

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HONGKONG.

No.14 OF 1874

FRIDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 1874.

PRESENT:

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary (JOHN GARDINER AUSTIN).
The Honorable the Attorney General (JOHN BRAMSTON).
The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer (CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH).
The Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE.
The Honorable RICHARD ROWETT.
The Honorable WILLIAM HASTINGS ALEXANDER.
The Honorable JAMES WHITTALL.

ABSENT:

His Excellency the Governor (SIR ARTHUR EDWARD KENNEDY, K.C.M.G., C.B.)
The Honorable the Chief Justice (SIR JOHN SMALE),—absent on leave.

The Council meets this day at 2.30 P.M., by Special Summons.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, in taking the Chair, reads a letter from His Excellency the Governor stating his inability to attend the Council.

The Honorable JAMES WHITTALL begs, on behalf of the Council, to express the sympathy which the Members feel for the cause which has prevented His Excellency from being present at the meeting.

The Minutes of the Council held on the 26th October, are read, corrected, and confirmed.

The Appropriation Bill for 1875 is read a second time.

The Honorable the Colonial Treasurer brings up the Report of the Sub-Committee appointed to consider and report upon the Estimates for the ensuing year, which is as follows; —

REPORT.

Having examined the proposed Estimates for 1875, we beg to recommend the following few alterations in the Votes for the Establishments: —

Harbor Department.

Gunpowder Dépôt,—Two additional Chinese Sailors at \$96
each,..... \$192.00

Educational Department.

Personal Allowance to Chiu-chi-Yeung, Teacher of English,..... \$240.00

Medical Department.

One additional Inspector of Nuisances,..... \$600.00

We understand that the salary of the “Official Trustee” is fixed by the Governor in Council at £50, subject, however, to reconsideration if the duties of the Office increase during the ensuing Twelve months.

We have not deemed it expedient to suggest any alteration in the Estimates for the Police Establishment, but while acknowledging the happy immunity which the Colony enjoys from serious crime, we think that having regard to the size, population, and Revenue of the Colony, the Expenditure on the Police Force is still much too great. In what way, however, retrenchment can best be carried out must be left to the Executive, to whom the consideration of the subject is earnestly recommended.

Among the Votes for Public Works, we are of opinion, that the amount proposed to be expended on the Public Gardens and Plantations should be reduced to \$2,000.

The Members of the Sub-Committee have confined their enquiries to the details of the Estimates, as laid before the Council at its last meeting, which, with the exceptions and alterations referred to, meets with their approval.”

CECIL C. SMITH.
CHAS. MAY.
PHINEAS RYRIE.
JAS WHITTALL.

Note.

With reference to several of the items of the Estimates I approve only of the amounts; it is my intention to object to them in Council upon other grounds.

PHINEAS RYRIE.

Council Chamber, 5th November, 1874.

The Council goes into Committee upon the Estimates for 1875.

The following Votes are agreed to:—

ESTABLISHMENTS: —

Governor,	\$ 740.00
Colonial Secretary,	7,880.00
Colonial Treasurer,	3,072.00
Auditor General,	14,799.00
Clerk of Councils,	100.00
Surveyor General,	21,062.00

On this last Vote being taken, the Honorable JAMES WHITTALL suggests that the Foresters and Rangers should be placed under the immediate control of the Surveyor General, who ought, in his opinion, to have charge of the Trees in the public lands of the Colony.

The Council concurs generally in the suggestion of the Honorable Member.

Postmaster General,	\$27,486.00
Registrar General,	10,198.00

Harbor Master, 26,954.00

On this Vote being taken, the Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE recommends that an additional fast Steam-launch should be purchased for the Public Service of the Colony.

Light Houses, \$ 6,428.00
Collector of Stamp Revenue, 4,078.00
Judicial,..... 20,180.00

On this Vote being taken, the Honorable RICHARD ROWETT draws attention to the inefficiency of the Interpretation in the Courts of the Colony.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary states, that the subject has the earnest attention of the Governor, and that steps are being taken to improve the staff of Interpreters.

Official Trustee, \$ 960.00
Registrar of Companies, 192.00
Ecclesiastical, 1,230.00
Educational, 17,376.00
Medical, 16,200.00
Police Magistrates, 6,100.00
Police, 150,478.80

On this Vote being taken, the Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE, after complaining of the conduct of the Captain Superintendent of Police during the late typhoon, and of the refusal of the Government to institute a public inquiry on the subject, after a petition had been addressed to His Excellency The Governor praying that an inquiry should be made, moves that the Vote be reduced by the amount of the Salary of that Officer.

The Honorable RICHARD ROWETT seconds the motion.

Debate ensues.

The Council divides.

Ayes (3).
Mr. WHITTALL.
Mr. ROWETT.
Mr. RYRIE.

Noes (4).
Mr. ALEXANDER.
THE COLONIAL TREASURER.
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.
THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Motion Lost.

Gaol, \$16,694.00

Fire Brigade, 8,112.00

On this Vote being taken, the Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE moves that the Vote be postponed until the Council should be informed as to what Officer actually commanded the Fire Brigade, in order that it might be known who was responsible when the Regulations were not carried out. It was advisable that a Commission should be appointed to manage the Brigade.

The Honorable RICHARD ROWETT seconds the motion.

Debate ensues.

The Council divides.

<i>Ayes</i> (3).	<i>Noes</i> (4).
Mr. WHITTALL.	Mr. ALEXANDER.
Mr. ROWETT.	THE COLONIAL TREASURER.
Mr. RYRIE.	THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.
	THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Motion lost.

The Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE gives notice of Protest against the decision of the Council.

Government Gardens, \$4,660.80

The following Protest, referred to above, was received on the 16th November:—

PROTEST.

Notice having been duly given I PHINEAS RYRIE a Member of the Legislative Council of Hongkong protest against a vote of said Council, sanctioning the Expenditure of a sum of \$8,112.00 on the Fire Brigade for the following reasons: —

- 1st. —That clause 5 of Fire Brigade Ordinance No. 4 of 1868 has been contravened in as much as that on the report of a Fire-being made at the Central Station on the morning of the 23rd September, 1874, the Brigade was neither mustered or turned out with their Engines and all necessary implements as provided by said clause.
- 2nd. —That the aforesaid clause provides also for the framing of regulations and that no such regulations have been made.
- 3rd. —That the President of the Council did not reply to a question put who was the Officer in Command of the Fire Brigade.
- 4th. —That the present management of the Brigade is faulty: a proper Fire Commission such as exists in Shanghai and other places should be appointed: it being most undesirable that one person only should have the control of the expenditure, as from mistaken economy on his part much damage may result, and I am informed

that a valuable Engine the property of the public has been rendered almost useless in consequence of there not being a properly qualified and careful Engineer to attend to it constantly.

5th. —That the Drill of the Brigade is not such as to make it an efficient one in event of a fire: much more being needed to that end than merely turning out the force once a month and feebly pumping water out of and into the harbour for the space of a quarter of an hour, such instruction can never fit men to cope successfully with the difficulties to be encountered at a serious fire.

P. RYRIE.

Hongkong, 16th November, 1874.

The Honorable the President adjourns the Council at 4.30 P.M. until Monday next, the 16th November at 2.30 P.M.

JOHN SMALE,
President.

Read and confirmed, this 16th Day of November, 1874.

CECIL C. SMITH,
for the Clerk of Councils.