are so many meat companies, and where the squatters can start their own butchers' shops—as many of them have done—there is very little likelihood of a monopoly being created. In any case, I congratulate the Government upon having, even in spite of public opinion, welcomed this company to Australia. I think that its advent can only result in good. The Government are talking of amending the law dealing with our fisheries. They appointed a committee to inquire into the fisheries. I think the appointment of the committee was a good thing, but I am of opinion that better work would have been done if one or two fishermen, or the chairman of the Fish Board, had been members of the committee, as they would then have been able to get some information that possibly they did not get. I have nothing to say against Government officials, but I think that an outsider on such a committee would have had a beneficial result. People may think that fish and oysters are of little importance, but they are growing into a big industry in Queensland. There is another matter which is dealt with in the Speech which concerns a primary industry, and that is oil. I see that the Government are satisfied that we have large supplies of oil in this State, if it can be found and brought to the surface profitably, and they intend, whatever may be the cost, to get a first-class expert to see if the oil can be discovered and put to a commercial use. They are to be congratulated on their intention, and Parliament should cheerfully vote any money that may be required to secure

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expert advice. (Hear, hear!) There are a number of little things referred to in the Speech, but I do not propose to deal with them in detail. There is one matter referred to which concerns the metropolitan area, especially the suburbs, and that is the reference to the Brisbane tramways. As hon. members know from the papers, the Tramways Company have proposed to extend several of their lines into various suburbs, but apparently the company and the Government do not quite understand what the law is on the subject, and it is said to be capable of two or three interpretations. I see the Government say that they intend to bring in a Bill declaring what is the law on the subject. That will be a good thing for the Government, for the Tramways Company, and for the community, as it is desirable that we should know what is the law. I understand that the law is that the local authorities have to take over the tramways, if anybody does. Well, anybody who has had much experience of local authorities knows that there is very little likelihood of ten or twenty local authorities taking over a tramway system and making a success of it. I hope that the Bill that is foreshadowed will make provision for the Government taking over the tramways upon payment of reasonable compensation to the Tramways Company. If there is any profit to be made from running the trams, the Government should make that profit, the same as in connection with the railways. It is possible that they may not be run any better than or even as well as they are at present. Still there seems to be a good deal of feeling over the matter, and the sooner they become Government property the better. In the meantime these extensions are hung up, to the detriment of the suburbs, and there should be some means provided for having those extensions made pretty soon. It has been said that the Tramways Company are desirous of making the extensions in order to secure an extension of tenure, but I understand from those who are in a position to know that the company is not looking so much for an extension of their franchise as to know exactly where they are. Under the present law, after a tramline has been built for a certain number of years, the local authorities have power to take it over, but it is not clear whether the lines can be taken over piecemeal or whether they must be taken over as a whole, and what the company is frightened of, I take it, is that at the end of twenty years the local authorities in North and South Brisbane can take over the lines within their areas, leaving the outer ends of the lines to the Tramways Company; and what use would the ends of the various lines be to the company if the lines in the city are taken over by North and South Brisbane?

HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: How could the local authorities run the trams if the motive power belongs to the Tramways Company?

HON. W. STEPHENS: The power-house is in North Brisbane, and, if the local authorities in North and South Brisbane took over the trams, they would take over the power-house too, of course, and how could Mr. Badger run the extremities of the tramlines, and possibly the local authorities could make him run them for his fixed term? It ought to be understood that the tramways are one

whole, and that if any part is taken over by the Government or the local authorities the whole system will be taken over. I think the Government should have power to take over the tramways.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What about compensation?

HON. W. STEPHENS: The question of compensation could be settled by arbitration or by a judge. The company came here and built the tramlines, and I do not think anyone wants to deprive them of their property without giving them reasonable compensation. You can fix the method of ascertaining the compensation which shall be payable, and provide that the matter shall be determined by a judge or by arbitrators, but the law should state clearly that if the tramways are taken over by a public authority they shall be taken over as a whole and not in sections. If Mr. Badger will not build extensions, I hope the Government will be bold enough to build them and to compel Mr. Badger to run his trams over those extensions. If the Government showed that in the case of the company refusing to build the extensions they would undertake the work, I think Mr. Badger would very soon build them; but the Government should protect the company by providing that if any part of the tramways are taken over the whole of the tramways shall be taken over as a going concern. Any company that comes here with as much money as they have expended on the tramways is entitled to reasonable protection, and while, as one who is interested in suburban extensions, I naturally desire to see extensions carried out, I think the work should be done on reasonable and fair principles. My private opinion is that the sooner the Government take over the tramways the sooner the general public will be satisfied; but if you ask my opinion as to what the result will be if the Government do take them over, I would say I am not quite sure that the company would not run the trams as well as the Government would run them, or even better than they would be run by the Government, and yet make a decent profit on the business. Perhaps the most important matter in connection with any Government or any business is the matter of finance. Finance comes before anything else in any business, occupation, or walk in life, and I congratulate the Government on getting their loan worked off before the more troublous times arrived. It was an excellent move on their part to get the money at the time they did get it. They have been twitted with not building railways and other public works, but people forget that the money they obtained by loan was borrowed for particular purposes, and they have only lent the money at short dates, so that it will be available for the purposes for which it was borrowed as soon as the works are proceeded with. If any man wants a few pounds and has an opportunity of borrowing the money under advantageous terms he will obtain that money, and will then make some profitable use of it until he actually requires it for the specific purpose for which it was obtained, and the action of the Government in this respect was particularly brilliant. It was a somewhat rare sight to see a young State like Queensland offering to finance Victoria until they floated their loan. I did not think Victoria would accept the proffered assistance, but I do not say

our Government were not justified in using their money in that way until such time as they required it for public works. The Treasurer is entitled to a little sympathy, as he has now nothing to do with the Customs, and the Federal Government have started an opposition Savings Bank. The State Treasurer has used some millions of Savings Bank money in a way which has been profitable to the State, and I am happy to say that most Queenslanders have remained loyal to Queensland in this respect, and have put their money into their own bank. I know a number of persons who recognise that the Treasurer uses the Savings Bank money for good purposes, and though they wear the red ribbon and vote Labour on election days, they show that they are Queenslanders and are prepared to stick to their own bank. (Hear, hear!) The Government should be encouraged to retain the Savings Bank business, and it is gratifying to note that people do not begrudge the use of the Savings Bank funds by the Government when they know that those moneys are being used for good purposes in their own State. Personally, I should not care to put money into the Federal Savings Bank to be used for Federal purposes in Melbourne or in the Federal capital. I prefer to see such moneys used for public purposes in my own State. Something is said in the Speech about floating a loan to meet loan obligations maturing in 1915. I am a young man and have been mayor of a municipality—I do not know much about how the country should be governed, but if I was mayor of a municipality and a loan had to be met the following year I should like the other fellow to be mayor for that year. And politicians would no doubt say it would be good policy on the part of the Government to let the other fellow have a turn in 1915, and let them show whether they are statesmen or politicians. But I am sure the members of our Government are statesmen, and that they will not allow the other fellow to have a turn in 1915, notwithstanding that the average politician would say that that was the policy for them to adopt in regard to that matter. I hope our revenue will continue to increase, and that the Treasurer will not have any serious difficulty to face, despite the fact that he has to contend with the opposition Federal Savings Bank, and that financially there are not too bright on the London market. Personally, I do not think there is any part of the world that is in a better position than we are, and I am confident that if money is going anywhere it will come to Queensland as readily as to any other part of the world. There is another big question that I should like to refer to, and that is the building of railways by the day-labour system. For many years railways were built on the contract system, but latterly Queensland, in common with other States of Australia, has adopted the day-labour system. My candid opinion is that by this system the Government has demoralised labour: they have given them Government wages and taught them the "Government stroke." To compare the work done by day labour with the work done by contractors is childish and utterly absurd. A contractor gets a lot of good foremen, good clerks, and good labourers, and if he is assured of anything like continuous employment he can give you excellent work and at a cheap rate. But if a man comes along to the Government and

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says he has been a foreman, he is appointed a foreman and paid 10s. a day or more, though they have no guarantee that he possesses the qualifications necessary for the billet. I believe that in one or two places where the men employed on railway construction have struck, the department have called for tenders from the men for the work. Fancy getting the men and employing them on railway works, giving them Government wages and teaching them the "Government stroke," and then asking them to take on the job by contract! But Australia has apparently gone in for the day-labour system. No doubt the system has its good points as well as its bad points, but I do not think it is satisfactory on the whole. I know that I wanted certain work doing, but men would not take 8s. a day as they could get 9s. and 10s. on the Government railways. I asked the men on the railways what they thought would be a fair price per yard for moving the stuff I wanted moving, and they said 1s. per yard. I got some labourers to take on the work at 4d. per yard, and they made 9s. a day at it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is a big difference.

HON. W. STEPHENS: Yes, it is a big difference, but the facts are as I have stated them. Of course railway engineers will tell you that railway construction work is done cheaper by day labour than it would be done by contract, and in proof of that they will show you their estimate of the cost of the work; but I contend that such proof is insufficient. At one time we were accustomed to having as Minister for Works men who were not too strong, and the Under Secretary used to tell them, "We estimate the cost of the job at so much, and we are getting it done for so much less," and the Minister congratulated the department on getting the work done so cheaply. But after a while they got another Minister who had done some building himself and who knew something about building. They proposed to erect a building which was estimated to cost £1,200, and a tender came in for £800. The Minister said, "There is a fool somewhere in this business; either the contractor or the man who made the estimate is a fool; do you know the contractor?" The Under Secretary replied, "Yes, he pays good wages, supplies the best material, and does good work." The Minister then said, "In that case the fool must be in this office," and he had the estimate revised. The revised estimate came out at £850. I merely mention these details to show you how necessary it is, where the day-labour system is adopted, to appoint one or two inspectors who shall be responsible to Parliament in order to investigate the work done and report as to how the money has been spent. If we had an engineer to design the work and furnish an estimate of its cost, and an independent inspector to examine the work and inquire into the expenditure, and make a half-yearly report to Parliament, you would be surprised at some of the statements which would appear in that report. I have no hesitation in saying that we are not getting £75 worth of work for every £100 that we spend. I say nothing against the engineers, but I would point out that in carrying out work by day labour you require foremen and inspectors, and capable men cannot be

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found for all the works which are in progress at the same time. Very often work is authorised and started before the plans are prepared. Plans are made overnight for next day's work, and that kind of thing is inevitable when Parliament passes railways rapidly for a while and then suddenly ceases to authorize the construction of railways. We should fix the amount that we are prepared to spend annually; then the engineers and other officers would know what they had to do and would make arrangements accordingly, and we should get our work done at reasonable prices. Possibly some people will say we are not spending too much at the present time, and that we are getting reasonable value for our money. To such persons I would point out that in New South Wales the other day a Labour Minister suggested that they should employ an old contractor to supervise public works and pay him by commission, so that they might be sure of getting reasonable value for the money spent. That gives a very good indication of what was in the mind of that Labour Minister on this matter, and if a Labour Minister would say that on the eve of an election, things must have been pretty laid down there. I think both Houses of Parliament should insist upon having the opinion of two experts as to whether we are getting value for the money we spend on work done by day labour. The day-labour system is a new system and a big one, and even those who are supporters of it should be glad to learn whether we are getting value for our money. I have no hesitation in saying that railway construction [4.30 p.m.] is costing us at least 25 per cent. more than it should, and, further than that, it is demoralising to the labour we have in the country by teaching men the "Government stroke" and Government methods. We are also told that we get a better railway by day labour. We do nothing of the kind. I was dealing with a Government engineer the other day in connection with the building of a road. We called for tenders for the road, and the estimate was about £1,500. I asked him about it, and he said, "I can get you a road made for £1,000, but not under this specification. Of course that specification is hard and fast, and the contractor is bound to give you a good job; but, if we spend £1,000 by day labour, we will not be so bound down, and you can get the work done for the money." That is the principle on which we are building our railways and getting the work done cheaper than by contract. When you do the work by contract, you have a specification, and an inspector sees that the contractor does the work according to the specification. But, when an engineer is building a line by day labour, the boss comes along and says that the engineer must rush along a bit quicker, and he does rush along a bit quicker. It would be all right with day labour if you had the same inspection as on a contract, but that is not so, and you do not get the same value for your money. It is the same in the Ipswich workshops. You see first-class mechanics going to the Ipswich workshops, and when you ask them how they are getting along, they say, "Oh, we are getting along very well." When you ask them how they do it, they say, "Well, there is not a Government inspector standing over us all day, and we can punch holes in iron

where before we had to bore them and then take a file and smooth them." It is in the finish of the work that the money is spent. I would like the Government to ascertain from outside sources, quite independent of the Railway Department, whether this day-labour system is what it is cracked up to be. If it is not, we are entitled to know it. Both sides are entitled to know how things stand in regard to it. I thank hon. members for their patient hearing, though I have taken a little longer than I intended.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

HON. W. STEPHENS: I am very glad indeed to have the Governor's Speech in the form in which it has been presented to us. I believe Ministers will do their level best to give us an honest "go," but, if they were spending £2,000,000 a year of their own money on railways, I am satisfied there would be some better supervision than there is to-day. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. F. T. BRETNALL: 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.

ADJOURNMENT.

ILLNESS OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I beg to move that the Council do now adjourn. In doing so, I would like to convey, with the permission of hon. members, the sympathy of the Council to the Chairman of Committees.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I understand he is in a very bad way, but I sincerely trust he may take a turn for the better and shortly be amongst us again.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. H. BARLOW: It is no use going on with the Address in Reply, because the Governor will not be here to receive it, so that I think it will be consulting the convenience of hon. members if we adjourn to-morrow for a fortnight, until 1st July.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at twenty-two minutes to 5 o'clock.
