

(No. 34.)



1872.

TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

REPORT

OF COLONIAL AUDITOR FOR THE YEAR 1871.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, July 2, 1872.



*Audit Office, 25th June, 1872.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to return herewith your Balance Sheets and Annual Statements of the Public Accounts for the year 1871, which have been fully examined in this office, together with the Journals and Ledgers belonging to your department.

1. I regret to have on this occasion to report a defalcation which has occurred in the money order branch, at an outstation, of the Post Office Department. The amount of the loss was £43 6s. 1d., and the circumstances attending it may be briefly narrated as follows :—Mr. E. S. Marshall, the defaulter, was Postmaster at Emu Bay, and had been fairly punctual in making his remittances to head quarters for some time after his appointment; but in June, 1871, his monthly account showed an amount in hand of £43 above the sum (£15) allowed to be retained by him to meet the payment of money orders at his office, and he was immediately directed to remit that amount to the chief office. On the 5th July, the sum of £31 12s. 11d. was received from him, but his account then disclosed that up to that date he had become further indebted to the extent of £30, for which a demand was at once sent to him, but was not complied with; and after repeated applications had been made, without avail, for that money, and also a further sum of £13 6s. 1d., accruing since the 5th July, the matter was placed in the hands of the Resident Stipendiary Magistrate, who in due course caused Marshall to be arrested for embezzlement: he was subsequently tried at Launceston, and received a sentence of two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

2. An indirect loss of about £10 has been sustained by the non-collection of the Dog Tax on Tasman's Peninsula for the year 1870-71. It appears to have occurred through an oversight in the office of the Commandant, to which the book of blank licences had been returned, after examination in this department for the previous year; but the book having been, it is presumed, laid aside until the proper time for making the following year's collection, the matter during a lapse of some months must have got overlooked, so that the necessary instructions had not been given to the officer usually employed to collect the tax, and when the omission was discovered it was too late to remedy the mistake, as the persons possessing dogs, who still remained on the Peninsula, declined to pay for the past year.

3. There has been in abeyance for some years a sum of £15 4s. 10d. which was advanced in 1866 to Mr. Thomas P. Ball, at that time employed in the Gaol for Males at Hobart Town, upon condition that the amount should be repaid to the Treasury on his receiving arrears of pension from the Imperial Government. In the mean time Mr. Ball died, and the money has never been recovered. It is understood, however, that there is a sufficient sum in the hands of the Assistant-Commissary-General to pay the amount; but the representative, a brother of the deceased, residing in Hobart Town, has not, as I am informed at the Colonial Secretary's office, taken the necessary steps, although applied to months ago, to enable the Colonial Treasurer to receive the amount due to his late brother, which therefore remains in the Commissariat Chest.

4. Attention has been drawn from time to time to an unsatisfied balance of £92 1s. 8d. remaining unaccounted for by the Rev. Thomas Reiby, being portion of a sum of £150 advanced to that gentleman in 1866, under a vote of Parliament for the services of a Catechist to the Islanders in Bass' Straits. The difference, £57 18s. 4d., between these two sums was refunded by Mr. Reiby in consequence of a query from this Department objecting to its appropriation, on the ground that the money had been applied to a different object from that contemplated by the vote. In applying for the advance in question, Mr. Reiby undertook to furnish to the Government a correct account of its expenditure; and it is such an account, with vouchers for the balance of £92 1s. 8d., which is still required from that gentleman; or failing the production of the same, a repayment of the amount into the Colonial Treasury.

If, however, Mr. Reiby is prepared at once to produce a satisfactory statement with vouchers, showing, as may reasonably be anticipated, that the money has been wholly appropriated to the benefit and improvement, in one way or other, of the Islanders in the Straits,—although not strictly applied in terms of the vote of Parliament,—it might perhaps be deemed within the province of the Government to submit the question during the present Session for the consideration of Parliament, whether the deviation from the original vote was of such a nature as to admit of its being sanctioned by a supplementary vote, so as to bring this long pending matter to a close.

5. In balancing the transactions of the year 1871 in the Treasury Ledger of the Land Fund, the Assistant Colonial Treasurer discovered that the sum of £680 18s. 11d. had been paid under Loans Acts 29 Vict. No. 1, and 31 Vict. No. 23, beyond the amount provided by Debenture Act, 29 Vict. No. 2.

This excess appears to have been caused by an oversight in preparing the Schedules to the Act 31 Vict. No. 23, when the compiler omitted to take into account certain outstanding liabilities under the Act 29 Vict. No. 1, thereby causing to be sanctioned by Parliament larger sums on certain works than were available for the same. As, however, I have already reported on this matter, by your desire, in a Memorandum dated the 8th ultimo, it is probably unnecessary for me to enlarge upon the subject in this letter.

6. In June, 1870, I submitted, with voucher No. 390 for £118 18s. 3d., a Minute to you on the subject generally of the supply of Public Furniture to Government House, in which I pointed out that there were no distinct regulations extant in regard to such expenditure beyond the Book of Regulations issued by the Secretary of State, which could scarcely be deemed applicable to a Colony possessing Responsible Government; and I therefore solicited instructions, under the authority of the Governor in Council, for my information and guidance in this matter. I beg leave now to call your attention to the observations contained in that Minute.

7. In 1868 an arrangement was entered into with Mr. Gould to produce a book on the Geological Structure of the Colony, and various payments have been made for work performed towards that object. It was at first understood that the book would be brought out within a period of twelve months; but I subsequently learnt from a correspondence, of which I was allowed a perusal, that an alteration had been made in the arrangement with Mr. Gould, for the convenience of the Government, by which he was not restricted as to the time of his work issuing from the press; and I therefore merely refer to the subject now, as I have not received any information or instructions connected with it for a considerable time past.

8. There are some other matters at present unsettled, but they do not appear to be of sufficient importance to call for any particular observations from me on this occasion.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

E. J. MANLEY.

*The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer.*