

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**TUESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 1920**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, 7 DECEMBER, 1920.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. W. Lennon) took the chair at half-past 4 o'clock p.m.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT.

The PRESIDENT: Hon. gentlemen—In taking my seat to-day as President of this Council, I am deeply sensible of the honour attaching to the position, and also of its duties and responsibilities. These latter, however, will be very much lightened if hon. gentlemen will be so good as to accord me their kind co-operation in my endeavour to promote the best interests and business of the Council, and to see that orderliness and decorum are characteristic of this Council, as they should be of every deliberative body. It will be my constant endeavour in any rulings I may be called upon to make to deal with the strictest impartiality and fairness, and I trust that by so doing in the course of time very cordial and happy relations may be established between hon. gentlemen and myself.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones): Mr. President, it is some time since you were appointed to the position of President of the Council, but to-day being the first day on which you have taken the chair, I desire to offer you congratulations on behalf of the Government. I desire also to offer you my personal congratulations, and I am sure I am voicing the opinion of every member of this Council when I say that I believe that your sense of fairness and justice, which characterised your occupancy of the Speaker's chair in the other branch of the Legislature, will be extended to this Chamber. I am sure the whole Council congratulate you on your appointment to the chair.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Hon. members, the Hon. Mr. Lennon has been appointed to the highest office that can be attained in this Chamber, and I was very pleased indeed to hear him say that he starts out with the intention of upholding the traditions of the office. In the past we have had a succession of hon. gentlemen in the chair who carried out the traditions of the position in the way they should be carried out. I can assure the President that, so far as this side is concerned, we will extend to him the courtesy that we have always extended to every occupant of the chair; and I feel sure, from what he has said, that we can hope that the relations between this Council and himself need be nothing but of the most amicable character. I hope that during his period of office nothing will occur to disturb the harmony that should exist between the occupant of the chair and those over whom he is supposed to preside. I hope that between us and the President relations will exist that will be to the mutual benefit of both parties.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: I desire to thank the Secretary for Mines, the representative of

the Government in this Chamber, and the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn for the very kind expressions they have uttered with regard to myself, and I hope they will not have any reason to alter those opinions in time to come.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

### PAPERS.

The PRESIDENT informed the Council that he had received from the Auditor-General his report on the accounts of the central sugar-mills under Government control, and on self-controlled central sugar-mills indebted to the Treasury, for the year ended 30th June, 1920.

Ordered to be printed.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES laid on the table the twentieth annual report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations.

Ordered to be printed.

### CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT 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 of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

### CONTROL OF AIR NAVIGATION BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is "A Bill to refer to the Parliament of the Commonwealth the control of air navigation, and for purposes connected therewith." There is very little to say regarding the Bill, which is of a non-contentious character, and I do not propose to say more than will be found in the preamble to the Bill. The Imperial authorities having urged upon the Commonwealth Government the necessity of uniform legislation in regard to international air navigation, and a common agreement having been arrived at thereon, a resolution was carried at the Premiers' Conference in May last which makes this Bill necessary to carry out that arrangement. The Bill proposes to vest in the Commonwealth Government the control and regulation of the navigation of air craft. Certain protection is required for the State of Queensland, and that protection will be found in clause 3, which reads—

"Nothing in this Act shall empower the Parliament of the Commonwealth, or any authority constituted or to be constituted under the Commonwealth, to affect or restrict the rights and powers of the State of Queensland in regard to—

(a) The acquisition or ownership by the said State of aircraft or aerodromes; or

(b) The use for the purpose of the Government of the said State of aircraft operating within the said State; or

(c) Police powers; and such rights and powers shall be retained by the said State as if this Act had not been passed."

I am sure that hon. members on both sides

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will have no objection to the Bill. If not regarded as of great importance to-day, the day is not far distant when it must be the basis of legislation that will afford proof of the wisdom of passing this measure at the present time. The Assembly having agreed to this Bill without any opposition, I do not anticipate that there will be any opposition to the measure in this Chamber, and I content myself with moving—That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: There is one provision that I should like to have seen in the Bill, but which has been omitted from it, and that is a provision to restrict the financial flights of the Government. The Bill is absolutely necessary to give power over aerial navigation to one authority, and I think it is a proper thing that the Commonwealth should have control of aerial navigation. In the first place, I think the Commonwealth are the proper authority to exercise that function, and in the next place I think our own Government have shown their inability to control aerial navigation on two or three occasions. We found that the Premier on going on his election tour started off for Chillagoe and came down at Pimpama Island, and then blamed the National party for obstructing his flight. However, I think the Federal Government is the proper authority to control this matter, and, as the Minister said, although at the present time there does not seem to be any necessity for such a measure, yet there is no doubt that at a future date aerial navigation will form a big factor, not only in warfare, but in commercial intercourse.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I take it that this Bill is the result of the International Air Committee which held their meetings in Paris in October last year. Various countries of the world signified by their signatures their adhesion to certain regulations framed by that International Committee.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: We signed, too.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes; I believe Senator Pearce represented the Commonwealth at that convention. The countries which signed the regulations were the United States of America, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, the British Empire, China, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, the Hedjaz, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State, Siam, Czecho-Slovakia, and Uruguay. Those include practically all the countries of the world except Russia and South Africa. I suppose that Russia was not represented at the convention. I have learnt that in South Africa there are huge schemes for running aeroplanes like mosquitoes all over the continent. As a result, probably, of Captain Ross Smith's trip and Lieutenant Parer's trip in the Dutch East Indies they have arranged daily tours for aerial post and passenger services. In Siam also they have an aerial post. I have the report here on the Paris and London air route up to the 30th October last for fourteen months. During that time 4,000 passengers and £200,000 worth of goods were carried. The total flights amounted to 300,000 miles. I understand that the service is absolutely reliable and regular, and there has not been a single accident on it. It is about time that the Government here got a hustle on with

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regard to aerial navigation, because Queensland is probably the best country in the world, with its clear atmosphere and big spaces, to take up aerial navigation. The official report on the New York-Chicago air service is that it is 95 per cent. perfect, and, if the commercial circles of Australia will only start aerial navigation, I believe that in a very short time we shall see mails carried to West Australia by air, and also to the Northern Territory, which will not then be as far away as the South Pole from Brisbane, but will be within twenty-four hours' journey. I look to aerial navigation to take the place of our railways so far as passengers are concerned, and I claim that the least the Government can do is to foster it in every possible way. In fact, they might offer a bonus for the improvement of aeroplane engines. As a matter of fact, there is a young man, named Friend, whose engines beat the Rolls-Royce engines. With his invention he absolutely controls 45 per cent. of the power of the petrol used. It is about time that we gave some encouragement to the brains of Australia, instead of letting them go to France and the United States of America.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Philp delegation went home crying "stinking fish" about Australia.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Where did the expert of the iron and steel works come from? Was he a Queenslander?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He came from the only steel works in Australia; the Government did not bring him from outside Australia.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I read in the "Standard" yesterday this paragraph—

"It is reported from Tokio that the Japanese Navy Department is increasing its seaplane corps from two to fifteen, comprising 286 planes and mother ships of the British model now building."

In view of the fact that the Commonwealth control the defences of Australia, it is a very wise thing to hand over the control of aerial navigation to that authority. If the Commonwealth had been founded before the States were founded, we should have had a uniform railway gauge at the present time, and we should not have to spend millions of money to make the gauge uniform. At all events, we shall have a uniform gauge in the air. The regulations which will be issued will be the most important feature under this Bill, and I have just one protest to make in this connection. In view of the fact that we are handing over everything in connection with aerial navigation to the Federal Parliament, I think members should have been supplied with a copy of the regulations, which are in print. Those regulations require every machine to carry a tail light and starboard and port lights the same as steamers. There are also some regulations dealing with low flying, pilot certificates, engineers' licenses, etc. My second ground of protest is that the local authorities have not been given any power under this Bill. I understand that 20 per cent. of the local authorities down South have offered to build aeroplane landing places for the Federal Government.

HON. W. F. FINLAYSON: Would you put that in the Local Authorities Bill?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I think the local authorities ought to have the oppor-

tunity of making landing grounds for airships.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What is there to prevent the local authorities from doing that?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Everything is to be handed over to the Federal authorities, except the controlling of State-owned aircraft or aerodromes, the use of State aircraft operating within the State, and police powers. I look to the time when passengers and mails will be carried at the rate of 70 miles per hour over places where Burke and Wills, Kennedy, and Leichhardt once painfully trod. Those who take an interest in our Constitution will have observed that there has been growing up since Federation a Cabinet of State Premiers and State Treasurers who meet in Melbourne or Sydney, very frequently at Cup time, and that those State Premiers and State Treasurers with the Prime Minister and the Treasurer of the Commonwealth settle matters for their respective States, and very often Queensland's interests go overboard. Everybody

knows that, if a man lives in [5 p.m.] Sydney, there is no other place in the Commonwealth equal to

Sydney. I have lived there myself. Everyone who has lived in Melbourne knows that there is no other place in the Commonwealth worth thinking about.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think you are wrong in your assumption, because very few resolutions have been put into effect that have been carried at the Premiers' Conferences.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: This is really an unconstitutional Cabinet of Premiers of the various States agreeing to certain things, and coming back to their Parliaments and rushing them through without the Parliament having fair time to discuss the matter. When the Premiers go down there, although they are clothed with a certain amount of nominal authority, they should not pledge the States to anything. As a matter of fact, it is quite unconstitutional. They should thrash out matters, but not pledge the States to anything. Our Premier pledged the State to hand over the State Savings Bank.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. He had to get the necessary ratification from Parliament.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He pledged the State and signed the agreement before it ever came before Parliament. There is really a dangerous precedent established by the Premiers meeting in May and pledging their Parliaments to do certain things.

HON. T. L. JONES: They do it subject to Parliamentary ratification.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There is no objection to the pledge in this case, because I understand that this legislation is introduced at the express desire of the Imperial Government. The States got a bit slow on this matter, and the Imperial Government said, "Hurry up your Parliaments and pass that Bill through, because all the other nations of the world are waiting for it." I think that, with the exception that the local authorities ought to have a little power left to them under it, this Bill is very useful and necessary, and it will, therefore, have our support.

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

## COMMITTEE.

(Hon. T. Nevitt in the chair.)

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2—"Control of air navigation referred to Commonwealth Parliament"—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He understood that, in anticipation of the State Parliaments passing the Bill, it had already passed through the Federal Parliament on 22nd November.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am not quite sure.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, and preamble, put and passed. The Council resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

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

## ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I beg to move—That the Council do now adjourn. The first business to-morrow will be the second reading of the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Act Amendment Bill.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Does that refer to the £103,000 that has been illegally expended on Chillagoe? If it does not refer to that, I have a question to ask; if it does refer to it, I need not ask any question.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. gentleman should give notice of his question, but I do not know of any £103,000 which has been illegally spent. Probably the acts of the hon. gentleman in this Council have made it necessary for us to ask for more funds to carry on operations at Chillagoe. The present Act will be broadened by this Bill, which will give us an opportunity of carrying on at Chillagoe to greater advantage than in the past, and I hope it will gain the support of the majority of members of the Council.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Auditor-General, on page 70 of his report, said that the money was illegally spent.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.