

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

sum of money on the Estimates sufficient to test the coal seam on the Upper Irwin by boring. The hon. member said he need hardly point out that the question of the existence of a coal seam in the neighborhood alluded to was a question of the utmost importance. Mr. Gregory, the late Surveyor General of Queensland, who had lately been induced to vacate that position to take charge of the geological department of the same Colony, had some years ago discovered three distinct seams of coal on the Upper Irwin, varying in thickness from six to seven feet. Some of the coal had been brought to Perth, and a fire had been made of it on a spot somewhere near the site of the present Western Australian Bank. The Government at the time thought the discovery of sufficient importance to justify a grant of 2,000 acres of land to Mr. Gregory. In 1872 or 1873 a sum of £500 was voted for the purchase of crushing machinery for the purpose of testing the supposed coal-fields of the Colony, and more especially those on the Irwin. Subsequently, some boring apparatus was imported at a cost of between £300 and £400, but what good it had done, beyond proving the non-existence of coal at Fremantle, he could not say. Mr. Brown, in his geological report, stated that he had discovered proofs of the existence of coal in the neighborhood referred to in the motion before the House: in fact, there was very little doubt of its presence, and he thought the Government would do well to put the matter to a practical test. He did not think the expense would be more than £150 or £200. The experiment might be fixed to take place at the time the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who took a great interest in the matter, visited the locality indicated.

Motion agreed to.

DONGARRA JETTY.

MR. CROWTHER moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying him to place a sum on the Estimates sufficient to repair and extend the Dongarra Jetty, so as to enable the coasting steamer to load alongside. Dongarra, the hon. member said, belonged to that district

which never asked and never got anything at the hands of the Legislature or of the Government. Three sessions ago he had introduced a similar motion, and provision was made on the Estimates for the carrying out of the work, but nothing was done. Subsequently he had again brought forward a motion to the same effect, and he was then asked to let the matter stand over until a survey of the harbor had been made. He thought the time had arrived when some steps should be taken to give practical effect to the resolution before the House. The sum required for this very desirable and necessary work would not entail a very large amount of expenditure. The present structure was unsuitable both for the steamer and for coasters loading alongside, and he hoped the Government would recognise the necessity of repairing and extending it.

Motion agreed to.

FIRST READINGS.

The Sale and Leasing of Settled Estates Bill, and the Scab-in-Sheep Ordinance, 1874, Amendment Bill, 1877, were read a first time.

THIRD READINGS.

The Industrial School Act, 1874, Amendment Bill, 1877; the Closing of Streets in Fremantle Bill; and the Confirmation of Expenditure Bill were read a third time.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT.

MR. STEERE asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government intended introducing a Bill to amend the Elementary Education Act this session.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) replied that the Government hoped to do so.

BALLOT BILL, 1877.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BROWN moved the addition of the following new section to this Bill, to stand as clause 27: "The presiding officer, on the application of any voter who is incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause from voting in the manner prescribed by this Act, or of

any voter who makes a declaration as hereinafter mentioned that he is unable to read, shall, in the presence of the agents of the candidates, cause the vote of such voter to be marked on a ballot paper in the manner directed by such voter, and the ballot paper to be placed in the ballot box; and the name and number on the register of voters of every voter whose vote is marked in pursuance of this rule, and the reason why it is so marked, shall be entered on a list, to be kept by the presiding officer." The hon. member said he could quite understand the objection to a person who could not read or write having a vote at all, but provision was made for such cases in the English Act, and he thought they might as well have it in the Local Bill, as well as a provision enabling voters who were blind or otherwise physically incapacitated to exercise the franchise.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking) considered the proposed clause unnecessary. If there were a large number of blind people in the community, well and good; no doubt it would be a hardship to debar them from voting. But among a small population like this, where the number of blind people might be counted on the fingers of one's hand, he did not think it was necessary to specially provide for their exercising the franchise. As to voters who made a declaration that they were unable to read, he thought the provision proposed to be made in such cases would be liable to abuse.

MR. BROWN understood that one of the objects of the Bill before the Committee was to extend the privilege of exercising the franchise to as many people as possible, and he thought, in a small community like this, they could not afford to exclude any class of persons who were otherwise entitled to vote.

MR. CROWTHER supported the motion, and considered it very essential that some provisions should be made for enabling illiterate persons to vote, with as much secrecy as possible. Many voters were as illiterate as natives, but at the same time possessed plenty of intelligence and sound common sense.

Question put, "That the new clause be added to the Bill," upon which a

division was called, with the following result:—

Ayes	7
Noes	8

Majority against	...	1
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burges	The Hon. A. O'G. Lefroy
Mr. Monger	The Hon. M. Fraser
Mr. Hardey	Mr. Shenton
Mr. Steere	Mr. Parker
Mr. Crowther	Mr. Padbury
Mr. Hamersley	Mr. Glyde
Mr. Brown (Teller.)	Mr. Gale
	The Hon. H. H. Hocking (Teller.)

The amendment was consequently negatived.

Schedules and Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported.

The House adjourned at a quarter past eight o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 6th August, 1877.

Paper—Powder Magazine at Albany—Messages from His Excellency the Governor—Financial Statement—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act, 1872, Amendment Bill, 1877: in Committee—Third Reading—Sale and Leasing of Settled Estates Bill: second reading; in committee.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at seven, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. A. O'Grady Lefroy) laid on the table of the House letters from Mr. Sub-Inspector Kelly and Sergeant Campbell, having reference to an alleged infringement of the orders issued to the police relative to the mode of escorting native prisoners.

POWDER MAGAZINE AT ALBANY.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL moved the following resolution: "That, in the opinion of this House, the reply