

Roman Catholic Bishop and himself, the Governor desires to take the sense of the House on the claim advanced, on behalf of the inmates of orphanages, to medical attendance and medicines at the public expense.

Government House, Perth, 14th December, 1875.

RAILWAY FROM GUILDFORD TO EASTERN DISTRICTS.

Mr. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, asked the Surveyor General whether he would place on the Table of the House all the papers and plans in connection with the preliminary survey made by Mr. Major for a railway from Guildford to the eastern districts.

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Hon. M. Fraser) laid on the table the papers and plans asked for.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. STEERE, as an amendment, moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

After some debate, which indicated that the amendment was generally supported,

Amendment put, "that the Bill be read a second time this day six months," upon which a division was called for, the result being as follows:—

Ayes15

Noes 3

Majority for12

Ayes.

Mr. Crowther

Mr. Randell

Mr. Gale

Mr. Hamersley

Mr. Padbury

Mr. Monger

Mr. T. Burges

Mr. Shenton

Mr. Burt

Mr. Pearce

Mr. Glyde

Mr. Brown

Mr. W. Burges

Mr. Marmion

Mr. Steere (Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Noes.

The Hon. M. Fraser

The Hon. H. H. Hocking

The Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy (Teller.)

CREWS OF COASTING VESSELS DISCIPLINE BILL.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking) moved the second reading of the Bill. He said that it was a mere transcript of the Merchant Shipping Act and provides that crews of coasting craft shall be similarly dealt with as the crews of merchantmen, subject to certain specified conditions.

The Bill was read a second time.

In Committee.

After some discussion,

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment.

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bill was read a third time and passed, on motion by the Attorney General (Hon. H. H. Hocking): Protection of Witnesses Bill.

The following Bill was read a third time and passed, on motion by the Acting Colonial Secretary (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy): Colonial Passengers' Ordinance, 1861, Amendment Bill.

The Council adjourned at 2.30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 15th December, 1875.

Financial Statement: in committee—Importation of Cattle, Sheep, and Pigs—Harvest Returns—Supreme Court Expenses—Dog Licenses—Law and Parliamentary Library: in committee—Church Organs, Refund of Duty: in committee—Fremantle Lodge of Freemasons Bill: first reading and select committee—Bestardy Laws Bill: third reading.

The ACTING SPEAKER took the Chair at 7 p.m.

PRAYERS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

In Committee.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) said that in submitting this his first statement to the House he must crave the indulgence of hon. members.

He would endeavor to occupy their time as shortly as possible, consistently with making the real position of the finances of the colony and all the circumstances connected therewith, as clear as possible to the minds of hon. members, and to the country at large. He would first of all deal with the exports and imports, and enter into a comparative statement with regard to some of the principal items. Commencing with sandalwood, he might state that the exports under this head during the year 1874, ending 30th September, amounted to 6,692 tons; during the following year we exported 7,057 tons, showing a slight increase. With regard to those important items of export pearls and pearl-shells, the total value of exports under this head in 1874 was £65,000; during the current year it reached £78,000. There was also an appreciable increase in our mineral exports; in 1874 they amounted to 2,206 tons; during the year ending 30th September, 1875, they reached 2,439 tons, including lead and copper. In the item of timber there was a still more satisfactory increase; last year (1874) we exported 4,834 loads, valued at £18,435, whereas during the current year (1875) the exports under this head reached 6,244 loads, of the estimated value of £24,723. Turning to wool, which he looked upon as one of our most important industries, one upon which much of the future of the colony depended, affording as it did a valuable source of profit from land unfit for agricultural purposes, he was sorry to say that a comparative statement of our wool exports during the two years under review showed a slight decrease in the latter year. In 1874, we exported 2,719,000 lbs. of wool, of the estimated value of £215,624; during the year ending 30th September last our exports only reached 2,387,196 lbs, valued at £179,039. The returns from the northern district, however, had not yet been received; when they came to hand the discrepancy would not be so great. There was a diminution in the total value of both exports and imports during the past year as compared with 1874; our exports in the latter year were valued at £399,000, whereas during the year ended 30th September last the total exports (produce of the colony) were estimated at £388,450. Our imports during the first-named year reached £364,162; in 1875 they were valued at £349,840. On the whole, then, it would be seen there was a slight decrease in the value of the imports and exports for the year ending 30th September last as compared with the preceding year; but there was good reason to believe that the depression—traceable, as regards imports, to some previous undue importation—was merely a transitory one. With regard to our

exports, they must necessarily fluctuate in value, and our purchasing powers must be affected accordingly; and he thought it was a matter for the grave consideration of the House whether, in view of the question of ways and means, it would be a wise and prudent policy to confine our expenditure within legitimate means. Any material depreciation in the value of our staple products, say pearl-shells or wool, must tell upon the purchasing power of the colony, and he thought it would be wise policy not to over-estimate that power. Turning to the revenue and expenditure, he was happy to state that the financial condition of the colony was satisfactory and flourishing. The revenue of 1874, exclusive of the Imperial grant-in-aid, amounted to £104,225, and exceeded the estimate by £33,545; Customs and land revenue having contributed to the improvement. The receipts from Customs in 1873 were £69,329; last year they reached £87,275. Land sales in the first-named year yielded £2,995, whereas in 1874 the revenue derived from this source amounted to £7,679. Independent of land sales there was likewise a very considerable increase in the revenue derived from Crown lands during the last 12 months; the receipts from this source being larger than for any corresponding period since the foundation of the colony. The total amount received was, £19,806,—showing that the progress of settlement has been satisfactory. The gross revenue from all sources during the year 1873 was £120,724; in 1874 the total receipts reached £134,235. The present year commenced with an available balance to the credit of the colony of £38,000. The actual receipts for the nine months ended 30th September last amounted to £114,000; adding to this the probable receipts for the current quarter, (£38,000)—based upon the revenue of previous quarters—the total revenue for this year will be £152,000, which sum, added to the available balance at the commencement of the year, will make the total assets about £190,000. After deducting the actual and estimated expenditure for the same period (£151,000), we shall commence the ensuing year with a balance to our credit fully as large as that available at the beginning of the present year, notwithstanding an outlay of £15,000 on account of the Eucla telegraph, and the vote for immigration (£7,000),—both charged against the current revenue. With regard to the proposed expenditure for the coming year, there was an unexpended balance of £700 remaining available from the loan of 1872; this sum it was proposed to expend in carrying out one of the works contemplated in the scheme to carry out which that loan was raised, namely, the navigation of the river

Swan. Of the loan of 1873, for railway and telegraph construction at Champion Bay, a balance of £14,600 remained still unfloated, the money not having been required, and the interest thereon being thereby saved. It was proposed to raise the balance, when required, by sale of debentures. What further sum might be found necessary on account of the railway at the north must depend on the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the condition of the works. With reference to the Eucla telegraph, he was pleased to be able to state that the work was progressing most satisfactorily, and a sum of £18,000 had been placed on the Estimates for next year to complete it, being £3,000 more than the vote for the present year. The immigration vote for 1875 was, as hon. members were aware, £10,000, and the House was already in possession of full information on the manner in which the vote had been expended. The accretion to our population resulting from this expenditure was about 500 statute adults, at a cost of about £18 each. The attempt to introduce coolie labor had, he was sorry to say, resulted in almost an utter failure; only 16 coolies had been introduced into the colony. In view of the continued scarcity of labor, and of the ready manner in which the recent arrivals had been absorbed into the labor market, a further sum of £7,000 had been placed on the Estimates for immigration purposes for the ensuing year. No hon. member, he apprehended, would object to that vote, for, without an accretion to our population, the colony must remain at a standstill. When the immigration vote came to be considered in Committee, he would be prepared to submit for the affirmation of the Council a plan for giving satisfactory effect to the vote. For some time past the question of the erection of public school-houses had occupied and agitated the public mind, and it had been contended that if the Government rendered education compulsory they must provide accommodation for the increased number of scholars which would result from the enforcement of the compulsory clause. On the other hand, it was maintained by some that the public should contribute a moiety of the amount required for school-building purposes, and that the whole expense should not devolve upon the Government. The solution of the question could be no longer delayed; there was a pressing want of increased school accommodation felt in many districts of the colony, and especially in Perth and Fremantle, and no further time should be lost in providing such increased accommodation. To delay it any longer would be to perpetuate a grievance under which teachers

already labored; their salaries now depended upon results, and upon the number of scholars attending the school, and if pupils could not be admitted for want of accommodation, the stipends of the teachers must suffer accordingly. The Central Board of Education had expressed an opinion that the erection and enlargement of public school-buildings should be undertaken and carried out by the Government, and the cost defrayed out of the general revenue. Papers in connection with this subject would be laid on the Table of the House with the Estimates, and it would be for hon. members to decide whether a sum of money should be voted for the purpose. Intimately connected with this question was the subject of higher education. A sum of £800 had been placed on the Estimates to carry out the contemplated scheme. A vote of £100 would be asked for sericultural purposes—an industry which he was pleased to find there was every prospect of being satisfactorily developed. Hon. members were aware that the Government had already devoted some attention to the subject, and the mulberry plantation at Claisebrook had recently been placed under the supervision of an experienced sericulturist, who would afford every information to parties desirous of embarking in an industry that sooner or later must add materially to the resources of the colony. Samples of cocoons and of the grain had been sent abroad and were spoken of very highly by professional sericulturists. Proceeding with the Estimates for the ensuing years, he might here mention that the total amount of probable expenditure was set down at £171,000, as against £156,596 for the current year, the surplus being principally made up of the following items:—the increased vote for the Eucla Telegraph which was £3,000 in excess of last year's grant; the sum of £2,000 beyond the grant voted for 1875 for roads and bridges—an item which he was sure would meet with no opposition. Under the head of gaols there would be an estimated increase of £1,500, necessitated by the transfer of colonial prisoners from the Imperial establishment to the charge and maintenance of the local Government. There was also an additional sum of £1,000 under the head of police, it being found absolutely necessary in order to maintain the efficiency of the service. With the increased rates of wages obtaining throughout the colony, and the increased price of various articles of daily consumption, it was found impossible to obtain the services of efficient men for the police service, unless the pay was improved in accordance with the general advance made in wages. A sum of about £2,500 over and above the grant for this

year would also be asked for for the postal and telegraph department, mainly for the conveyance of mails throughout the colony and between England and the colony. An additional vote of £2,000 would be asked for the Survey Department, the satisfactory progress of settlement—evidenced by the fact that the revenue derived from Crown lands during the last 12 months was the largest ever collected in the colony, exceeding, as it did, the estimate, by 50 per cent,—entailed a corresponding increase of labor in the Land and Survey Department; which would be still further increased when the proposed additional Land Regulations came into operation. The educational vote for the ensuing year was about £1,800 in excess of the vote granted for the same purpose last year. A sum of £500 had been placed on the Estimates for the purchase of rifles for Perth Volunteers, and there were some other slightly increased items of expenditure which would be fully explained when the House went into Committee on the Estimates. But he was happy to be able to add that no increased taxation would be necessary to meet the unavoidable additional expenditure. There would be no attempt on the part of the Government to alter the present system of taxation, or to impose additional burdens upon the taxpayers, notwithstanding, as he said before, an outlay of £25,000 on account of the Eucla telegraph and immigration, charged against current revenue. The Estimates had been framed upon principles of the strictest economy, consistent with the maintenance of the efficiency of the Public Service; he therefore relied on the readiness of the House to grant such supplies as might be necessary for that purpose and for the purpose of maintaining the public credit of the colony. Before moving the first item on the Estimates, he would place on the table the following papers, which he commended to the consideration of the House:—correspondence from Colonel Harvest relative to the Volunteer Corps; correspondence relative to contributions from the citizens of Perth towards the enlargement of the Government Girls' and Infants' school; and a despatch from the Secretary of State recommending further recognition of the services of Mr. John Forrest. The hon. gentleman concluded his financial statement by moving the first item on the Estimates for the ensuing year:—Establishment of His Excellency the Governor, £254 9s. 2d.

Mr. STEERE said the financial statement just made must, on the whole, be satisfactory to hon. members, and he congratulated the country on the continued flourishing conditions of the revenue. With regard to the

increased expenditure contemplated he, of course, could not say whether the various items were such as would receive the approval of the House until they were in possession of further details regarding them. With regard to our exports, he might incidentally observe that it appeared to him of the utmost importance to the colony that our returns of exports should be as complete and comprehensible as possible. At present the export returns of our principal exports were totally unreliable, and especially was this the case with wool. The decrease in the quantity passed through the Customs House for exportation of the staple product was apparently enormous, and must at once have struck the ordinary observer with wonder. But he believed that much of this apparent discrepancy between the returns of last year, and those of the preceding year, arose from the fact that not sufficient care and trouble had been taken to ascertain the precise weight of the wool, and to distinguish the greasy from the clean. With regard to the proposed expenditure of another sum of £18,000 on the Eucla telegraph line, he considered it a great misfortune that that work had ever been undertaken out of the current revenue, instead of by means of a public loan. The colony had been much crippled thereby with regard to other equally necessary works of local importance. He was glad to find that it was proposed to continue to vote for immigration, but he thought that the sum intended to be expended (£7,000) was barely adequate for the purpose. Immigration was still the great want of the colony, and every effort should be made to keep up a continuous stream. He observed from the papers presented to the House on this subject that no provision had been made for securing the services of an emigration agent at Home. He had come to the conclusion that without someone in England to look up intending emigrants we should never get any very large number. When the vote came to be further considered, he hoped that some steps would be taken to obtain the services of somebody to represent the colony as emigration agent; he should himself be prepared to offer a suggestion on the subject. With reference to the question of the erection of public schools solely out of public funds, he did not wish to say much at present until the House was placed in possession of further information on the subject; but it did appear to him that it was only right that these schools should be provided out of the general revenue. It was a perfect farce to compel children to attend school if we did not provide adequate school accommodation for them.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

IMPORTATION OF CATTLE, SHEEP, AND PIGS.

Mr. PADBURY, in accordance with notice, asked the Acting Colonial Secretary whether it is the intention of His Excellency the Governor to prolong his proclamation prohibiting the importation of cattle, sheep, and pigs, from the United Kingdom after September, 1876. The hon. member intimated to the House that in the event of the restriction being removed he intended importing by the *Charlotte Padbury* next year two or three pedigree cattle from England.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) replied that on the 30th day of June, 1876, the prohibition of cattle importation ceases, by *Gazette* notice of 13th April, 1875; and unless the Governments of the other Australian colonies should think it necessary to extend the time this Government would not do so.

HARVEST RETURNS.

Mr. PADBURY, in accordance with notice, asked the Acting Colonial Secretary whether it was the intention of the Government to take a census of crops after harvest, the same as is done in South Australia.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) said that the Government had forwarded circulars to the various districts of the colony for the census of harvest crops to be taken as is done in South Australia.

SUPREME COURT EXPENSES.

Mr. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved for a return of the expenses incurred by the Government on account of witnesses and prisoners attending the Supreme Court, from districts other than Perth and Fremantle, from the 30th September, 1874, to 30th September, 1875; also expenses incurred by the police attending the Supreme Court during the same period.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) said that the returns asked for were in a forward course of preparation and would be placed on the table when completed.

DOG LICENSES.

Mr. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved that more stringent instructions should

be issued to the police to carry out the provisions of the Act for licensing dogs; and that they be directed to use more exertion for the destruction of unlicensed dogs. The havoc caused among sheep by native dogs and the dogs of natives was very serious; he firmly believed that not much fewer than 100,000 sheep a year were thus destroyed by these animals throughout the colony. Within his own district it was estimated that the number did not fall short of 5,000. It was evident that more stringent regulations should be framed for abating this dog nuisance, and he trusted that steps to that end would be taken without further delay.

Mr. PADBURY seconded and supported the motion which, after a conversational discussion, was adopted.

Question put and passed.

LAW AND PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY.

Mr. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, brought under the notice of the House the present state of the Law and Parliamentary Library, and moved that the Council do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to take into consideration the question that an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor asking him to allow the sum of £250, which was voted by the House for the Parliamentary Library, but which vote had been allowed to lapse, to be again placed on the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

After some debate in Committee, the motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

CHURCH ORGANS: REFUND OF DUTY.

Mr. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, moved that the Council do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to take into consideration his notice of motion that an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, asking him to refund the duty which had been paid by the church wardens of St. George's Church, Perth, and the trustees of Wesley Church, on the organs lately imported by those two religious bodies.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

After some debate in Committee, the motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

FREMANTLE LODGE OF FREEMASONS BILL.

First Reading and Select Committee.

Mr. PEARSE, in accordance with notice, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to enable the trustees of Fremantle Lodge, No. 1033, of Freemasons, to raise money on Fremantle town lot 870.

The Bill was read a first time, and referred to a select committee consisting of Mr. Burt, Mr. Monger, and the Mover (Mr. Pearse).

BASTARDY LAWS BILL.

Third Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking) moved that the Bill be now read a third time.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

The Council adjourned at 10 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 16th December, 1875.

Geraldton and Northampton Railway Petition—High School Bill Petition—Geraldton and Northampton Railway: select committee report—Ballot and Secret Voting at Elections—District Roads Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Northern District Special Revenue Returns—Game Act, 1874—Prawn Fishing—Election Petitions Bill: third reading—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act, 1872. Amendment Bill: recommitment—Crews of Coasting Vessels Discipline Bill: third reading.

The ACTING SPEAKER took the Chair at 12 noon.

PRAYERS.

GERALDTON AND NORTHAMPTON RAILWAY PETITION.

Mr. CROWTHER presented a petition from Mr. Palmer, the contractor for the construction of the Geraldton and Northampton railway, praying for a remission of duty on material imported for carrying out the works.

The petition was received and read by the Clerk.

HIGH SCHOOL BILL PETITION.

Mr. MARMION brought up a petition signed by the Roman Catholic Bishop, Clergy, and laity of Western Australia, praying that the Legislative Council would withhold its

sanction from any scheme of higher education opposed to the principle of the Elementary Education Act, or that would deny the petitioners their fair share of any fund voted for such purpose.

The petition was received and read by the Clerk.

GERALDTON AND NORTHAMPTON RAILWAY.

Select Committee Report.

Mr. STEERE brought up the report of the select committee appointed to take into consideration the condition of the Geraldton and Northampton railway works as contractor for and to recommend for the consideration of the House the best manner in which they should be carried to a completion.

The report was read and ordered to be printed.

BALLOT AND SECRET VOTING AT ELECTIONS.

Mr. W. BURGESS, in accordance with notice, moved that an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that he would be pleased to bring in a Bill to put an end to proxy voting, and to establish the ballot and secret voting at elections, as at present obtained in England. Freedom of election was the basis of constitutional liberty and he trusted the House would support the motion.

Mr. STEERE regretted that he could not support it.

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Hon. M. Fraser), looking at the scattered state of the population, and the extensive area of many of the electorates, did not think it would be wise to abolish proxy voting altogether, unless the country was prepared to multiply polling booths *ad infinitum*, and to provide other expensive machinery for ensuring voting by ballot alone. The motion before the House was premature.

Mr. BURT said people were quite ready to attend the races from long distances, so why would they not do the same at an election?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking) thought some way out ought to be placed on the present system of voting by proxy, and no doubt the Government would be prepared to entertain any reasonable suggestion having that object in view. The existing Act provided for the appointment of deputy returning officers and for declaring district voting places, which obviated the necessity of electors having to travel very long distances to record their