

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 30 JUNE 1874

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the Crown. It had been deemed advisable to incorporate these clauses in a separate Act, and, therefore, when the honorable the Colonial Treasurer introduced the Audit Bill, they were omitted with a view of introducing them in this measure—thus having the provisions relating to the public accounts in one Bill, and those having reference to the recovery of Crown property in another. The Bill contained nothing more than existed in the clauses of the Audit Act, which had been repealed, and he did not think it necessary to detain the House by any lengthened remarks upon its provisions. He moved—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The question was put and passed, and the House went into committee on the Bill.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved—

That the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the purpose of considering Supplies to be granted to Her Majesty for the first six months of the year 1875.

The motion was put and carried, and the House went into committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Mr. Morgan, Sir,—Such a very short time has elapsed since I made my financial statement, that I do not apprehend that it will be the wish of the committee that I should occupy their attention by again going into figures at any length. I shall, therefore, simply confine myself to giving the results of the first six months of the present year, the accounts of which have been made up to last evening; and I am sure that the committee will be glad to hear that the financial prospects of the colony continue to be as good as when I last had the honor of addressing them. We commenced the present year with a sum of £240,000, or, what has been so frequently spoken of as a surplus by honorable members of this House. This amount the Government transferred to a separate account, and it has, therefore, no connection with revenue transactions. The revenue balance on hand with which we commenced the year was £228 18s. 4d.; and the revenue receipts for the six months ending June 30, were £575,031 12s. 4d.; and the expenditure for the same period, including the interest, which is due to-morrow, was £521,358 16s. 11d., leaving an excess of revenue over expenditure, so far as our revenue transactions are concerned, for the six months, of £53,901 10s. 9d. The revenue has increased, as compared with the corresponding period of last year, from £504,873 to £575,031, showing an increase of over £70,158 for the first six months of the present year. The expenditure for the first six months of 1873 was £466,152, and for the first six months of 1874, £521,358, showing a balance of £55,206 against an increase of revenue of £70,158. The estimated revenue for the first six months of 1875 is £575,000,

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 30 June, 1874.

Crown Remedies Bill.—Supply.

CROWN REMEDIES BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he might inform honorable members that it was simply a reprint of those clauses in the Audit Act which had been repealed, and which provided for the protection of the property of

which honorable members will perceive is within a few pounds of the receipts for the first six months of the present year. The probable total expenditure we estimate at £533,396, which leaves an estimated balance of £22,604. The first item I have to deal with is that of Customs, which is one of the most important items of revenue; and from that source I estimate to receive £240,000. Up to the present time, £236,000 has actually been received from that source; but there are yet some collections to come in from the North, which will bring the total up to my estimate. Of course, as I need hardly tell the committee, we shall lose a proportion of our *ad valorem* duties, for which some allowance must be made. After to-day, we shall lose a portion, as the reduced rate of seven and a-half per cent. comes into operation to-morrow; and after the first of October next those duties will be still further reduced to five per cent., instead of ten per cent., as hitherto. We will say that, from this cause, we shall lose £30,000 for the first six months of next year; but I think that the loss thus estimated will be largely recouped by the increased consumption of dutiable articles. Whilst on this subject, I should like to ask the committee to follow me whilst I make a few remarks on the probable effect of this reduction in the tariff. It has often been said by honorable members that the late alterations in the tariff have simply had the effect of increasing the taxation of the country; but from that assertion I must most decidedly differ. No doubt, the duty has been increased on a number of minor articles, but, at the same time, the large reductions in taxation, which have been made by the abolition of the duty on salt and machinery, have just about compensated for those increases. If we have gained in one direction, therefore, we have lost in another. To prove the correctness of this, I have had returns made at the Custom House, Brisbane, of the receipts for the same amount of time—namely, two months—under the old and new tariffs; or, in other words, what would have been received under the old tariff, and what has been actually received under the revised tariff. Under the old tariff, the collections would have amounted to £48,541 and under the new tariff the amount received was £47,536, which shows an actual loss of about two per cent., which, we may presume, will be the result running through the whole of the colony; and so, of course, when the *ad valorem* duties are reduced, there will be a still further reduction of taxation. The receipts from the first item of the revenue—namely, “Excise”—are estimated at £12,500, the actual receipts from this source for the first half of the present year being £11,252. From land sales by auction we estimate to receive £9,000, as there has been already received this year £4,778. Mineral lands we calculate will yield £3,000, and we have already received this year £8,558. As most

of the selections are now confirmed and paid up, the future revenue from this source will be from new selections and mining licenses. The pre-emptive purchases under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 are only estimated at £10,000, although the receipts up to date for the present year amount to £39,592. Still, from all the information I have received, this is not a source of revenue from which we can anticipate large returns for any lengthened period. It appears to me that £10,000 is as much as we can fairly estimate from that source for the first six months of next year. The rents under the Act of 1863 are set down at £5,000, the receipts for the present year up to June 30 amounting to £6,858; but it must be borne in mind by the committee that this will be the last amount received from this source, and they ought properly to be included in the operations of this year. There are, however, certain selections which will run on under that Act, from which we can calculate to receive £5,000. The rents of land under the Act of 1868 we estimate at £120,000; but up to the present time, from that source, we have only received £103,589. But, as from the annual rents for the first six months of next year we expect £105,000, from new selections £8,000, from balances due £4,000, and from selections taken up under the sugar and coffee regulations on the new lands opened up in the North £3,000, I think that, even leaving out the last item, we may very fairly estimate the revenue under this head at the figure I have stated. Runs sold by auction we estimate will yield £4,750, and the survey fees £600, against £5,733 and £5,162 received to date. The gold revenue for the first six months of next year I have calculated at £8,000, and I may say that this is one of the most unsatisfactory items in the Estimates, and one regarding which the least certainty can be brought to bear on any calculation; for, notwithstanding all the new diggings which have been opened, the receipts for the first half of the present year have amounted to only £5,495. From the sale of duty stamps we expect to receive £23,000, which is not an extravagant calculation, considering that the revenue under this head amounted to £22,187 for the first six months of this year. Postage we estimate at £14,250, the amount actually received for the past half year being £12,928. Harbor and light dues I consider will yield £5,000, as compared with £7,170, which is the amount which has been received during the corresponding half of this year. Honorable members will, however, remember, that when I moved the second reading of the Navigation Bill, I stated that it was proposed to relieve coasting steamers and other vessels employed in the sea-carrying trade of the colony from all charges which come under this head; and as this estimate has been based upon the supposition that that measure will become law, it has caused the reduction of the estimate

for next year from what it has been this year. The railway receipts have been estimated at £65,000, which honorable members will no doubt consider a large increase on the amount received during the past six months, namely, £53,543; but I have no doubt that the extensions both north and south, which will be opened before the period mentioned, will have the effect of causing the increase we have estimated. Licenses are put down at £22,000; whilst the receipts for the present half year amount to £22,663. Fees of office £4,000, which is a reduction of £704 upon the present receipts. Fines and forfeitures £1,500, and from miscellaneous sources £10,000. There is a further sum of £3,000, interest on balances at the bank, which may be credited this evening, which will bring up the total estimated receipts to £575,000, whilst the total receipts for the half year ending to-day amount to £575,031. I think, therefore, that we can fairly say that our estimate is rather under than over for the first six months of next year. I think, also, that it will be found that what we shall lose by the reduction of the *ad valorem* duty and taxation generally, will be compensated for by the increased prosperity and general progress of the colony. The total estimated expenditure for the first six months of 1875 shows a decrease of £28,356; and this is principally attributable to the large decrease in the expenditure of the department of my honorable colleague, the Minister for Works. There are, however, some increases amounting in the whole to £31,930, the majority of which have been necessitated by recent legislation. For instance, the additional judges and the officers necessary for them to carry out their work, forms a considerable increase, and for that I have put down £2,616. Education I have estimated at £9,918 increase. Administration of justice, £869. Postmaster-General's department, £3,498; this, I may mention, is principally caused by the extension of the telegraphic system. Interest on public debt, £8,286. These items, together with £6,743 for miscellaneous and departmental contingencies, amount to a total of, as I said just now, £31,930, which, taken from the total decrease of £60,286, leaves a net decrease of expenditure for the first six months of 1875 of £28,356. I have no doubt that honorable members may consider the amount set down for road expenditure as somewhat small, but by looking to the schedules which I have had furnished, they will see that there is an available balance of £176,013; and I think that when that is taken into consideration, they will acknowledge that ample provision has been made for the next twelve months. Honorable members will also observe that there is, in addition to the estimates of expenditure I have mentioned, a loan estimate, which has been rendered necessary in order to carry out works at present in progress, and which will be included in the first Loan Bill. When we reach that portion of the Estimates,

these matters will be more fully referred to; but I may mention, as one instance, that the loan for the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway is not only exhausted but actually overdrawn to the amount of £7,876. If honorable members will refer to the return of loan balances, up to June 30, 1874, on the second page of the schedules, they will see the position in which the various public loans of the colony stand, and that, with the exception of the items of Immigration and the construction of the Southern and Western Railway, there are still large sums to the credit of all the purposes for which those amounts were voted. They will see that a sum of £17,970 has been already spent over and above the sum authorised for Immigration, and £7,876 over the loan vote for the Ipswich and Brisbane Railway. Supplementary Estimates will be shortly brought down for the current year, and I may say that we shall have to ask the House for a very large sum for educational purposes—in fact, it will be more than one half of the whole amount. I may, in conclusion, point out to the committee, as many honorable members are aware, that the revenue for the second half of the year has always proved to be in excess of that for the first six months, and has always been more prosperous. As a proof of that, I may state that, whilst the first six months of last year yielded only £504,873, the last six months yielded £615,161, showing an increase of £110,288. It may, therefore, be reasonably expected, if that is any indication of what is likely to take place, and the country continues to progress as it has done, that we shall have a handsome surplus at the end of the present year. I do not think there is anything that I have omitted, and I will now conclude by moving—

That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the first six months of the year 1875, the sum of £87 for the salary of an Aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

The motion was put and agreed to.