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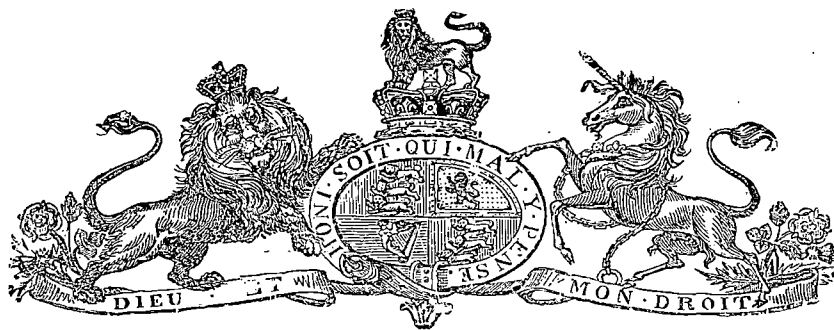
1891.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACCOMMODATION :

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE, WITH MINUTES OF
PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE.

Brought up by Mr. Gill, and ordered by the House or Assembly to be printed,
October 29, 1891.



REPORT of Select Committee appointed, on the 7th August, to inquire into and report upon the nature and probable Cost of such Improvements to the present Parliament Buildings as will afford adequate accommodation to Members and Officers of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

THE MINISTER OF LANDS.
MR. HIDDLESTONE.
MR. DAVIES.
MR. CRISP.

MR. MACKENZIE.
MR. GILL.
COL. ST. HILL.
MR. REIBEY.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1891.

The Committee met at 3 P.M.

Present—Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. Gill, Mr. Reibey, Mr. Mackenzie, and Col. St. Hill.

Mr. Reibey was unanimously voted to the Chair.

The Chairman laid correspondence *re* alterations to Parliamentary Buildings on the Table.—(Appendix A).

Ordered, That the following witnesses be summoned to attend and give evidence at 3.15 P.M. on Thursday, the 27th instant:—Mr. Eldridge, Government Architect; Mr. Shields; Mr. F. A. Packer, Clerk of the House; Henry E. Lette, M.H.A.; Mr. Henry T. Manning, Clerk Assistant; and that the Hon. the Speaker be requested to attend and give evidence before the Committee.

The Committee adjourned at 3.30 P.M. until 2.15 P.M. on Thursday, the 27th instant.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 1891.

No quorum.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1891.

The Committee met at 2.30 P.M.

Present.—Mr. Gill, Col. St. Hill, Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. Reibey (Chairman).

The Chairman laid on the Table a plan showing the proposed alterations to the Parliamentary Buildings.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. F. A. Packer, Clerk of the House, was called in and examined.

Mr. Packer withdrew.

Mr. H. E. Lette, M.H.A., and Chairman of Committees, gave evidence before the Committee.

Mr. Lette withdrew.

The Hon. the Speaker attended and gave evidence before the Committee.

Mr. Speaker withdrew.

Mr. H. T. Manning, Clerk Assistant, House of Assembly, was examined.

Mr. Manning withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 3.50 P.M. until 2 P.M. on Tuesday next.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1891.

The Committee met at 11 A.M.

Present.—Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Gill, Mr. Reibey (Chairman).

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Robert Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, was called in and examined.

Mr. Clerk withdrew.

Mr. T. C. Just, formerly a Member of the House of Assembly, and now Reporter, was called in and examined.

Mr. T. C. Just withdrew.

Resolved, that Mr. Fincham, Engineer-in-Chief, be summoned to attend and give evidence before the Committee.

Mr. Fincham was called in, and consulted as to the proposed rearrangement of the Parliamentary Buildings.

The Committee adjourned at 12:30 P.M. until 3:15 P.M.
 The Committee assembled at 3:30 P.M.
 The Hon. the Speaker attended and gave evidence.
 The Speaker withdrew.
 At 3:30 P.M. the Committee adjourned until 10:30 A.M. on Tuesday, 22nd instant.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1891.

The Committee met at 10:45 A.M.
Present—Mr. Gill, Mr. Hiddlestone, Mr. Mackenzie, Col. St. Hill, Mr. Reibey (Chairman).
 The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.
 The Committee adjourned until a date to be determined by the Chairman.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1891.

The Committee met at 3 P.M.
Present—Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Gill, Mr. Reibey (Chairman).
 The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.
 Mr. Fred. Augustus Packer, Clerk of the House, was re-called and examined.
 Mr. Packer withdrew.
 The Hon. the Speaker was called in, and gave evidence before the Committee.
 The Hon. the Speaker withdrew.
 The Committee adjourned at 3:45 P.M. until 11 A.M. on Tuesday next.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1891.

The Committee met at 11 A.M.
Present—Mr. Gill, Mr. Mackenzie, Colonel St. Hill, Mr. Reibey (Chairman).
 The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.
 Mr. James Fincham, Engineer-in-Chief, was called in and examined.
 Mr. Fincham withdrew.
 The Committee deliberated.
 The Committee adjourned at 11:50 A.M. until a date to be hereafter determined by the Chairman.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1891.

The Committee met at 2:30 P.M.
 The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.
 Mr. Gill, in Mr. Reibey's absence, was voted to the Chair.
 The Draft Report was drawn up and agreed to.
 The Committee adjourned *sine die*.

REPORT.

Your Committee have the honor to report to your Honorable House that they have carefully considered the evidence taken, and the plans and specifications submitted to them; and although they are not prepared to recommend the expenditure of a large sum of money in the erection of new Parliament Houses, they would recommend to the favourable consideration of Parliament the desirableness of effecting, during the approaching recess, some important alterations in accordance with the evidence received and with the plans now submitted to the House.

Your Committee believe that the present building is of such a substantial nature as to justify the expense of improvement, and are of opinion that ample accommodation can be provided for the Members and Officers of both Houses for many years to come.

Plans and specifications of the improvements which your Committee recommend should be adopted are herewith submitted for the consideration of your Honorable House.

THOS. REIBEY, *Chairman*.

Committee Room, Thursday, 29th October, 1891.

EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1891.

FREDERICK A. PACKER, *called and examined.*

1. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Frederick A. Packer.
2. You are Clerk of the House? Yes.
3. Are you aware of the present condition of this House, and the accommodation it affords? Yes, I am.
4. You are aware also that various attempts have been made to increase the accommodation, for the comfort and convenience of Members? Yes, I am.
5. Will you look at that plan that is now upon the table, and give us any suggestions that you may think desirable? I do not think that it is a wise thing to put a valuable library like that we possess into a wooden building; that wooden building is perfect matchwood; the danger to the library is bad enough now, with the possible chance of the place catching fire.
6. You think, then, that if the library were placed where Mr. Fincham proposes, it ought to be in a new building? Yes, unless we are content to run a very great risk.
7. Do you think that it would be a very good position for a library? Yes, I think it is a very good one, inasmuch as Members going there are less-likely to be annoyed by people passing to and fro between the two Houses. It would be much more private.
8. It is proposed to make the library 57 feet by 17 feet. Would that be large enough? Unless it is double the space we have at the present time it would not be large enough.
9. Do you think that the proposed size would be sufficient? Of course in making such alterations as these we have to look to the future. I do not know whether it is intended to take the reading-room to this new building.
10. *By Col. St. Hill.*—Will it not be inconvenient not to have all these rooms containing the Parliamentary papers and so on, on the same floor as the Assembly? It would certainly be much better that they should be on the same floor. The newspapers are very largely used for reference, and Members don't want to have to go up or down stairs for them. I certainly think that the newspaper-room and the library should be on the same floor as the Assembly. They would be better in separate rooms, as different classes of readers use them.
11. *By the Chairman.*—Then you don't think that the size proposed for the library is enough? Not unless it will give a larger space than the library we now have. We certainly require double the space.
12. What do you think of Mr. Fincham's proposal in regard to the Assistant Librarian? I think the position he has chosen for him is a very bad one, because the Library Attendant should be in constant attendance in the library. He has no right to have his office away from the library at all. His office should be as near to the library and the chamber as possible. It is a mistake for the library attendant to be in the room he now occupies;—he should always be in the library, or close to it.
13. Do you think the room proposed for the Clerk Assistant is in the right position? The position is bad, the room being down stairs. The Clerk Assistant is an officer who is always wanted, and he should be always easily accessible for the Members or Clerk of the House to transact Parliamentary business with.
14. Mr. Fincham proposes to enlarge the Chamber of the House of Assembly? Yes.
15. Do you think that would be a good arrangement? Of course it would be a very comfortable arrangement; but, as far as the size of the Chamber goes, I think it is large enough at present to meet all requirements. The proposed enlargement would certainly be a great improvement.
16. Do you like the arrangement for the ladies' and strangers galleries? It will give more room.
17. Do you think the position chosen for the reporters' gallery is a good one? Yes, it is the proper position.
18. What do you think of the present proposal with regard to converting the present libraries into private rooms for Members? There is one objection, and that is that it would bring strangers too much into the precincts of the House. Many complaints are made, which perhaps don't reach Members themselves, but which come to me, of certain Members bringing strangers into the libraries, and I think that these two rooms should be appropriated as private rooms for Members only, not as conference rooms to bring strangers into.
19. *By Mr. Mackenzie.*—Then where would you bring strangers? Down stairs would be the best place.
20. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think the proposed Committee rooms, and the room for the Chairman Committees, as proposed, would be an advantage? Yes, they are well arranged.

21. Do you think that the accommodation in the reporters' room is sufficient? I have not heard any complaints about it. It is a spacious room.

22. It is a great improvement on the past? Yes, except with regard to the reporters having to come upstairs. I do not know that there is any particular reason why it should not be downstairs.

23. Are there any suggestions you would like to offer to the Committee? I do not know whether it would spoil the architectural beauty of the building, but I think it would add to the comfort of Members if there were a balcony round the front of the building. It would not cost a great deal, and would add to the comfort of Members in a large degree.

24. Don't you think it is inadvisable to relinquish the present newspaper room? Yes. It is now in an exceedingly convenient position, and I do not know where you could get a better one. It is convenient to both Houses.

25. *By Mr. Gill.*—Do you think that the present library is not large enough? It is not. In regard to the caretakers' cottages, it seems to be a rather anomalous arrangement that we should have caretakers who are away from the building. The whole of the Legislative Council portion of the building is entirely unguarded after the House rises at night, and during recess from after 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Doran, the messenger, who is in charge of this portion of the building, lives in Lansdowne Crescent, and there is not a living soul in the building after he goes away in the afternoon. I have always thought that this was very wrong, especially in the interests of the library, as it would be very easy for anyone to get in and steal the books right and left.

26. You think the protection of the building on the Legislative Council side is not sufficient? There is none, and that answer applies particularly to the library.

27. *By Mr. Gill.*—Would not under the library be a good position for a caretaker's residence? Yes.

28. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think it desirable that the caretaker should reside on the premises? Yes, otherwise the place is left to take care of itself. The windows of the smoking room could easily be opened if anyone wished to get in.

29. Is St. Leger's accommodation sufficient? Yes. I think that he is in very good quarters.

30. Are there any further suggestions you would like to make to the Committee? No; I think that is all I have to say.

HENRY ELMS LETTE, *called and examined.*

31. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Henry Elms Lette.

32. You are Chairman of Committees of the House of Assembly? Yes.

33. Do you think it would be an improvement to enlarge the Chamber as proposed? Yes. It would make the Chamber a good many feet longer and wider, and of course it would be a great improvement. Members require something better than they have now, and I think that this would be a most decided improvement.

34. Have you any suggestion to offer with regard to your own room? As far as the Chairman of Committees is concerned, he ought to be as near to the Chamber as possible. The present room is too far away, and in the suggested arrangements the room is too distant.

35. Do you think it desirable that we should have one large room for the library? Yes. That would be very desirable.

36. Do you think that there ought to be a room for newspapers as distinct from the library, and as close to the House Chamber as possible? Yes.

37. *By Mr. Gill.*—Do you think that it would be a good plan to have a fire-proof building for the library? Yes, I do. It is not right to run the risk of keeping valuable books in a wooden building.

38. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think it desirable that the Clerk Assistant's room should be downstairs? No, I do not think so.

39. Or the Library Attendant? Certainly not. He should be on the same floor as the Chamber and the library.

40. *By Mr. Hiddlestone.*—What part of the building is most convenient for a room for the Chairman of Committees? The part where the library is at present, although the messages going from one House to the other would have to go through that room, and that certainly would be a drawback. It is also desirable that there should be a room for witnesses and other strangers.

41. *By the Chairman.*—Will you examine this plan of Mr. Fincham's at your leisure, and give the Committee any suggestions that may occur to you? Yes, with pleasure.

THE HONORABLE NICHOLAS JOHN BROWN, *called and examined.*

42. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Nicholas John Brown.

43. You are the Speaker of the House of Assembly? Yes.

44. This plan upon the table has been sketched out by Mr. Fincham to assist us in considering the question of improving the accommodation of Parliament House, and in it he suggests certain alterations:

I will first draw your attention to the proposed enlargement of the Chamber—what is your opinion of the proposal? As far as I could judge from a hasty look at the plan, I think it is an admirable mode of enlarging the Chamber. My only objection to it is that it is a work of a permanent character, which I would be sorry to see undertaken in connection with these buildings. I think if I may be pardoned for offering my opinion unasked on this subject, that we ought to contemplate the building of new Houses of Parliament on a more suitable site as soon as the financial position of the country warrants the expenditure, with a due regard to other demands on the Government for roads, bridges, &c., and every permanent addition you make to these buildings renders that time more remote. The natural question is, what alternative would I propose? I would certainly propose that whatever additions may be required should be supplied by wooden structures at the back of the building.

45. Do you think it is desirable to place a valuable library in a wooden building? I did not notice that. The library ought not to be placed in a wooden building.

46. Have you any objection to the library being placed in the western wing of the building? I think it is in a very good position.

47. Do you think the Legislative Council would object to having it so far away? Of course there is a difficulty there—I had overlooked that for a moment. It certainly should be in a central position, between the two Houses. The accommodation proposed in this plan is not more than is required. I say that from my own certain knowledge of the inconveniences Hon. Members and the officers of the House are under, I do not see a room too many provided here. It is hardly fair to ask my opinion off-hand about matters of detail connected with a complicated subject like this.

48. You would not think it desirable that the Clerk Assistant should have his room downstairs? No.

49. Or the Library Attendant? No. I think matters should be so arranged that the Clerk Assistant should have two rooms,—one where he can be seen by people who wish to see him on business connected with Committees, &c., and a quiet one, where he can do his writing and reading by himself. There can be nothing but unpleasantness and disarrangement from the present state of affairs. He should have his official room as near the Chamber as possible. I will carefully look over the plan to-morrow morning, and offer the Committee any suggestions I may think it desirable to adopt.

HENRY T. MANING, *called and examined.*

50. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Henry T. Maning.

51. You are Clerk Assistant of the House of Assembly? Yes.

52. Have you seen the alterations suggested in this plan? Yes. I think, on the whole, the suggestions are fairly good. The Members at present suffer very great inconvenience from lack of room, and I think that the suggested improvement to the Chamber is therefore most desirable. It is most inconvenient for the officials who have to look up references and get information for the Members. I have to leave my seat and sometimes go down on all fours with the Library Attendant to find references that may be required. If there is nothing else done, the enlargement of the Chamber is desirable.

53. Do you think that the position chosen for the library is a good one? Yes; but it should be in a substantial building of brick or stone, and should be even larger than proposed. I think now that we are running too great a risk in having these wooden buildings about the place. The library is under-insured, and would be hard to replace.

54. There is an engine downstairs now? Yes; and in consequence the Clerk recently gave notice to the Insurance Company to come down and inspect the place.

55. You think that the position of the library is a good one, but that it should be a substantial building of brick or stone, and should be larger? Yes.

56. Do you think that the newspaper room should be near the library? Yes, and near the House.

57. Do you think that the Clerk Assistant's room should be downstairs? No. I think that the Clerk Assistant's room should be as near as possible to that of the Chairman of Committees, and the House. I think also that the Library Attendant's room should be as near as possible to the library, the Clerk Assistant's room, and the Chamber.

58. Do you think that a Messenger's room downstairs would be desirable? No, it would be hardly fair to the men. They are constantly on their feet during the Session; and having to come upstairs for every message would only add unnecessarily to their labour.

59. *By Col. St. Hill.*—Could not they have a waiting-room upstairs, and a room of their own downstairs? During the Session they are always on duty, though on Mondays they are on somewhat easier duty.

60. Do you think that the room allotted for the reporters is in a bad position? That is a question that I cannot answer: it is for the reporters themselves to decide. I would suggest that an expression of opinion be elicited from them.

61. If you have any further suggestions to make, will you do so at a future meeting? With pleasure. The Committee then adjourned.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1891

ROBERT CLERK, *called and examined.*

62. *By Mr. Reibey.*—What is your name? Robert Clerk.

63. You are Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Assembly? I am.

64. Are you fully acquainted with the accommodation afforded to Members in the present building? Yes.

65. Do you consider that accommodation sufficient for the Members, Officers, and Servants of the House? Well, it has proved sufficient as the work has been done, but whether or not it can be improved is another question. The present accommodation has sufficed in a way.

66. But you think it might be improved? Yes, with advantage.

67. What do you think of the alterations suggested in the plan upon the table? These arrangements seems to me to be very good, but I would rather have seen a new Parliament House.

68. Do you consider the proposed alteration in the Chamber a good one? Yes, I think it is very good indeed.

69. Do you consider the position proposed for the new library a good one? Yes. The present library is too small altogether for the House. If Members wish to discuss anything there is no place but the library to go to.

70. Do you find your present accommodation sufficient? Well, I cannot say that it is very comfortable. In the gales of wind that sometimes occur the wind that comes up through the floor is very distressing. The carpet is sometimes raised about 18 inches from the floor. The room is too small for a fireplace, and I have to use a stove, which is very unhealthy. When I use the stove I have to sit with the door open.

71. You do not think your present room is suitable for the Sergeant-at-Arms? No, I do not. For years the Sergeant-at-Arms had the present room as also the one where the Clerk Assistant is now.

72. Do you think that the Servants of the House, and the Assistant Librarian should have their rooms downstairs? No, I do not think such an arrangement would be a wise one, because they are so constantly required while the House is sitting in looking up books and references of various sorts for the use of Members. I think that the Assistant Librarian especially ought to be as near the Chamber as possible.

73. What is your opinion in regard to the present accommodation given to the Messengers? It is very indifferent indeed.

74. Do you think that they ought to have their room on the same floor as the Chamber? I think so. It would be more convenient. All their work is from upstairs, and it would only cause a loss of time, and give them a great deal of extra work, if they had to run upstairs every time they were required. They should have some extra accommodation on the same floor as the Chamber.

75. Do you think that the Clerk Assistant's room should be downstairs? No, decidedly not. He is an officer who is required so frequently by Members that his room should be as near to the Chamber as possible.

76. *By Mr. Gill.*—You are aware that we have a very valuable library connected with these buildings? Yes.

77. The proposed new library is a wooden one: do you think it would be right to put a valuable library into a wooden building? No, I do not think it would be right to do so. I would like to mention, while on the subject, I made a requisition for having water laid on to these buildings, and proper hoses supplied, so that in case of fire some proper means might be at hand to deal with it. That requisition I made in Mr. Braddon's time, but it was not granted at the time; I am not aware that it has been granted since. In a building like this there ought to be proper means for dealing with an outbreak of fire.

78. *By the Chairman.*—Have you any further suggestions to make? No, I do not think that I can say anything more.

NICHOLAS JOHN BROWN, *called and examined.*

79. *By the Chairman.*—The Committee understand that there are some suggestions you wish to make upon a further examination of the plans? I have carefully examined the plans since I last gave evidence, and I have just pencilled a few memoranda that I had better read. For reasons which I have already given in my evidence upon the last occasion upon which I appeared before this Committee, I am opposed to any permanent or expensive additions being made to the present Parliamentary Buildings; but, if it is decided otherwise, and a majority desire the proposed alteration of the House of Assembly Chamber, which I think very good in itself, then I certainly think the permanent work should stop there. The cost of erecting a new library, which must necessarily be an expensive building, should not, in my opinion, be incurred. Moreover, the library should have the best aspect obtainable, and there certainly would be a very cheerless outlook from our library if it were placed at the back of the building as shown on the plan. I think it would be better to leave the library as it is. I would prefer putting up a new wooden building adjoining the room at present occupied by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and so provide a new room for the Sergeant-at-Arms and a second office for the Clerk-Assistant. The provision for Committee Rooms seems to me to be more than ample. It must be remembered that this Session has been an exceptionally busy one in the matter of Select Committees: otherwise the proposed arrangement seems to me to be a very good one. I do not know whether the rooms proposed to be allotted to the Customs Department are sufficient. Assuming this to be so, then some new building will, of course, be necessary for caretakers. My opinion about the whole matter would, perhaps, be modified if I knew what is the estimated cost of the proposed alterations.

80. Then, you think that the only substantial addition that ought to be made is the addition to the Chamber? I think so, most decidedly, for the reasons I have given; but it must be understood that I do not approve even of that addition to the present buildings.

81. And you object to the library on account of its position? It would be a mistake to put the library where you propose to put it.

82. Why do you think that the library should have a cheerful outlook? I can only answer that by saying that if you or I were building a house for ourselves we would not build our library looking into the back yard,—we would like to put it in the most cheerful part of the house.

83. Would you not consider more the comfort of a quiet room to read in than the view it would give you? I do not wish to argue the matter; I only express my opinion. I should certainly select the front rather than the back of the building for the library.

84. Do not you consider that the present library is miserably small? Yes, it is quite insufficient?

85. Is it not quite impossible to classify the books there? Yes. It would help to do away with the objections to the present library if it were enlarged; but I must adhere to the opinion that it would be a mistake to make any permanent or expensive additions to the present building.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1891.

FREDERICK A. PACKER, *recalled and examined.*

86. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think that this plan, as revised, is an improvement on the one that was first submitted for our consideration? Generally speaking, I think that it is. Of course, it gives a much more spacious library, but I think that the room for newspapers should be on the same floor as the library and chamber, as Members constantly require to refer to them. I do not approve of the room proposed for the Library Attendant. I think that he should have a desk or partition of some sort in the library or the newspaper room. It is a great mistake to make the Library Attendant, what he is becoming too much now, and that is a sort of general clerk. My reason for saying this is that trouble is frequently experienced in regard to books and newspapers, particularly the latter, being taken away from the premises when there is no one there to see to them. I can give you an instance this very week. The *English Standards* and some other papers, which came in here on Saturday last, were taken away by one Member, and he had them until this (Friday) morning—nearly a week—during which time no other Member had an opportunity of seeing them. If there were someone in the place to see that the papers were in their places that would not be done. You may make rules, but if a Member chooses to put papers under his arm and walk away with them when no one is looking, what can be done? The Library Attendant is a great part of his time in the side room, which at one time used to be the Clerk Assistant's room, engaged in the distribution of papers and so on. It is a question which should be gone into, whether it is desirable that he should be employed in that work at all, and whether, as in other Legislatures, there should not be a Clerk of Papers, or someone to do that work. In some way or other the Library Attendant should be always about the library, otherwise I am afraid it will be impossible to check the abuses which I have referred to. It would be possible to include the newspapers and the library in the one room, but the objection has to be considered whether the disturbance caused by those who came in to read the newspapers would be too great. Another matter I would like to mention is that the Chairman of Committees ought to be as near the Clerk Assistant's room as possible.

87. Do you wish to offer any further suggestions to the Committee? There ought to be some small room set apart for the doorkeeper and messenger. Having St. Leger constantly downstairs in his own quarters works very badly. He should have some room to go into when he is on duty, and remain there during regular office hours, for if a messenger is allowed to be living in his own house during office hours he is really only nominally on duty. In every other department under the Government the messengers have offices where they have to be in regular attendance when on duty.

NICHOLAS JOHN BROWN, *recalled and examined.*

88. *By the Chairman.*—Have you had an opportunity of examining the revised plan of the alterations proposed to Parliament House? Yes.

89. What do you think of the proposal to increase the size of the refreshment room? I think, always with the reservation I have made as to any permanent improvements, that it would be a great improvement.

90. Don't you think that the room for the Sergeant-at-Arms should be as near the Chamber as possible? I think most decidedly that it should be as near the Bar of the House as possible. I think that the present library is the best room for the Sergeant-at-Arms.

91. Have you any suggestions to make with regard to this revised plan? The only suggestion I wish to make is in regard to the reporters' gallery. The reporters have always been provided with ample space up to the present, and they might find themselves rather crowded under the new arrangement. Provided that the reporters have sufficient room, I think the place proposed is the proper one for them. As to the other arrangements for the newspapers and reading room, the rooms for Parliamentary records and papers, and so forth, I have no suggestions to offer. I think the general arrangements are very good. I have previously stated that I thought that the extension of the chamber would be a great improvement.

92. Does the lighting of the library from above to a great extent remove the objection you had to it? It certainly modifies my objections very much; but I still object to the library being placed at the back of the building. To light it from above, and so get rid of the unattractive outlook, is certainly a great improvement on the former proposal. The light from above for reading is very much preferable to the light from a window.

93. *By Mr. Hiddlestone.*—Do you think all these matters are worth serious consideration, and, if possible, carrying into effect? No, I do not. I think it is a mistake to go on adding to this present building, as we are doing from year to year, because every additional thousand pounds you spend on this building makes more distant the day upon which we will have buildings more suitable for the purpose, and in a better position.

94. *By Col. St. Hill.*—But this building as it is proposed to be altered will be suitable for Government offices of some sort or another? As far as I know, the Government departments, with the exception of the Post and Telegraph Offices, are pretty well provided for at present.

95. *By the Chairman.*—You think it is not desirable to spend money on the present building? I certainly do not think that it is wise to spend money on permanent improvements. If additional accommodation is required, and that accommodation can be provided by comparatively temporary wooden buildings adjoining the present room of the Sergeant-at-Arms, I say let it be given; but to spend a large sum of money, which will mean the Legislature remaining here for another twenty years, I think will be a great mistake.

96. Considering the great inconvenience that Members suffer at present for want of room, do not you think it would be a wise thing to spend £4000 or £5000 in giving accommodation that is actually necessary? I think that the expenditure of £1000 at the outside, not interfering with the present library, would give all the accommodation we require at present.

97. Do you think there is any probability of a new Parliament House being built within the next ten years? I think that within the next five years there is a great probability of the Colony being in a position to undertake a work of that kind. I think that it is not too soon now to ask Parliament to vote £200 or £300—I don't know exactly what the amount would be—for plans for a new and thoroughly well-arranged building for the accommodation of the Legislature. If you call for tenders for plans now, you may be sure that it will be four or five years before matters will be sufficiently matured for the work to be undertaken. I think in five years the Colony will be quite in a position to undertake the expenditure.

98. *By Col. St. Hill.*—What if federation comes about? I was about to refer to that. In making any alterations it is not an unreasonable thing to take into consideration the possibility of whatever Legislative buildings we provide here being partially used for the Meetings of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. I have been influenced all through by that consideration.

99. *By the Chairman.*—Would not the alterations suggested in the present building be rendered more necessary by that consideration? Perhaps arrangements could be made that might prove suitable, but certainly the position of the present buildings is not suitable.

100. Do you think that the colony would be justified in spending £40,000 or £50,000 if the Federal Parliament was to meet here? The whole of the colonies would participate in that expenditure, if you assume that the Federal Parliament would require a separate and distinct building, but I do not assume that; the buildings used by the local Parliament might be very well joined with buildings arranged for use by the Federal Parliament, if they are large and commodious enough.

101. You think if the improvements now suggested were carried out the present buildings would be suitable for the Federal Parliament, but that the site is not good enough? No; I must say that I do not think so; in the first place the Chamber would not be large enough. In the Federal Parliament there will be 110 Members, and here you are only providing accommodation for 36 or 38.

102. But we are going to give room for double the number of Members that there are at present? Well, even then it will not be large enough for the Commonwealth Parliament.

103. *By Mr. M'Kenzie.*—Do you think that the buildings of the Commonwealth Parliament should be used by the local Parliament? I see no reason why they should not be adjoining and on the same site.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1891.

JAMES FINCHAM, *called and examined.*

104. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? James Fincham.

105. Can you give us the approximate cost of the improvements you have suggested in the plans you have prepared? I can give you the approximate cost, but I cannot give the amount very closely until the plans have been properly worked out and the quantities calculated. I put down the cost at something between £5000 and £6000.

106. Do you think that the improvements suggested can be effected at a lower cost? No, I do not think so.

107. *By Mr. Mackenzie.*—I suppose the most expensive part would be extending the Chamber? Yes, that would be the most expensive portion of the work.

108. *By the Chairman.*—Will it take you long to supply an accurate estimate of the cost? I should want a fortnight.

109. Do you think that necessary improvements could be effected at a lower cost? I should hardly like to constitute myself a judge of what is necessary and what is not; but I have consulted yourself, Mr.

Chairman, as you are aware, as to the requirements of the House of Assembly, and I also spoke to the President of the Legislative Council, and went over the rooms connected with that building with Mr. Nowell, which, I believe, was at your suggestion. Mr. Nowell pointed out the various requirements there, and the President suggested the necessity of some large room in which banquets could be held, and with that in view I sketched out the extension of the present refreshment room, although I thought at the time that it would be possible to utilise the large library that it is proposed to construct for such occasions. I had some thoughts of seeing if I could not save expense by doing away with the proposed alterations to the Chamber, by throwing the dais into another position altogether, but I am not prepared to say that I could manage that without disarranging the whole of the rooms, which are now fairly well grouped together. I fancy that a large common room for members of the press attending both Houses of Parliament would be very acceptable to the members of the press, and one of them pointed out to me that there should be some separate room for members of the press that were waiting to go on to work, as those who were smoking and talking interfered with those who were at work. The only way in which that could be done is by giving the members of the press a spare room, and there is one on the lower floor. I was unable to put the dwellings, in accordance with your wishes, in the basement of the buildings. They will have to go where shown, with their front facing yard and not the street. The alteration of the Chamber has one great advantage which commends itself to my mind, and that is that the present buildings are thoroughly well constructed, and will pay for alteration. One weak point is the outerwall of the Chamber

110. How much has it gone out of the perpendicular? Not much; it seems to be more bulged than anything else. I should say that it is two inches out of the perpendicular. This is, no doubt, caused by the bad construction of the roof, just as the Treasury roof caused the walls to bulge until we took the thing in hand.

111. You think in the proposed alterations to the Chamber that you can improve the atmosphere? Yes, besides giving much needed accommodation to the press and strangers.

112. And do away with the present danger to health that exists? Yes.

113. Have you ever attended the Chamber when it is crowded? In past years I have, but not for some time.

114. Have you ever found the atmosphere unpleasant? Before the electric light was laid on I have found it abominably unpleasant at times.

115. You were not in the House on Tuesday evening? No.

The Chairman.—A gentleman entered the House on Tuesday evening and told me to-day that he could not stand the atmosphere of the Chamber, which fairly stank.

116. Do you think that for the expenditure of £6000 the Chamber could be made suitable for years to come? Yes; and I think the building is so good that it will pay for alteration. Some buildings are so bad that when you begin to alter them they tumble about your ears. This building is thoroughly well constructed, and will pay for any alterations that may be made to it.

APPENDIX A.

Sept. 17, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR,

ON several occasions in the past I have called attention in the House of Assembly to the want of accommodation provided for Members, to the bad ventilation of the Chamber, and the unhealthy atmosphere in consequence; also, to the mean and miserable provision for visitors and Servants of the House. On each occasion the Minister of the day promised that "during the recess he would consider the matter and remedy the evils complained of." With the exception of removing the Reporters to the Strangers' Gallery, building a heavy gallery over the Chair of the Sergeant of Arms, and fitting up a *Bow* for the "Ladies' Gallery," very little else has been done.

For many years past Members have complained of the unhealthy atmosphere of the House. Several have attributed loss of sight and attacks of illness to the bad ventilation and foul atmosphere of the Chamber. Last night Mr. Pillinger was compelled to retire, being unable to endure the heat and foul air. A few evenings before the Member for Kingborough (Mr. Gill) had to leave his seat for the same cause.

My object in writing is to suggest improvements—such as can be made without any great cost, and such as the comfort, health, and convenience of Members and Servants of the House demand. As the erection of a new House of Parliament cannot be entertained at the present time, nor, indeed, for many years to come, the Members of Parliament have, I think, a right to ask for such an expenditure of money as would make the present building more convenient and less injurious to health. If that portion of the building now occupied by the Collector of Customs were given up for the enlargement of the House of Assembly and other additions, a great change for the better could be effected at a small cost—such a change as would not only conserve the comfort of Members, but afford for many years to come, and until the Country would be justified in erecting a new House, all that is actually necessary. The Chamber of the Assembly could be enlarged by throwing the Speaker's room into it; a gallery for visitors and strangers such as the dignity of Parliament demands, and more room and conveniences for Members, could be easily provided. The Speaker's, Clerk's room, and Committee rooms, much needed, could be placed where the Customs offices now are.

I call your attention to the inadequate accommodation provided for the Assistant Clerk. This office is small, much used by the public and Members, and is occupied also by Assistant Librarian, in whose charge are Parliamentary papers constantly needed by Members.

The Messenger's room is too small, not larger than a glass or linen closet in many private residences. The comfort of the servants of the House deserves consideration.

The Sergeant-at-Arms' room is not what it ought to be—small, out of the way, and not fit for any gentleman to occupy as an office or retiring room.

Under existing arrangements neither the privacy nor comfort of Members is secured. The Reporters, Assistant Clerk, Assistant Librarian, and Messengers are huddled together, and every year's experience of our work in Parliament confirms my opinion that a radical change is needed, if the dignity of Parliament, the comfort of Members, and the convenience of the officers and servants are worthy of consideration.

The expenditure of some £2000 or £3000 will effect the changes I propose. I trust you will give this subject your grave consideration.

I am, &c.

THOMAS REIBEY, *Speaker.*

The Hon. the Premier.

House of Assembly, Tuesday, 1st November, 1887.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor of informing you that, at a meeting of Members of the House held on Friday last, it was unanimously resolved that I should communicate a request to you that the Government should submit a vote to Parliament, during the present Session, in order to carry out the alterations in the House of Assembly specified in my letter of the 17th of September last, which still remains unacknowledged.

I may add that the meeting was largely attended by Members from both sides of the House, and that the recommendations contained in my letter already referred to were cordially approved of.

I am, &c.

THOS. REIBEY, *Speaker.*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

Chief Secretary's Office, Hobart, 2nd November, 1887.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, calling attention to your communication of the 17th September last, and requesting that a Vote should be submitted to Parliament during the present Session in order to carry out the alterations in the House of Assembly therein referred to.

Your letter has been forwarded to the Honorable the Minister of Lands and Works, to whom your former communication was transmitted on the 23rd September last.

I have, &c.

P. O. FYSH.

The Honorable the Speaker of the House of Assembly.

THOMAS COOK JUST, *called and examined.*

By the Chairman.—What is your name? Thomas Cook Just.

Have you seen the plan upon the table, which contains suggested alterations for the improvement of the House? Yes.

Do you think that the alterations suggested in the Chamber would be a great convenience? Undoubtedly. It is a question chiefly of the expense, because, after all, it is a makeshift. There is one thing I am afraid of, and that is that these continuous long passages will create enormous draughts. The complaint now in the Chamber is that the place is too draughty.

But the Chamber will not be so much a passage when altered as proposed as it is now? Of course it will be relieved in that respect.

By Mr. Gill.—Are you satisfied with the reporters' room as it is at present? To my mind it is comfortable and commodious enough. The only trouble is that it is a long way from the gallery. I would like to see the reporters' room near the gallery, immediately behind it if possible. We want really two rooms. When a lot of men are writing out notes and absorbed in their work other men want to talk, and there should be a room where the reporters who are working could go on, and another room in which the other men could talk or see people, or get instructions, without disturbing those who are at work.

Would the two rooms downstairs do? Yes, they would do very well. I understand that there is a great lack of storage room for blue books, papers, and so on, and it struck me that a couple of rooms for the press, with good store-rooms underneath, could be made where the window is at the foot of Mr. Packer's steps. We could then go out of the gallery and walk into our room without having to travel so far as we do now.

Are you aware that we have a very valuable collection of books in the library? Yes.

Do you think it would be wise to keep them in a wooden building? No, I do not think you would gain anything by doing so. Brickwork is cheap enough.

It is suggested that the present wooden building should be taken down, and a fire-proof one erected, in which the books and papers could be all kept together? It would not be wide enough to get the proper arrangement of the books. You want proper passages and bays, with tables down the centre. The modern way of arranging libraries is on the bay system.

By the Chairman.—Have you any further suggestions to offer to the Committee? There is one thing that I would like to mention, and that is that the reporters are complaining of draughts up in the gallery.

By Mr. Mackenzie.—Would it be possible to have the system of classification you have mentioned in the present library? The present room is so cut up that you would not have room enough for the bays.

The books are in two or three rooms at present? You would have to pull down the walls. The books may be classified by subdividing the shelves. The present rooms are too confined altogether.

Is there any way of extending the newspaper room? You can build that out as much as you please. You will find as the years go on that you will want a great deal more room, and it is as well to make the alterations large enough while you are about it. I should like to see the present building let alone for the present, or enough spent upon it to suffice for present needs, and a splendid design gone in for for a new building on Franklin Square. You want to face the harbour with a magnificent front. The approach to the reporters' gallery in the Council is abominable, and wants alteration.