

Friday, 5th November.

The Speaker did not take the chair yesterday till a quarter past three o'clock, when there were present—The Solicitor-General, the Auditor-General, the Chairman of General Sessions, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General; Messrs Miller, Nicholson, O'Shanassy, Murphy, Fawkner, Russell, Rutledge, Anderson, and Thomson.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table a copy of correspondence relating to the appointment of Wm Swainson, Esq, as botanical surveyor for the Colony, and moved that it be printed, which was carried.

Dr THOMSON moved—

That an Address be presented to His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor, drawing His Excellency's attention to the inconvenience experienced by this House, from the absence of any responsible Officer of the Revenue Department of the Government, from the Nominee Benches, and submitting the propriety in the event of a vacancy occurring in the number of the Official Nominees, of remedying so obvious a defect in the Constitution of the House.

It was not his intention to occupy the time of the House at any length on the subject, but merely to state that much inconvenience had been experienced by himself and other Members when financial matters were under discussion. They had experienced the anomaly of having an Auditor General who undertook all kinds of work, and of having the Tariff Bill, the Customs Regulation Bill, and other commercial measures brought into the House by the Attorney General, though he believed the Attorney General was the last man in the House that hon. member would wish to consult on any question of trade. (Hear and a laugh.) The legal brigade was amply represented on the Government Benches, and he thought one of those gentlemen might be spared, and his place supplied by some representative of the revenue department.

Mr FAWKNER seconded the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought that, if on the recent occasion of an election at Geelong, the Lieutenant Governor had intimated to the electors that it would be highly inexpedient to elect any person who had been connected with the medical profession, (Laughter) a great outcry would have been raised, and the hon. mover would have been the loudest to exclaim. Doubtless such a course would have been an infringement of the rights of the electors, but he thought the present motion, was also an invasion of the prerogative of the Governor, who by the Constitutional Act was as fully empowered to appoint ten members of the Council, as were the electors of the various districts to elect the remainder. He could not see any necessity for the motion either as the Auditor General, the officer through whose hands all the accounts passed, had always had, and continued to have, a seat in the Council.

Dr. THOMSON said, it was not his wish to interfere with the prerogative of the Governor. He was merely asking as a favor, that the House might be supplied with information, which at present on many important matters they got only second hand.

The motion was then put and negatived.

Mr RUTLEDGE, in a long rambling speech, moved

That the Copies of the Correspondence relating to Allan's Ford Bridge, over the River Hopkins, laid upon the Council Table by the Colonial Secretary, on the 27th October last, be printed.

Mr FAWKNER objected that such paltry correspondence should be sent to the printer, while so many important documents remained unprinted. He would only consent to the motion on the understanding, that its object should not be carried into effect till all the other printing in the office was done.

Mr WILKINSON could see no necessity for printing the correspondence at all, as it was not intended to found any motion on it.

Mr RUTLEDGE having replied, the motion was put and carried, with the understanding stipulated for by Mr Fawkner.

Mr RUTLEDGE then moved—

That an Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, praying His Excellency will give directions that either the Postmaster or some Officer under his directions, should as occasion may seem to require, visit, inspect, and report upon, the various Post Offices of the Interior.

The honorable member said that he thought it would be obvious, not only to the House, but to the Lieutenant-Governor himself, that the present motion was necessary, for it was very well known with what great irregularity the affairs of the Post Office in the interior were conducted, and also that it was no easy matter to get efficient postmasters. It was well known that in certain portions of the western districts great irregularity existed, and if the Postmaster or an agent from the Post office were to visit these places, no very great time would be occupied. The whole of the Western District might be gone through in two months, and the Northern and Eastern Districts in four months.

Mr FAWKNER had much pleasure in seconding the motion just made. He did not know whether it was want of pay, or want of judgment in the selection of the officers in the Post office, that caused the evils which existed in that department, but great irregularities at present prevailed in it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY quite agreed with what had fallen from the two hon members who had last addressed the House. He thought that in the report of the board which sat upon the subject of the post office, and which was laid on the table of the House last session, there was a similar recommendation to that contained in the present motion. There must be an officer specially appointed to discharge this duty, as the Post Master General and the other officers at present employed had their time fully occupied.

Mr WILKINSON thought the motion unnecessary, as the subject had been under the Select Committee upon the Post Office, whose report was not yet printed.

Dr. MURPHY explained that the labors of that Committee had been confined to the Post Office at Melbourne, and the Post Offices at the Diggins.

Mr RUTLEDGE having replied, the motion was put and carried.

Mr WESTGARTH presented a petition signed by Captain Harrison, as chairman of a public meeting, held at Mount Alexander, at which 6,000 persons were said to have been present, praying the House not to pass the Gold Export Duty Bill.

The Petition was ordered to be received.

Mr. WESTGARTH had another Petition of a like tenor to present, signed by 600 persons at Bendigo, but owing to some informality in its form, he withdrew it for the present.

The House then went into Committee on the Passengers' Bill, and some of its clauses having been considered, the House resumed, and the further consideration of the Bill was fixed for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 5 o'clock.