

1856.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON
REPORTING DEBATES.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES.

VOTES, No. 36, SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1856.

15. Mr. Fitzherbert, pursuant to notice, moved, That in the opinion of this House it is essential to the effective working of the system of Responsible Government in the Colony, that some means should be adopted to secure accurate and authentic reports of the substance and arguments of the speeches made by Honorable Members of House of Representatives in their places in the House. That, accordingly, a suitable annual grant should be voted by the House, to be applied either in aid of the existing reporting power of the Colony, or in some other way calculated to secure the attainment of the above object.

Question put and passed.

VOTES, No. 39, TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1856.

9. Reporting Debates :—Mr. Fitzherbert, pursuant to notice, moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider and report upon the best mode of carrying out the resolution adopted by the House on the 14th inst. relative to the securing correct reports of the speeches made by Honorable Members of this House; such Committee to consist of Mr. Sewell, Mr. Bell, Mr. Carleton, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Fox, and the mover; to report this day week.

Question put and passed.

VOTES, No. 45, TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1856.

3. Postponements :—On motion of Mr. Fitzherbert, leave was given to the Committee on Reporting Debates to postpone their Report to Friday next.
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VOTES, No. 48, FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 1856.

9. Reporting Debates Committee :—On motion of Mr. Fitzherbert, leave was given to this Committee to postpone their Report until Tuesday next.
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VOTES, No. 50, TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1856.

10. Reporting Debates Committee :—Mr. Fitzherbert, Chairman of this Committee, brought up their Report, which was read, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE of the House of Representatives, appointed June 17, 1856, to consider and report upon the best mode of carrying out the Resolution adopted by the House on the 14th instant, relative to the securing correct Reports of the Speeches made by Honorable Members of this House, report as follows :—

Your Committee unanimously recognize the importance of the subject referred for their consideration and report; although they do not so entirely agree as to the practicability of giving effect to their wishes.

Without, however, any desire either to exaggerate or underrate the difficulties in their way, your Committee have regarded them as obstacles which it has been resolved to deal with practically, with a view to their removal if possible.

The first enquiries of your Committee were naturally directed to the labours of a Select Committee appointed during the 1st Session of this House on the same subject; expecting to find in their Report some valuable suggestions. These enquiries, however, were entirely unavailing for any such purpose, as they merely disclosed the fact, that no minutes had been preserved, nor any report ever brought up.

The attention of your Committee was next directed to parties connected with the local press; to whom a statement was made of the general views of the Committee, and an application for any practical suggestions thereon.

It is only just to state that these applications met with prompt attention; and the opinions of various persons, connected with the local press, will be found embodied in an appendix to this Report.

A comparison of these suggestions with the opinions and experience of the individual members of your Committee has led them to offer to your Honorable House the following recommendation :—

1. That a sum not exceeding £800 should be authorized, by resolution of the House, to be expended, to aid in the production of correct reports and their publication during the ensuing Session.
2. That the necessary arrangements be entrusted to Mr. Speaker and a Press Committee.

Your Committee concludes by expressing their opinion that there is no just ground for apprehension that the independence of the Public Press will be in any way impaired by the authorized and paid publication of accurate reports.

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT, *Chairman.*

*Committee Room, House of Representatives,
July 1, 1856.*