

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 1920

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER, 1920.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN (Hon. T. Nevitt) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 2.

ASSENT.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt from the Lieutenant-Governor of a message conveying His Excellency's assent to this Bill.

PAPERS.

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

Report upon the Government central sugar-mills for 1919-1920.

Report of the Chief Inspector of Machinery and Scaffolding for 1919-1920.

Report of the Director of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for 1919-1920.

Supplementary report of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Brisbane, for 1919.

Thirty-sixth report on the creation, inscription, and issue of stock.

TEMPORARY ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones): In order to facilitate Government business, I would suggest that the Presiding Chairman should leave the chair for, say, half an hour. The Wheat Pool Bill is now being read a third time in the Assembly, and we expect the Bill here in a few minutes, or, at latest, by 4 o'clock. I may also state that I would like the Bill to be read a first time and a second time to-day. It will be a great pity for hon. members to come here and go away without doing some business.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Does that mean the suspension of the Standing Orders?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We could do it by leave of the Council, if hon. members opposite are prepared to go on with the Bill.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: That seems to be about the only good Bill in your programme.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It will facilitate the passage of the Bill greatly if we pass the second reading to-day.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: If I am in order, I would like to have some indication from the Minister as to how long we are likely to sit to-day. Some of us believed that the sitting would close before 6 o'clock.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I propose to adjourn after the second reading of the Wheat Pool Bill.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Surely the Minister does not expect us to pass the second reading of the Wheat Pool Bill to-day, when we have not yet seen the Bill. I do not think it is a fair thing to ask us to pass such an important measure before we know

what it contains. It is certainly not in accordance with our Standing Orders to proceed with the second reading of a Bill immediately after it has been read a first time. We have nothing at all on our business-paper to-day, and I think the Minister might be satisfied to make his second reading speech this afternoon and allow the debate on the second reading to take place to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We can do the whole thing to-morrow, if you like.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That would be better still, so long as we get the Bill before us to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Of course, if one hon. member objects, we cannot suspend the Standing Orders without notice.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I do not want to object to the suspension of the Standing Orders, but does the hon. gentleman think it a fair thing to proceed with the second reading of a Bill that we have not yet seen? The hon. gentleman is familiar with the whole of the contents of the Bill, as he is a member of the Cabinet which is responsible for introducing it; but we do not know what the Bill proposes, and it is hardly fair to ask us to pass the second reading to-day. It would be better for the Minister to make his second reading speech this afternoon and then adjourn.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would like to inform the Council that the Bill is urgent. I take it the hon. gentleman desires to help the wheat farmers. (Hear, hear!) The hon. gentleman knows that the Bill provides for the appointment of a board and the establishment of a wheat pool.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Does it not partially amend the Industrial Arbitration Act?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am merely taking this course to meet the convenience of hon. members on both sides of the Chamber. I have already expressed the opinion that, if we concentrated our business on three days a week, we might suit the convenience of both sides by not sitting on Friday. If we follow the course suggested by the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn, we will pass the first reading of the Bill to-day, and then I would make my second reading speech. We would take the second reading to-morrow, and go into Committee the next day; and, as we cannot take the third reading on the same day that the Bill passes through the Committee stage, the Bill cannot be passed this week. Personally, I think the rule requiring a Bill to be read a third time on a subsequent day to that on which it is considered in Committee should be abolished. I am desirous of getting the Wheat Pool Bill through, so that we shall not need to sit on Friday. If the Bill is got out of the way, then we need not sit on Friday.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING RULES AND ORDERS.

WHEAT POOL BILL.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move, without notice—

“That so much of the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the Wheat Pool Bill being read a second time on the same day on which it shall be read a first time and ordered to be printed.”

Hon. A. J. Jones.]

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Council that the hon. gentleman be allowed to move the motion without notice?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

TEMPORARY ADJOURNMENT.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN left the chair at twenty minutes to 4 o'clock, and resumed it at 4 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I move—That the Council do now adjourn. I had hoped to have the Wheat Pool Bill here this afternoon, and I asked the Council to suspend the Standing Orders so that we might deal with the Bill in its first and second reading stages to-day. However, the suspension of the Standing Orders will apply to-morrow, when we can go on with the second reading, and, after that is finished, if hon. members wish, we can deal with the remaining stages of the Bill, and then adjourn until the following week. At the present time the third reading of the Bill is being debated in the Assembly.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: What are members there opposing? Is it the Arbitration Act amendment?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not know, but a good many farmers' representatives are speaking on the Bill. It would ill become me to make any reference to the debates of the Assembly.

HON. L. McDONALD: The hon. gentleman ought to have known that.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Perhaps he does know it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Bill is an important one, and the Premier is anxious to have it passed this week. The Government are under some obligation to the primary producers to have the Bill passed, and they are anxious to have it dealt with this week. I hope that hon. gentlemen opposite will be ready with their speeches to-morrow, and that there will be no delay in dealing with the Bill. I do not anticipate that we shall have any other business before us this week. I regret that the Council has had to meet for so short a time to-day, and that we have no business to go on with.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We will all have business at the match on Friday afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I hope so; but at present the business of this Council is largely controlled by the Assembly.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: With regard to what the Minister has said regarding the urgency of the Wheat Pool Bill, I may assure him that every member on this side of the Chamber is as keenly anxious as the Government to pass this Bill into law, or to pass any other Bill which will be of benefit to the primary producers. I believe that, if it had not been for the action of the Government in trying to get an amendment of the Arbitration Act into the Bill, the measure might have been before us at the present time. I mention this reason why the Wheat Pool Bill is not before us now, because that

explains why we are asked to adjourn till to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are apologising for members of the Opposition in the Assembly.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I am not apologising for anyone. The other day someone said that the Government did not include farmers among the workers to whom the Industrial Arbitration Act applied. I may say that the Government did their level best to include farmers amongst those who were made subject to the provisions of that Act.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in discussing the Industrial Arbitration Act on the motion now before the Council?

HON. A. DUNN: I can quite understand that on this occasion the representative of the Government was justified in calling the Council together, because of the urgency for getting the Wheat Pool Bill passed; but, on behalf of country members, I should like to enter a protest against the Council being called together when there is not sufficient business on the paper to engage hon. members for a considerable time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will adjourn till 7 o'clock if you wish it.

HON. A. DUNN: I wish to say that country members are put to considerable expense and loss of time in attending the meetings of the Council, and it is only reasonable that there should be sufficient business to keep them going for at least two afternoons and two evenings in the week, so that they may put in a reasonable amount of work before they return home.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Did you come to Brisbane expressly to attend this meeting?

HON. A. DUNN: In many cases I have come to Brisbane to attend the meetings of the Council, and when I have come here the Council has been adjourned for a week. Last week I came down to Brisbane and attended here for something less than half an hour on one day, and had then to go home again. That is not reasonable treatment for country members. There is nothing, so far as I know, unless it is necessary to deal with some urgent matters, to prevent there being sufficient business before the Council to engage hon. members during at least two afternoons and two evenings a week. I think it is reasonable to ask that the convenience of country members should be studied to that extent.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: It is your friends in another place who are blocking the Wheat Pool Bill now.

HON. A. DUNN: I know that the representative of the Government has been very good in the past in arranging the business of the Council, and I have no doubt that good will result from calling his attention to what has happened on the present occasion.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I sympathise with the Hon. Mr. Dunn in the remarks he has addressed to the Council. Our business depends upon what the Government do in another place, and no one knows what the Government are going to do next, or whom they are going to "do" next; no one can foretell what the Government will do during any five minutes. It seems to me that the

[Hon. A. J. Jones.]

Minister has simply brought thirty-two members here on a fool's errand, when those members might have been occupied in doing other business.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: We will soon fix it up so that they need not bother coming here any longer.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I think we might give an assurance to the Minister that one-third of the members of the Council will be present to-morrow to get the Wheat Pool Bill through its several stages, including its third reading, so that hon. members need not be brought here and prevented from witnessing Hobbs making his hundred runs on Friday. The members on this side of the Chamber are anxious to do what they can to assist the wheat farmers, but I would point out that the Government, when bowled out by the electors, did not play the game.

HON. W. J. RIORDAN: They have taken your middle stump, any way.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I suggest to the Minister that he should pass the Bill through all its stages to-morrow, and so save hon. members from the necessity of coming back on Friday. Hon. members on this side have no objection to following that course, and, if my suggestion is adopted, there will be no need for country members to come here again on Friday.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I also sympathise a good deal with the Hon. Mr. Dunn. I think his complaint is quite justified. We on this side of the Chamber gave the Minister an opportunity last week to provide business for hon. members to transact. The Hon. Mr. Fowles introduced a Bill to do away with minority government in Queensland, but hon. members on the opposite side opposed that measure.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Minister tells us that we cannot do anything unless the Assembly sends some Bills to this Chamber. That is a confession of the inability of the Government to grasp the situation. We can easily initiate legislation in this Chamber, and, if the Government and the Minister are in earnest in asking us to do business, they can bring in a Bill for the redistribution of seats, and thus do away with the present inequality of representation in the Assembly.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: What have seats to do with us?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They have a good deal to do with the Government. If the Government had not a majority of seats in the Assembly, they would not be in power to-day. The Minister might easily bring in a Bill to do away with the disgraceful condition which exists with regard to electoral representation at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I find myself in agreement with the Hon. Mr. Fowles on this occasion.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I must be wrong, then.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If we pass the second reading of the Wheat Pool Bill to-morrow and deal also with the Committee stage of the measure, it would be absurd to call hon. members together on Friday in order to pass the third reading of

the Bill. I will make arrangements for the necessary motion to be moved so that we may pass the Bill through all its stages to-morrow. Again, I say I regret having had to call hon. members together, but I did so in anticipation of the Wheat Pool Bill passing through its third reading stage—which is usually a formal stage—in the Assembly, and I sympathise a good deal with the Hon. Mr. Dunn. I have no desire to inconvenience country members: but there is just one reason why certain hon. members are in attendance to-day, and a reason for their presence in the city, and that is to attend a certain claim before the Arbitration Court which affects the journalists.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The hon. member did not say he came to Brisbane to-day specially to attend Parliament.

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: They like arbitration for themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Probably there is also another reason why there are so many hon. members opposite in attendance to-day, and I am sorry to disappoint them in their criticisms of the clauses of the Wheat Pool Bill. I do not desire to be out of order by following the Hon. Mr. Leahy, who attempted to make a second reading speech, because we will have an opportunity to-morrow of dealing with that matter. I want to say that I, as a member of the Government, stand for a fair deal to the farmers—a fair price to the farmers—and I also desire to see that those who do the work of harvesting the wheat shall receive a fair remuneration for their labour, and to-morrow I am going to stand for that principle in the Bill.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Even if you have to put the city loaf up to 6d.?

HON. J. S. COLLINGS: It is not the city loaf you are worrying about, but the city loafer—the loafer you represent.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You want his vote.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: All the workers engaged in any industry should be paid a living wage, and it is our duty to see that a living wage is paid in every industry. Some members of the Assembly, in speaking on this Bill, made reference to that broad policy, and we, as a party, stand for a fair deal to all workers, whether they are farmers, wage-earners, or any other class.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The farm labourers are well treated now.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman is not going to get a second reading speech in now, and I move—That the Council do now adjourn.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I am entitled to speak on this motion, as the previous motion on which I spoke was, "That the Council, at its rising, do adjourn till to-morrow," and this motion is, "That the Council do now adjourn."

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Council is—"That the Council do now adjourn." The hon. gentleman has already spoken on that motion.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: All right, I will get it in to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at eighteen minutes past 4 o'clock p.m.

Hon. P. J. Leahy.