

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 2 JULY 1912**

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Mr. BOOKER: The gentleman whom I have the pleasure to nominate is a man of culture and of the highest integrity; his conduct in the chair has been courteous to hon. members on both sides of the House and helpful to hon. members who needed help, and his decisions were absolutely impartial.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition laughter.

Mr. BOOKER: These qualifications peculiarly fit the hon. member for Lockyer to be the Speaker of this Assembly, and I now formally move that Mr. William Drayton Armstrong do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): I have much pleasure in seconding the proposition so ably, so clearly, and so shortly put before the House by the hon. member for Wide Bay. Of Mr. Armstrong's fitness for the office of Speaker the House has had some experience. By long service, by education, by experience, and by his knowledge of the Standing Orders he is well qualified to fill the position for which he has been nominated, and I am quite sure that during the session he will be as courteous to members as he has been in the past, and as kindly sympathetic with those members who now sit in the House for the first time as he showed himself to be in the last Parliament. I have always respected his decisions as Speaker. Only on one occasion did I vote—

Mr. BARBER: Only one? (Laughter.)

Mr. WHITE: Only on one occasion did I vote against the decision of Mr. Armstrong as Speaker, and that vote I sincerely regretted; not because I thought I was wrong, but because I am quite sure that the Speaker gave his decision according to the Standing Orders, and it is by the Standing Orders that the procedure of this House is governed. I have very little more to say in support of the proposition submitted by the hon. member for Wide Bay. We do not want to take up the time of the House in discussing this matter. Mr. Armstrong possesses the qualities necessary in a Speaker; his impartial decisions I respect, even when they are against me, and I believe that those impartial decisions commend themselves to all parties in the House.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I have much pleasure in proposing that Mr. James Forsyth do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARDACRE: Mr. Forsyth is one of the oldest and most respected members of the House; he has a good knowledge of the Standing Orders and of the practice and procedure of Parliament, which will enable him to give just decisions. From what we know of Mr. Forsyth we may feel sure that no matter what his political opinions may be, he will give just and impartial decisions in the chair—decisions which will be fair to both sides of the House. The hon. member is well fitted by his general ability, his intelligence, and his character for the highest position of honour and dignity that this House can confer, and for those reasons I have much pleasure in moving that Mr. James Forsyth do take the chair of the House as Speaker.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): The proposal of the hon. member for Leichhardt

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 2 JULY, 1912.

### MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House met at 12 o'clock this day, pursuant to proclamation, and shortly afterwards proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber for the purpose of hearing the Commission summoning Parliament read.

On its return,

The CLERK read a Commission, under the hand of His Excellency the Governor, authorising the Honourable D. F. Denham, the Honourable W. H. Barnes, and the Honourable J. G. Appel to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to members elect.

The CLERK having read the list of members elected, as endorsed on the writs which had been returned, the members present took the oath or affirmation of allegiance and subscribed the roll.

The members absent were—Hon. J. W. Blair (*Ipswich*), Mr. Bouchard (*South Brisbane*), Mr. Fox (*Normanby*), Hon. R. Philp (*Townsville*), and Lieut.-Colonel Rankin (*Burrum*).

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

Mr. BOOKER (*Wide Bay*): Mr. a'Court,—I have very great pleasure in nominating Mr. William Drayton Armstrong, member for Lockyer, as Speaker of this House. In submitting this nomination I have every confidence in the judgment of hon. members who sat in the last Parliament, as I am quite certain that they are with me when I say Mr. Armstrong filled the position of Speaker with credit to himself and honour to the Assembly.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition laughter.

[*Hon. Sir A. Morgan.*]

has come upon me as a surprise, as I had not the slightest idea that my friend had any intention of proposing me for the position of Speaker of this House. While I thank the hon. member very much for the very kind expressions which he has used with regard to myself, I have to say that I could not accept the position, even if the House gave me a majority in this election. I therefore hope that the hon. member will not press the nomination; I could not accept the position.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. THEODORE (*Chillagoe*): I regret that Mr. Forsyth has declined nomination for the office of Speaker. I feel sure that had he allowed his name to be submitted he would have been elected by a substantial majority in preference to the gentleman who has been nominated for the position. However, as the hon. member has declined nomination, I beg to move that the words "William Drayton Armstrong" in the nomination be omitted with the view of inserting the words "John White." (Laughter.) Mr. White has certain qualifications which fit him for this position; in fact, infinitely more qualifications than are possessed by the gentleman nominated by the hon. member for Wide Bay. In a matter of this sort we should as far as possible sink party considerations. We understood last session that the Standing Orders were amended with regard to the procedure in connection with the election of Speaker in order to enable members to sink party differences as much as possible when dealing with that matter. I think this party-speaking personally, anyhow, I have the greatest desire that party influences and prejudices should be eliminated as far as the election of Speaker is concerned. For that reason I desire to see elected a member who has a good claim to the position, by reason of his acquaintance with the Standing Orders, and is temperamentally fitted to fill the position. Therefore, I have much pleasure in nominating Mr. John White.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): I sincerely thank the hon. member for (chillagoe) for the very nice way in which he has put my name before the hon. members in nominating me for the highest position that can be offered to a member; but I sincerely regret that my business connections will not permit me to accept the position so kindly offered by the other side.

Mr. BARBER: Don't blush, John; don't blush!

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): As both the members on the other side who have been nominated by this side have refused to accept nomination, it devolves upon us to make another nomination. Last year, when the Standing Orders were altered so as to allow the Speaker to be elected by exhaustive ballot, it was thought that party considerations would be eliminated; but it is quite evident now that party feeling has not been obliterated. It is evident that the gentlemen nominated on the other side are not free to accept the position.

Mr. FORSYTH: Absolutely not true as far as I am concerned.

Mr. HAMILTON: I can endorse the hon. member's statement that he was not communicated with previously. He was not approached on the subject; and had there been any intention on the other side of not making

it a party matter, perhaps things would have been different; but as it has been deemed necessary on the other side to make it a party question, and as the Government have made it a party question, I have much pleasure in submitting the name of Mr. Herbert Freemont Hardacre, member for Leichhardt. Mr. Hardacre is one of the oldest members of the House. I am sure he has the good will of every member in the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAMILTON: And I am certain from his knowledge of the Standing Orders, from his capacity, his temperament, and in every other respect, he is eminently fitted to occupy the position of Speaker of this Assembly. We want to show that we do not approach the matter from a party point of view; and we would have been willing to accept a second nomination from the other side; but the hands of members on the other side are tied—(Government laughter)—and those nominated by us are not allowed to accept the nomination; therefore we have to nominate a member on this side. Though the other side are bound and shackled, we are not—(renewed Government laughter)—and I have much pleasure in nominating Mr. Herbert Freemont Hardacre for the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Mr. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): I have very much pleasure in seconding the nomination of Mr. Hardacre as Speaker of this Assembly. I deeply regret, however, that the election of Speaker has been forced into the channel of party proceedings. I had hoped, and I think it was the desire of our party, that the election of Speaker under the new Standing Orders would have had no semblance of party spirit, but that an attempt would have been made to appoint the best and most capable member to occupy the position—one with suitable temperament and qualifications, who would give to the Assembly impartial treatment. I have nothing to say against Mr. Armstrong outside his position as Speaker. We are not dealing with him in his private capacity. His courtesy nobody questions; but impartiality was not a marked feature of his actions in the chair during last Parliament.

Mr. BOOKER: Oh, yes!

Mr. HUNTER: For that reason it is regrettable that the Government should force the House to accept a gentleman of that description. The gentleman who nominated Mr. Armstrong says it is not so. What better evidence could you get that it is a purely party matter than the fact that two nominations of Government supporters have been made by members on this side and both have been declined?

Mr. FORSYTH: It is absolutely untrue all the same.

Mr. HUNTER: What has happened? At a caucus of the Government party it was decided to stand by the Speaker appointed last session, and neither the hon. member for Musgrave nor the hon. member for Murrumbidgee dared to accept nomination. Members opposite are bound hand and foot. (Government laughter.) The party stand pledged to the late Speaker, no matter how he treated this Assembly last session; and it is the business of the party in opposition to try and get the fairest and most just man they can for the position, because they

*Mr. Hunter.*]

suffer more than any other party when there is a partial Speaker in the chair. While I have much pleasure in supporting the nomination of Mr. Hardacre, I regret that we have been driven to take up this position on account of the Government having made the election of Speaker a party matter.

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*): When the Standing Orders were being considered some time ago, I think I pointed out to the House that the mere fact of having a secret ballot would not alter to any great extent the election of Speaker. I said that the party which won the election—whether it was the Liberal party or the Labour party—would select a Speaker from their own side; and to-day we find that the Government party has selected the gentleman who was Speaker in the last Parliament for the position during this Parliament. And we know perfectly well, though we are proposing to go to a secret ballot on the question, when the numbers go up Mr. Armstrong will be elected. And if the Labour party had won the election, Mr. Hardacre would probably have been the chosen one. From my knowledge of Mr. Hardacre, I think he would fill the position of Speaker very creditably. I said that when he was proposed for the position last Parliament, and I voted for him; and having voted for Mr. Hardacre on that occasion, believing him to be a good man for the position, I intend to vote for Mr. Hardacre to-day. All the same, as far as Mr. Armstrong is concerned—

Mr. WHITE: Is that what your caucus decided?

Mr. MURPHY: Yes. (Laughter.) I may tell you that there was a caucus of the Independent party.

Mr. HUNTER: There is no split in your party. (Laughter.)

Mr. MURPHY: No. I survived the ordeal, but some of my colleagues at the last election did not survive the ordeal. In every battle there have to be some casualties: and some of the members of the Labour party, as well as members of the Independent party—including, I am sorry to say, my friend John Mann—were beaten. But when you go to the country everybody who contests a seat is not going to get elected. It was a hundred to one against me when I went into the Burke. (Laughter.) But I survived the ordeal, and I am here. I just want to say that, so far as Mr. Armstrong is concerned—although I suppose I came into conflict with that gentleman as much as anybody in the House—that last Parliament the hon. gentleman, I think, behaved very creditably in the position.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: Yes, I think we are entitled to give credit where credit is due. I know this: that the hon. gentleman gave a decision in connection with the Invieta Railway Bill, in which he went against the Government. He pointed out that it was a private Bill, and stuck to his guns.

Mr. HAMILTON: That did not matter to the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, the Government forces rallied up, and they altered the decision of the Speaker. I say that last session Mr. Armstrong carried out the duties of Speaker in a very creditable way.

Mr. WHITE: Why not vote for him?

[*Mr. Hunter.*]

Mr. MURPHY: No, because party government comes in. (Laughter.) I am sitting on the Opposition side of the House, and a gentleman is nominated from the Opposition side, and as one who is sitting in opposition I think it is my duty to vote for the Opposition candidate. But I can tell the Opposition candidate that he is going to get badly beaten. (Laughter.)

Mr. HUNTER: You were not at the caucus, were you?

Mr. MURPHY: No, I was not at the caucus, and I was not at the hon. gentleman's caucus either; I was at a caucus of my own. (Laughter.) We might just as well realise that it would probably be better for Queensland and for Australia if party government was wiped out altogether—

“When none were for a party,  
But all were for the State.”

Then possibly we might be able to select the best man in the House for the Speakership. It might not be the gift of any particular party, it might be the gift of the members of the House selecting the man most fitted for the position.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: How can it be done?

Mr. MURPHY: It can be done. You will find after this vote has been taken, that it is the man who has been nominated from the side of the big battalions who is going to get elected.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: It will not be the best man.

Mr. MURPHY: It may not be the best man, but under the system of party government the man whom that party selects is going to be appointed. I pointed out while we were considering those Standing Orders that the very position which has arisen to-day could not be avoided, although we were going to so much trouble to alter the Standing Orders.

At 1.15 p.m.,

The CLERK said: If no other hon. member wishes to speak, I shall now put the question—“That Mr. William Drayton Armstrong do take the chair of the House as Speaker.” As hon. members take the ballot-papers they will notice that a cross has to be made against the name of the member for whom they wish to vote.

The division bell was then rung for two minutes, the bar was closed, and each member advanced to the table and placed his vote in the ballot-box.

At 1.22 p.m.,

The CLERK asked if all hon. members had returned their ballot-papers?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

The CLERK thereupon opened the ballot-box, and having counted the votes, with the aid of the Clerk Assistant (Mr. C. A. Bernays), said the voting was—

Mr. ARMSTRONG ... 41

Mr. HARDACRE ... 24

He therefore declared Mr. Armstrong duly elected, amid Government cheers.

Mr. HUNTER: Have you counted the absent votes?

HON. W. D. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*), speaking from his place, then said: Mr. a'Court,—I wish to thank the proposer and seconder of my nomination for the Speakership of the House for their kind expressions towards myself, and I also thank hon. members for the way in which they have supported my nomination. I am not unacquainted with the duties of the position. I am conscious also that I possess imperfections, but, hon. members, I will do my best. I now beg to submit myself to the pleasure of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER-ELECT was then conducted to the chair by Mr. Booker and Mr. White.

The SPEAKER, speaking from the dais, then said: I wish to thank hon. members for having elected me to the high, responsible, and honourable position of Speaker of this House. To the utmost of my ability I shall endeavour to discharge the duties of the office with strict impartiality, and I ask hon. members to give me that generous assistance necessary to maintain the high tradition established by my predecessors and which surrounds the Speakership of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: (Hon. J. Tolmie, *Toowoomba*): I am delighted to have the opportunity of congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on the high dignity which has been conferred upon you. Twelve months ago you expressed your pleasure at having been selected as Speaker of this House. That pleasure must be greatly accentuated to-day, when, after twelve months' experience of your administration of the affairs of this House, hon. members have again seen fit to elect you to the high position then conferred upon you. My long association with you, dating back from my childhood, leads me to believe that, as in the past, so in the future, your conduct in the chair will be such as to win the approval of this House by the impartiality of your dealings with it, and by the courtesy and consideration which you have always shown to hon. members; and I have no doubt that your courtesy and consideration to hon. members will win the approval and approbation of the country. I have very much pleasure indeed in congratulating you and the Chamber upon your election to the high office of Speaker.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): I have to announce to the House that I have ascertained from His Excellency that he will be pleased to receive the Speaker-elect in the Council Chamber, Executive Buildings, at 11.40 a.m. to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn till 11.30 a.m. to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at thirty-five minutes past 1 o'clock.