

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER 1920

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER, 1920.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN (Hon. T. Nevitt) took the chair at half-past 4 o'clock p.m.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO HON. T. C. BEIRNE.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: I have to inform the Council that I have received a letter, dated 1st December, 1920, from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, intimating that he has granted a request for leave of absence for three months from the Legislative Council to the Hon. T. C. Beirne.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO HIS EXCELLENCY SIR MATTHEW NATHAN.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones): I beg to move the following address of welcome to His Excellency Sir Matthew Nathan, and I am sure the Council will agree to the motion being moved without notice:—

“To His Excellency Lieutenant-Colonel the Right Honourable Sir Matthew Nathan, P.C. (Ire.), G.C.M.G.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:—

“We, the Members of the Queensland Legislative Council, heartily welcome Your Excellency, sincerely hope that Your Excellency will have a long and prosperous stay amongst us, and take this opportunity of renewing our assurances of fidelity and devotion to the Gracious Sovereign whom Your Excellency represents.”

*HON. P. J. LEAHY: I rise for the purpose of seconding very briefly the resolution which has been moved by the representative of the Government. Sir Matthew Nathan has had a long and distinguished career in the Imperial service. I am quite sure we all hope and believe that his stay in Queensland will be pleasant, and that this State will make great progress during the period of his occupancy of office, whether it be short or long. I feel confident that, when the time comes for him to leave us, we will esteem him even more highly than we do now. In conclusion, I have to express the hope that any difficulties the State may be in at the present time may speedily clear away, and that long

before His Excellency leaves us we shall be in possession of the fullest measure of prosperity that the State has ever enjoyed.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion. I consider that this is the best motion we have had from the Government side of the Chamber for a very long time. I certainly appreciate it, and I endorse all that is conveyed in it, and hope that His Excellency will be spared to remain his full term with us and that, while he is here, we shall have no troubles so far as politics are concerned. I hope that he will have an easy row to hoe, and that we will all agree to make his tenure of office as agreeable as possible to him and to ourselves.

HON. R. BEDFORD: I agree generally with the terms of the motion—agreeing so much that it was not necessary for me to speak except for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that party politics are so mean and so dirty so far as the other side are concerned—

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. R. BEDFORD: That immediately the Governor arrived in Australia he was misrepresented by the Tory Press to the effect that he had been sent out as a result of the Philp delegation.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You were a bit previous with your question.

HON. R. BEDFORD: That may be. There is the fact that it had to be immediately attacked, and I attacked it in the right way, and now that it has been proved that the Governor was in no sense to blame, and that the statement was an invention of the Tory Press solely for the purpose of party politics in Queensland, it seems necessary personally to dissociate the Governor from that statement of which he has been found guiltless.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You withdraw unconditionally. (Laughter.)

HON. R. BEDFORD: I am not withdrawing unconditionally at all. It is now up to the "Courier" and the other papers which, for purposes of party politics, made this statement against the Governor to withdraw. I in no way have changed my belief that an imported Governor is absolutely wrong; but here is a case where a gentleman has arrived and has been unfairly placed under the stigma of having engaged in party politics even before he entered the State and just as soon as he got into touch with the Australian Press. It having been proved that the Governor is in nowise guilty of the partisan statement that was attributed to him, it only seems fair to me in connection with this motion to put the saddle of blame upon the right horse. That is my only reason for speaking.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Apologise gracefully.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES presented the following papers:—

Report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for 1919-1920;

The Immigration Agent's report for 1919;

Report of the Royal Commission on Public Works on proposed branch line from Mount Mulligan Railway to Wolfram Camp;

and said: I move—That the papers be printed.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: A motion that papers be printed is usually a formal motion, but one wonders whether it is worth while printing the paper now laid on the table with respect to a particular railway. It is just as well to draw attention to these accounts, as they have become as thick as flies in summer.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: What accounts do you mean?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I refer particularly to the accounts of the Public Works Commission, which has cost the country £10,539. The last report issued by the Commission was not worth reading; there was no business in the report, as it dealt with impossible proposals.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in discussing a question of finance relating to the Public Works Commission on the motion that a report on a particular railway line be printed? We may get anywhere if we are allowed to discuss a motion in the way the hon. member proposes to discuss this motion that the paper be printed. I stand always for the right of free speech and free criticism, but I think the hon. gentleman is out of order in discussing this matter on the particular motion before the Council.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: In reply to the question of the Minister as to whether the Hon. Mr. Fowles is in order in speaking to a motion for the printing of a paper, I may state that the hon. member will be perfectly in order in debating the question as to whether a paper laid on the table is worth printing or not, but outside that he cannot go.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The question really before the Council is whether this particular paper is worth printing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I was wrong in stating that the paper was a report of the Public Works Commission. It is a railway report.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I understand the hon. gentleman to say that the paper in question is not a report of the Public Works Commission, but that it is a report on a particular railway. The Minister has had so much responsibility thrust upon him that he was probably not in a mental condition to notice the mistake at the time. I am not sure whether the hon. gentleman mentioned any particular railway or not, but, inasmuch as there is no reasonable hope of any railway being built for some considerable time, I might very well ask whether it is worth while printing the report on this particular railway.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The paper has already been printed.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: We know that. That is the kind of thing the Government always do; they chance incurring expenditure, and then ask for authority for that expenditure. With regard to the printing of papers, I would remind hon. gentlemen that some of us know only too well what an expensive item paper is at the present time, and I think we ought not to do anything to cause a greater consumption of paper and a consequent greater expense to the country than is necessary. The more paper the Government use, the less paper there will be for the Hon. Mr. Crampton and myself. There is a great deal of paper

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wasted in the printing of public documents, which neither hon. members nor the public ever read; and there should be economy exercised in that direction, not only for the sake of the Government and the taxpayer, but also for the sake of those who use a considerable amount of paper.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: For the information of members of the Council, I may state that the question of the consumption of paper in the printing of public documents has not been overlooked. I have gone into the matter, and I have given instructions to the Clerk to prepare a list of all Government documents to which hon. members are entitled, so that each member may be able to indicate what documents he requires, because, if we can save the printing of the surplus copies, that will mean a considerable saving to the Printing Office.

Question put and passed.

CONTROL OF AIR NAVIGATION BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR MINES, this Bill, received by message from the Assembly, was read a first time.

The second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I move—That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I do not think we ought to allow this Bill to go through any stage without protest.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You spoke on the second reading yesterday.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I was not here yesterday; I thought that the protest that was made in the other Chamber and the protest that was made here on the second reading would have convinced the Government that the right thing for them to do was to drop the Bill. But, in spite of all that has been said, apparently they have determined to go on showing the same callous indifference to the needs of the unemployed outside and to the retrenchment that is going on.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is no retrenchment.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Talking about retrenchment, it was rather interesting to read in the Press a day or two ago that retrenchment was going on.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have always said in this Chamber that the Government were encouraging a system whereby two men were employed to do one man's job.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We read in the Press that retrenchment was going on on a large scale in the Government service, and the Railway Union passed a resolution condemning the Government. Immediately retrenchment was stopped, and the Government decided that it was not necessary to retrench. Evidently, they have been compelled by outside powers to withdraw the

notices of retrenchment, and they are going on in the same old way.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the hon. gentleman that the question under discussion is the third reading of a Bill and not the general policy of the Government.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I think I am perfectly in order in submitting reasons for objecting to the third reading of the Bill.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You should have been here yesterday.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We find that for the last five months the financial position of the Government is £194,107 worse than it was for the same period last year. Last year revenue exceeded expenditure by £23,347, but for the past five months the excess of expenditure over revenue is £170,760, so that the position is actually worse than it was last year by £194,107, although the Government are getting a very much larger revenue this year. We find also from the Treasurer's Budget that they propose to expend over £12,000,000—the largest expenditure they have yet had—and that they expect to close the year with a surplus of £11,523. Whether their anticipations are likely to be realised, I do not know; but apparently they are going on spending money in the same reckless way and utterly indifferent as to what is going to happen.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You have registered your protest.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You are making a second reading speech on the third reading. You have exhausted all the intelligence on that side.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The hon. member is not yet in a position to dictate to this Council. Fortunately, we have still some say in spite of the hon. gentleman. I say that the Bill is one that we should not be asked to pass at the present time, and that it is absolutely wrong for the Government to propose to have an additional Minister with a salary of £1,000 a year. I shall probably be told that the extra expenditure is only £500 per annum; but the principal Act provides that eight Ministers shall be provided for at the rate of £1,000 each, and this Bill increases the number to nine without making any qualification that the salary shall be only £1,000 per annum.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You are not angry at all; you are quite happy. You are only pretending to be angry; you are too kindly.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The hon. gentleman is wrong as usual; he was even wrong about the Governor.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You have such an angelic nature! (Laughter)

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I think that the Government should drop the Bill. They have a lot of money to meet this year. Although they stated that the £1,000,000 which was borrowed from the Bank of England was not borrowed to enable them to pay interest in London, we find from London "Truth" of 6th October last that over £1,000,000 is falling due between now and 1st February next, and that this £1,000,000 was borrowed with the object of repaying those amounts.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They are selling the furniture to pay the rent.

[Hon. P. J. Leahy.]

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is just about what they are doing. The Treasurer, in his Budget Speech, says that he hopes that redemptions will be continued for some indefinite period, but he makes no provision in the Budget for paying that money off. The Hon. Mr. Bedford has often quoted from the London "Truth," which is a highly reputable paper—

HON. R. BEDFORD: It is as big a black-mailer as the London "Financial News" or the London "Financial Times."

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He has quoted it as a paper that is largely read in England.

HON. R. BEDFORD: I have never quoted from it.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: "Truth," in its issue of 6th October, distinctly says that the Queensland Government are not likely to be able to provide for the repayment of nearly £20,000,000 that are falling due in the next five years, in view of "legislation of the type for which Queensland has achieved an unenviable notoriety."

HON. R. BEDFORD: It was an honest paper when Labouchere owned it, but it is not now. It is now one of the biggest blackmailers in London.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Bill is an iniquitous one at the present time, and I hope the people will keep it in remembrance against the next time that the Government go to the country for re-election or otherwise.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I desire to say a few words at this stage.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You made a second reading speech yesterday.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes. I promised to give hon. gentlemen some little additional information, but I will not criticise the Bill or make a second reading speech. I will just allow the facts to speak for themselves.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Won't you elaborate the facts at all?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not in any way. They simply cannot be missed; they are like the sun in the heavens. The facts are these: That the cost of administering a department is certainly not confined to £1,000. If we ask how much Ministers separately are costing the country at the present time, we find that no information is given in either House of Parliament on that important question. I do not criticise that; probably, there is something to hide, and very good reasons for hiding it.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Let us hope for the worst.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I will just give one or two facts. On page 33 of the Auditor-General's report, and on page 135 of "Hansard" for this year, it is stated that the Premier's recent visit to London cost £3,730. That is for the visit of one Minister to London on a fruitless errand.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The Premier and party.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: In the old days such visits were paid by one Minister and an attendant. Now we find the party consists of a Minister, attendants, wives, etc.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Would you separate husband and wife? (Laughter.)

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We now find the whole solar system going to London.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The cost of travelling has increased more than 100 per cent. during the last few years.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He is accompanied by a retinue like the Shah of Persia.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I do not want to be drawn off the subject by disorderly remarks. The Premier's recent visit to London cost £3,730. The Agent-General's visit to London—doubtless, he is a star of lesser magnitude—only cost £2,413, according to page 32 of the Auditor-General's report.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What did the banquets to him cost?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Hon. Mr. Fihelly's trip cost £1,800—a comparatively small amount; but the vouchers for that, apparently, are not yet forthcoming. The Hon. Mr. Huxham's trip—just a trip across the ferry to New Zealand for a few weeks—cost £413.

HON. R. BEDFORD: That is because he belongs to the same Rechabite lodge as you.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I now come to the cost of the ex-Premier's visit to London.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is he?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Hon. T. J. Ryan, M.H.R. for West Sydney.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Take Mr. Appel's record for Secretary for Mines as against the Hon. Mr. Jones's for the same trip up North. The Hon. Mr. Appel's expenses were £1,800, and the Hon. Mr. Jones's were only £80.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is a serious matter that, after all these years have passed, Queensland does not yet know the cost of Mr. Ryan's junketings in two hemispheres.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Was he travelling in two hemispheres at once?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I have no doubt he did a jazz straddle on the equator.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You can't. I have tried it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He might have had one leg in either hemisphere. At any rate, he had a good look in so far as expenses were concerned. The serious part of it is that, when questions are asked about Ministers' travelling expenses, these are the answers that are given—

"A return will be tabled."

"The information is being obtained."

"See return so-and-so"—

Of course, "return so-and-so" has nothing whatever to do with the question. Those are the answers that are given.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Premier challenged a member of the other House to move for a return covering the expenses of all Ministers; Mr. Ryan did the same; but hon. members on the other side did not want that.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: A return was asked for in this Chamber applying to all Ministers.

HON. J. G. SMITH: I said I was going to ask for it, and so I will after what you have said.

Hon. E. W. H. Fowles.]

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I am very pleased to hear the hon. member say so. It is a shameful suppression of facts—a hiding of facts from the people of Queensland—that Mr. Ryan's travelling expenses of years ago have not yet been disclosed to the people of Queensland. In "Hansard," pages 169 and 170, there is the clearest evidence of dodgery in regard to that matter.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I thought we were going to get away at 5 o'clock!

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes, we are. It is well known for whom this Bill is to be passed.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Do you know for whom it is to be passed?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I think so. I promised yesterday to give the date and particulars of "Voucher No. 2766." That voucher was for the sum of £19 16s. 8d., which was charged to "Loan Special Suspense Account," though the expenditure was incurred by the Minister who is head of the Department of Justice. The voucher reads—

"LOAN SPEC. SUSP.—DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

"£19 16s. 8d.

"To Provide Refreshments, etc., for Four, Hon. J. Mullin, M.L.A., Minister for Justice.

NEWMARKET HOTEL.			
	£	s.	d.
13th September—			
½ dozen bottles Dewar's whisky, at 14s. ...	4	4	0
½ dozen bottles Lager, 2s. 3d. ...	0	13	6
4 dozen bottles soda, 6s. ...	1	4	0
4 dozen bottles ginger ale, 6s. ...	1	4	0
50 cigars, 12s. 6d. ...	1	5	0
2 tins Capstan, 2s. 3d. ...	0	4	6
			8 14 0

J. KEIRY & SONS, BUTCHERS.

13th September—			
13 lb. steak ...	0	10	10
2 lb. fillet ...	0	3	0
2 lb. sausages ...	0	1	4
6 lb. Empire ...	0	6	0
			1 1 2

CASH PURCHASES.

Fruit ...	0	10	0
20 matches ...	0	0	10
Papers ...	0	0	4
Cards ...	0	2	6
Lemons ...	0	1	6
Cigarettes and matches ...	0	5	6
Cakes and biscuits ...	0	5	0
Cakes and biscuits ...	0	5	2
Cigars and matches ...	0	4	0
Cigars ...	0	11	0
Bread ...	0	0	7
Lager ...	0	15	0
Whisky ...	0	14	0
Papers ...	0	0	4
			3 15 9

Railway Co-operative Stores—Groceries ...			6 5 9
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Voucher 2766 ... £19 16 8"

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That voucher, or a copy of it, got into the possession of certain people in Northern Queensland, and, as a result of its publication, this letter was written to Mr. J. H. C. Sleeman—

"General Manager's Office,
"Northern Division,
"Townsville, 6th October, 1920.

"J. H. C. Sleeman, Esq.,
"Sturt street,
"Townsville.

"Dear Sir,—In this morning's issue of the 'Townsville Daily Bulletin' there appears on page 5 copy of a voucher over your name. The voucher, of which this is a copy, is the property of the Commissioner of Railways, and so far as I am aware it has never left the office.

"I demand that you advise me at once from whom you received the copy published, failing which I intend putting the matter in the hands of the police.

"Yours faithfully,
"(Signed) ARTHUR J. CROWTHER,
"General Manager."

This was Mr. Sleeman's reply to that letter—
"6th October, 1920.

"Arthur J. Crowther, Esq.,
"G.N.R.

"Dear Sir,—Yours of even date to hand. As a reasonable man, you will recognise that if I have violated any law the mere disclosure of from whom I got the information will not in any way satisfy the demands of justice. In the circumstances I must therefore submit to your consulting with the police.

"Yours faithfully,
"(Sgd.) JOHN H. C. SLEEMAN."

The matter was immediately put in the hands of the police, and soon afterwards Detective Sergeant Seymour called on Mr. Sleeman to try and trace the origin of the document, and he confirmed the statement that the document was a copy of a document stolen from the Railway Commissioner's custody. Mr. Sleeman further wrote—

"Whilst I regret that the document is a stolen one, I am pleased to have this further testimony as to its accuracy. If the lady or gentleman who sent this to me desires to assist the police in tracing this document, Detective Sergeant Seymour would be very pleased to get the information."

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: Did they go into Mr. Sleeman's history?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It is a voucher we are referring to.

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: Mr. Sleeman was in Western Australia for a long time, and they might have got some evidence as to the reputation he bore when in that State.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: On the evidence of Mr. Crowther and Detective-Sergeant Seymour it is evident that the document I have quoted is a copy of the voucher in Mr. Crowther's office.

HON. J. G. SMITH: Now you are simply dealing with thieves.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What about the arrangement to adjourn at 5 o'clock?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There was no arrangement made with me, but I can stop at once if the Minister wants to get away.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I know of no arrangement to adjourn at 5 o'clock.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: There was an arrangement to that effect made last night.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The hon. gentleman will remember that a few years ago a big hullabaloo was made over a twopenny-halfpenny rebate on Mr. Paget's cement, and that Mr. Paget was practically hounded out of his office as Secretary for Railways over that matter. Yet here we have a Minister of the Crown having the cost of refreshments for four—I presume one was the Hon. J. Mullan, and that there were three others—charged to Railway Special Suspense Account.

HON. J. G. SMITH: What should it be charged to?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: To refreshments for the Minister for Justice. The cost of those refreshments should be charged to the Minister's own department, and the voucher ought to have been laid on the table of the Council. But when this Council wants information with regard to money matters it gets none, and the country gets none. Can we get the amount paid as Ministerial expenses for the last four years? No; we cannot get any information on that subject, except what appears in the Auditor-General's report. The Government seem to have some reason for hiding these illegitimate expenses, and it is about time that the people of Queensland had an opportunity of knowing how Ministers are playing "ducks and drakes" with Treasury funds. Now the Government are asking for an additional Minister, and the very Minister who has introduced the Bill providing for the appointment of an additional Minister is the very Minister who incurred the expenses mentioned in the voucher I have quoted. Mr. Crowther tried all he reasonably could to hide the Minister's action. In other circumstances and in other Parliaments a document like that would have caused any Minister to resign, and might even have caused the Government to resign. The Indian Mutiny was caused by greased cartridges. In times past so keen was the sense of honour amongst public men that a Government would have thrown out a Minister who did such a thing as that disclosed in "Voucher No. 2766." Ministerial expenses are not divulged to the country, and this Council is vouchsafed no information with regard to them. As a matter of fact the Government take care to cover up those expenses. Is it not a shame that the late Premier's expenses are not known yet, although they were incurred two or three years ago? If this is the way the Government carry on the finances of the country with regard to their own pockets, it is no wonder that we are jazz-dancing over the precipice with regard to larger finance.

HON. J. G. SMITH: The only thing that troubles you is that you are not "getting a cut" out of it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Just one other fact; the expense of Parliament last year for Queensland—and it is proposed to add to it—and by that I mean merely Ministerial salaries and the ceteras gathering round Ministers—I do not mean the expense of departments—the expense of Parliament in Queensland last year was £55,450.

HON. R. BEDFORD: How much of that was for the useless expenditure on this useless House?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: In Victoria it was £49,443, although Victoria has more than double the population of Queensland.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Concentrated in an area about the size of a suburb of Brisbane.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Well, they spend less upon their Parliament than we do. South Australia spent only £31,826, with a population of 468,194. These are further reasons why this iniquitous Bill—which provides, by means of a party shuffle, for the salary of a ninth Minister—not a fifth wheel to the coach, but a ninth wheel—should not be proceeded with even at this late stage.

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: I trust that in any future discussion in this Chamber hon. members on the other side will at least look into the reputations of the men they quote before they base arguments upon statements made by such men.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I quoted Mr. Crowther.

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: The hon. gentleman quoted a gentleman from Western Australia named Sleeman.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I quoted Mr. Crowther; Mr. Sleeman referred to him.

HON. W. J. DUNSTAN: I would ask the Hon. Mr. Fowles to inquire into the reputation of some of these gentlemen before he makes so much use of their statements.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Mr. Sleeman's reputation has nothing to do with the voucher.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I take Mr. Crowther's word.

Question—That the Bill be now read a third time—put and passed.

The Bill was then passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly by message in the usual form.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—

"That the Council, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next."

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Council do now adjourn. The first business on Tuesday will be the second reading of the Commonwealth Powers (Air Navigation) Bill.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: By leave of the Council, I would like to make a short personal explanation.

THE PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Council that the hon. gentleman be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I promised one hon. member last week that I would give the references for certain statements that I made. I made a reference to certain strikes that had taken place in the Government sugar-mills during this last year. The hon. member will find those strikes referred to in

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volume cxxxiv. of "Hansard," pages 3241, 3242, 3243, 3249, and 3250. Full accounts are given there of those strikes. I would also refer the hon. gentleman to the report on the Government central sugar-mills for 1920, which has just come to hand. On page 2 of the report there is this sentence—

"The season in the North also brought more than the usual industrial troubles."

I feel sure that, when the hon. gentleman sees those references, he will understand that the statements I made were perfectly accurate.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I would ask the Minister if he is in possession of information with regard to the duration of the session. Several hon. members of the Council, including myself, would like to have some idea as to how long this session will last. An answer to that question might affect our movements with regard to holidays, and so on. I would like to know when Parliament is likely to adjourn, and also whether, when we do adjourn, that will be the end of the session, or whether the session is to be continued after the Christmas holidays. If the Minister can give us any information on that point without, of course, divulging Government secrets, I shall be very grateful to him.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I would like to inform the hon. gentleman that the business of the Council is largely governed by the conduct of business in the Assembly, and it is well that the Council should not sit unless we have some business to do. Frequently long discussions take place on what are usually known as formal motions, such as a motion for the printing of papers. I shall endeavour in future to have sufficient business to enable the Council to carry on sittings the full length of time, and to discuss matters in their proper time and their proper place.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I don't think the hon. gentleman understood my question. That is not what I was asking.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As the business of the Council is largely governed by the conduct of business in the Assembly, I do not know when this Council will adjourn. We will finish the business, whenever it is.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.