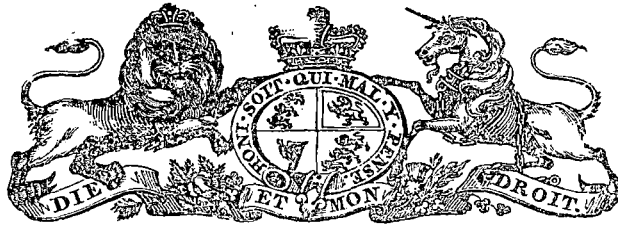


(No. 54.)



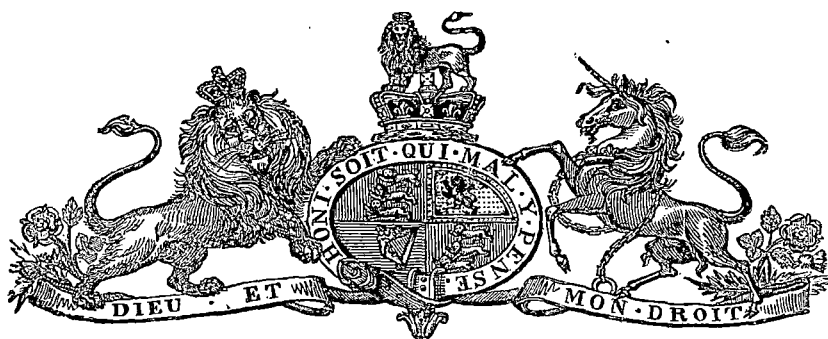
1858.

T A S M A N I A.

T H E H O U S E.

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ACCOMMODATION.

Brought up by Mr. Chapman, and ordered by the House to be printed, 20 October,
1858.



THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed on the 22nd September, 1858, to enquire into and report upon the present Accommodation afforded to the Members of the Legislative Council in the House,—to the Public,—and to the Reporters for the Press,—and upon the general Condition of the House, have agreed to the following

REPORT.

1. Your Committee have found the present accommodation afforded to the Members of the Legislative Council to be totally inadequate.

2. The Gallery set apart for the Public is not large enough to afford proper accommodation to the number of individuals whom the Members are authorised by the Standing Orders to introduce; and it is so badly ventilated, that whenever it is filled the atmosphere becomes oppressive and unhealthy in the highest degree.

3. Although attempts have, at different times, been made to improve the accommodation afforded to the Reporters of the Press, yet those attempts have been so unsuccessful, that not only is it evident that the labour of Reporting under existing circumstances must be unnecessarily difficult and exhausting, but whenever the Public Gallery is well filled, the access to and from the Reporters' Gallery becomes greatly impeded.

4. With regard to the general condition of the House, your Committee have given their attention to the defects which are so conspicuous in the Ventilation and the Lighting of the House, as well as the transmission of sound; but in addition to these serious defects they have become aware of an evil of a still more important character in reference to the existing state of the Roof, which is reported by the Director of Public Works to be by no means satisfactory. Not only does it appear to be exceedingly liable to take fire, but the inconvenience to which Members have frequently been exposed from rain finding its way into the Chamber cannot, as the Roof is now constructed, be remedied.

5. Your Committee have, in consultation with the Director of Public Works, endeavoured to devise means of remedying the various defects adverted to, but have been driven to the conclusion that, without taking down the whole building and reconstructing a new Chamber altogether, this object could not be attained. To adopt this course would evidently entail a very heavy outlay, while the additional accommodation that could be procured within the same space, however ingeniously devised, could not be expected to bear a due proportion to such an expenditure of Public Money.

6. Your Committee in its investigation into the general condition of the House could not fail to notice two fruitful sources of inconvenience:—

First. The want of a commodious Library, from which two evils arise. The Books at present in the possession of the Parliament are crowded into two small Committee Rooms, which, as mere receptacles of Books, are inadequate to receive the additions just made by the transfer to the Parliament by the Executive Government of a valuable collection of Parliamentary Papers. For the reception of these, and of the additional supply of books expected from England, provision must necessarily be made.

By the present arrangement, on the one hand, those Members in particular who are required to serve on Committees are liable to constant interruption by those whose duties lead them to consult the books belonging to Parliament; while, on the other hand, Members generally are debarred from the use of any Library in its legitimate capacity of a Reading-room.

The second source of inconvenience referred to is the distance at which the Government Printing Office is situated. It is needless to observe that the Printing Office is an indispensable adjunct to every Legislature; the communications between the two are necessarily perpetual, and the business of the Legislature is much expedited by facilitating that communication.

The present arrangement, in addition to the expenditure in the shape of wages to Messengers whose time is taken up in carrying papers to and from the Printing Office, also involves a large annual outlay in the shape of Rent; £250 a year is now paid as Rent for the Printing Office, which would be saved to the Public, were a Printing Office erected on the land belonging to the Crown in the immediate neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament.

7. Having taken all these various matters into their consideration, your Committee arrived at the conclusion that the only effectual and economical mode of securing the objects in view, and of remedying defects which have long been so painfully felt by all those whose duties require their protracted attendance within the Chamber now used as the House of Assembly, would be to erect some new buildings to meet the more pressing wants of the Legislature.

8. Your Committee, therefore, requested the Director of Public Works to furnish a sketch plan and rough estimate of such new buildings, proposing that they should contain a Chamber 65 feet in length, 40 feet in breadth, and 25 feet in height, including suitable accommodation for Members of the Legislative Council, Reporters, and Public; together with accommodation for the Government Printing Establishment; and that the present Chamber should be converted into a commodious Library for both Houses.

9. The Director of Public Works accordingly submitted such Plans and Estimate, together with a Memorandum explanatory of the same, which your Committee now beg to lay upon the Table of your Honorable House.

The suggestions contained in Mr. Kay's Memorandum your Committee approve, and recommend their adoption by the House, conceiving that the proposed Plan will, by a very moderate outlay, remove the inconveniences complained of, while a considerable annual expenditure will, at the same time, be saved to the Public.

THOS D. CHAPMAN, *Chairman.*

20 October, 1858.

APPENDIX.

MEMORANDUM.

In accordance with the annexed copy of a Resolution of the Select Committee, I have prepared Sketch Plans, now submitted, showing how a new House of Assembly may be best erected and attached to the present Buildings, by placing it in the rear of the same, and entering it from the staircase by passages taken off the intervening rooms.

In a Memorandum submitted by me to a Select Committee of the House, dated the 12th December, 1856, for the improvement of the Ventilation and internal arrangements of the Chamber, and printed in January, 1857, it was proposed to substitute a new Roof with a Lantern light to the present House, and erect a Strangers' Gallery over the present staircase. This could still be done, but would not give the accommodation now sought for in the Gallery; nor could any means of Ventilation be devised so successfully as if the room was a larger one; because it would always on occasions be overcrowded.

The present House would not admit of further enlargement as to its area than then proposed, because the walls to be removed for that purpose, being principal walls, cannot be so removed without taking down the whole building, and reconstructing a new room altogether; and which, when increased to a height proper for its increased area, would interfere with the architecture of the front of the Building, so that it must be altogether altered in design.

A large expense would thus be incurred, and perhaps to little good purpose; and the present adjacent rooms, lost in the new room, being still required, would have to be erected somewhere else.

It certainly appears, for the above reasons, a preferable mode to adopt the plan of erecting a room as a distinct structure. This of itself would cost about £4725 only, were it not for the great height of building that must be previously brought up to the required level.

But if, as I think, the Government may entertain the project of placing the Printing Offices in this substructure, the cost of this part of the work may be defrayed under its proper head, amounting to about £1575.

The present House of Assembly would then become available for a spacious Library; to have which is much desired, I believe, by the Members of both Houses; and the adjacent rooms would at once fall into their appropriate uses without much further alteration.

The state of the existing roof of the House of Assembly is by no means satisfactory. The necessity for the making apertures in the roof for the discharge of the heated air has caused the liability of rain finding its way in; and constructed as it is, this cannot be remedied.

The introduction of gas in the present plan adopted for lighting the Chamber is highly objectionable from the liability of the roof to take fire, as the wood-work, with all the precautionary measures adopted, is far too near the burning jets to be considered safe. Were, however, the present Chamber to be converted into a Library, the roof and ceiling may be restored to what they originally were, and the outside resingled and made secure from the admission of wet.

WM. P. KAY, *Director of Public Works.*

15th October, 1858.