

The Hon. Sir R. Stout moved, That at the rising to-day the Committee adjourn until Friday next, at 10.30 o'clock a.m., for the consideration of the draft report.

Upon the question being put a division was called for, and the names were taken down as follow :—

Ayes, 5 : Mr. Guinness, Hon. Sir Hall, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Hon. Sir R. Stout, Mr. Tanner.

Noes, 3 : Mr. G. Hutchison, Dr. Newman, Mr. Wright.

Motion agreed to.

Resolved, on the motion of the Hon. Sir R. Stout, That the Committee adjourn until Friday next.

FRIDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1893.

Present : Mr. Shera (Chairman), Hon. Sir J. Hall, Mr. G. Hutchison, Dr. Newman, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Hon. Sir R. Stout, Mr. Tanner, Mr. Wright.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Order of Reference of the 23rd August read by the Clerk.

Resolved, on the motion of Dr. Newman, That the consideration of the draft report be postponed until Friday next.

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The Committee then adjourned until Tuesday next, at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1893.

Present : Mr. Shera (Chairman), Hon. Sir J. Hall, Mr. G. Hutchison, Mr. J. Mills, Dr. Newman, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Mr. Tanner, Mr. Wright.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Resolved, on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Seddon, That Mr. Costall be asked to attend to-morrow to give further evidence.

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The Committee then adjourned until to-morrow, at 11 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1893.

Present : Mr. Shera (Chairman), Mr. Guinness, Hon. Sir J. Hall, Mr. G. Hutchison, Mr. J. Mills, Mr. Saunders, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Mr. Tanner, Mr. Wright.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Costall, Government Printer, attended, and made a further statement, which was taken down by the reporter.

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The Committee then adjourned until Friday next, at 11 o'clock.

FRIDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1893.

Present : Mr. Shera (Chairman), Mr. Guinness, Hon. Sir J. Hall, Mr. G. Hutchison, Mr. J. Mills, Dr. Newman, Mr. Saunders, Hon. Sir R. Stout, Mr. Tanner, Hon. Mr. Ward, Mr. Wright.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and confirmed.

The Chairman produced the following draft printed report as drawn up by the Subcommittee :—

“The Committee have the honour to report that they have considered the papers referred to them regarding the error made in the Public Works Statement of 1892, and have also examined persons and papers. They find the facts to be as follows :—

“1. The Public Works Statement was laid on the table of the House of Representatives on the 27th September, 1892, by leave of the House, and the following copies were circulated—namely : 180 to the House of Representatives, 69 to the Legislative Council, and 46 to departments ; making a total of 295. After the Statement had been laid on the table it was discovered by Mr. Blow, the Under-Secretary for Public Works, that it contained an error in the text at page 14. This error was in the figures of expenditure for the year 1891–92. It was given in the Statement as £295,978, instead of £391,501. Mr. Blow discovered this error either the next day or the day after, and had it altered in the printing office, making the amount correct—namely, 391,501. There was also a slight error in the table called D, annexed to the Statement, through an omission of a credit of £111. This table was altered to Table C, and the figures “£111” were inserted in the last column under the heading of “Expenditure of 1891–92.” The insertion of these figures necessitated the alteration of the summation of that column in three particulars—namely, summation from £70,957 to £70,846, from £312,482 to £312,371, and in the total summation from £391,612 to £391,501. These alterations in Table D were made by Mr. Clapham, Accountant to the Public Works Department. The alterations were made without Mr. Seddon being informed of them.

“2. The error in the text occurred through Mr. Blow having handed to Mr Seddon a slip of paper containing the expenditure for the several years, 1885–86 down to 1891–92. This was in the handwriting of a cadet in the office to whom it was dictated. It gave the expenditure for 1891–92 as £295,978.

“3. Mr. Seddon, assuming that this statement was correct, prepared two paragraphs in the Public Works Statement, as follows : (At page 1.) “Results have proved, however, that fair progress has been made with our necessary reproductive public works, and yet the expenditure thereon has been less during the past year than it has been for years past, and still the colony has advanced.” (At page 14.) “For the purpose of showing how the ‘tapering-off’ policy succeeded by