

candidate for whom any voter in such station is about to vote or has voted, or as to the number on the back of the ballot paper given to any voter at such station. Every officer, clerk, and agent in attendance at the counting of the votes shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting, and shall not attempt to ascertain at such counting the number on the back of any ballot paper, or communicate any information obtained at such counting as to the candidate for whom any vote is given in any particular ballot paper. No person shall directly or indirectly induce any voter to display his ballot paper after he shall have marked the same, so as to make known to any person the name of the candidate for or against whom he has so marked his vote. Every person who acts in contravention of the provisions of this section shall be liable, on summary conviction before two or more Justices of the Peace, to imprisonment for any term not exceeding six months, with or without hard labor."

Agreed to.

MR. STEERE further moved, That the following new clause be added and stand as section 25: "In case any candidate at any election shall fail to receive a number of votes equal at least to one-fifth part of the votes received by the successful candidate if only one, or by such one of the successful candidates, if there shall be more than one, as shall have received the smallest number of votes, the said sum of twenty-five pounds deposited by such candidate in the hands of the returning officer in pursuance of the provisions of the 4th section of this Act, shall be forfeited by such candidate, and shall forthwith be paid by the returning officer to the Colonial Treasurer, for the general purposes of the Colony. And after every election, the returning officer shall pay to any successful candidate, and to any unsuccessful candidate who shall so have received a number of votes equal at least to one-fifth part as aforesaid, the sum of twenty-five pounds deposited by him as aforesaid."

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at a quarter to eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 2nd August, 1877.

Amendment of Education Act—Pawnbrokers' Ordinance, 1860, Amendment Bill, 1877: second reading; in committee—Confirmation of Expenditure: report of select committee; Bill committed.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, asked the Acting Colonial Secretary, When the Government intend to introduce a Bill to amend the Elementary Education Act?

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy): As soon as it is ready.

MR. STEERE: That's not an answer to my question. The Bill may not be ready a year hence.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy): I am unable to see how it can be said that my reply is no answer to the hon member's question. He asked me when the Government intend introducing the Bill, and I informed him that we intend doing so as soon as it is ready.

MR. STEERE: I maintain that's no answer at all. I appeal to you, sir, (the Speaker) whether that is such a reply as a member of this House is entitled to receive from a member of the Government.

MR. SPEAKER: I take it that, so far, it is an answer; you ask when the Government will introduce the Bill, and they reply "as soon as it is ready." I suppose it may be in the printer's hands.

MR. STEERE, with leave, gave notice, That on the following day he would ask the Government whether they intend to introduce the Bill this session.

PAWNBROKERS' ORDINANCE, 1860, AMENDMENT BILL, 1877.

MR. PEARSE moved, The second reading of a Bill to amend the Pawnbrokers' Ordinance, 1860. The honorable member, in giving his reasons for introducing such a Bill, stated that he had received a letter from three pawnbrokers

—Messrs. Davies, Henderson, and Greaves—stating that nine-tenths of the articles pawned were of a textile, and consequently of a perishable, nature. They, therefore, requested that the period of redemption of articles, unless under special arrangement, should be limited to three months. After consultation with the Attorney General he had brought in the present Bill, embodying such a provision, and he hoped the House would take the matter into consideration.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and passed through committee without amendment or discussion.

CONFIRMATION OF EXPENDITURE— REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. STEERE, pursuant to notice, moved, That the House do now proceed with the consideration of the following report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the over-expenditure for the year 1876, beyond the grant for that year:

“The committee appointed by your honorable Council to inquire into the various items of expenditure in excess of the sums voted by the Legislature for the year 1876, have to report to the House as follows:—

Your committee are of opinion that with respect to the greater number of items of expenditure in excess of the amount voted it will not be necessary for them to make any observations, as they are explained by the Comparative Statement of Expenditure which has been placed in the hands of the honorable members, and they are more particularly set forth in a paper containing an Abstract of the Receipts and Expenditure for 1876, which is attached to this report, and which the committee think should be placed upon the table at the commencement of each session. This paper contains a full statement of the expenses incurred in the Colony for each department of the public service, but it does not include articles purchased by the Crown Agents for the various departments, which latter would have to be added to give the total cost under each item of expenditure.

One cause of the excess of expenditure has undoubtedly been in estimating it at

too low a figure. In five items alone—Justice, Medical, Gaols, Rottnest and Poor House—the total expenditure incurred in 1875 was £27,099, whereas the estimate for the same services in 1876 was only £23,497, and the actual expenditure was £31,602. Under some of the headings above enumerated, it must have been apparent that an increased expenditure would probably be required, as actually was the case; and this has, in some measure, led to so large a sum now being required to meet the deficiency.

The expenditure in connection with the Medical Department, and with Gaols, Poor House, and Rottnest, has increased in a manner that is becoming most serious, and the committee are impressed with the opinion that the services in connection with these departments are not administered as economically as they ought to be. The increased cost of provisions for persons in hospitals, gaols, and poor houses, is the explanation that has been given to account for this excessive expenditure, but the committee think that that fact is not sufficient of itself satisfactorily to explain the sums expended. The cost of each prisoner in 1875 was £39, whereas in 1876 it amounted to £48 per head, which appears a large addition in one year. Again, the daily average number of patients in hospitals has been less in 1876 than in 1875, whilst the cost of provisions and contingencies has increased. The committee are of opinion that the time at their disposal during the session of the Legislature is not sufficient to enable them to make such an inquiry into the departments before mentioned as is required, and they recommend that an humble address should be presented to His Excellency the Governor, requesting him to appoint a commission, to be empowered to make an investigation into the administration of these departments, and of such others as His Excellency may deem expedient. The committee do not wish to trench upon the right of His Excellency to appoint such person or persons as he may think fit upon such commission, but at the same time they think it right to suggest that at any rate one person experienced in finance should be appointed upon it.

It has been brought under the notice of the committee, that a great portion of

the clothing required for gaols and poor houses is purchased by the Crown Agents from a charitable institution in London, at prices exceeding what the necessary articles could be procured for in this Colony; and the committee are of opinion that whenever a saving could be effected thereby, public tenders should be invited in the Colony for such articles as may be required for the public service.

The committee have refrained from making any reference to the Police department, as negotiations are now pending with the Home Government in respect to it; but the House will doubtless soon have to take into its serious consideration the propriety of re-organizing the Police Force, the cost of which now forms so large an item in the total expenditure."

MR. STEERE, in moving the adoption of the foregoing report, said he did not think it was necessary for him to add a word in explanation: the report itself contained all the information which the committee were able to furnish the House, as the result of their investigations. The paper alluded to as being attached to the report could not be printed in time to accompany the report, but it had been laid on the table, and hon. members had been afforded an opportunity of perusing it. He hoped that, in future sessions, a similar paper would be placed on the table of the House with other documents usually laid there at the commencement of the session, as it would be of great assistance to hon. members desirous of acquainting themselves with the question of public expenditure.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) explained that the increase under the heading of "Gaols," commented upon in the report, was occasioned by the augmentation in the number of prisoners which had now to be maintained by the Local Government. Up to the year 1875 the Colonial prisoners were supported in the Imperial Convict Establishment at a cost of, he thought, 1s. 11d. per diem, per head, which was a very low rate. This was altogether independent of the cost of their supervision. In 1875 instructions were received from the Imperial Government that colonial prisoners were no longer to be maintained in the Imperial establishment, and the Local Government were therefore compelled to form a

separate establishment in Perth, provided with the requisite bedding, furniture, and other appointments, and the necessary staff of officers. This, of course entailed a considerable increase of expenditure, and accounted for the excess under the head of "Gaols," the change not having been anticipated when the Estimates were framed. The cost of rations alone was a very heavy item as compared with the previous expenditure on that account.

MR. MARMION asked to whom these rations were issued.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) said they were issued to the gaoler, who was responsible to the head of the department—the Sheriff.

MR. PADBURY gathered from the report that the cost of supervision alone was more than double the cost of the prisoners' maintenance. This was a significant fact, which ought to be looked to.

Report adopted.

CONFIRMATION OF EXPENDITURE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

This Bill was agreed to without discussion.

The House adjourned at a quarter to one o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 3rd August, 1877.

Coal seam on the Upper Irwin—Dongarra Jetty—First readings—Education Act: amendment of—Third readings—Ballot Bill: further considered in committee.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

COAL SEAM ON THE UPPER IRWIN.

MR. CROWTHER, in committee, moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he will be pleased to place a