

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL NO. 20.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH APRIL, 1885.

PRESENT:

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

(SIR GEORGE FERGUSON BOWEN, G.C.M.G.)

His Honour the Chief Justice, (SIR GEORGE PHILLIPPO, Knt.)

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary, (WILLIAM HENRY MARSH, C.M.G.)

„ the Attorney General, (EDWARD LOUGHLIN O'MALLEY.)

„ the Colonial Treasurer, (ALFRED LISTER.)

„ the Surveyor General, (JOHN MACNEILE PRICE.)

„ the Registrar General (FREDERICK STEWART, LL.D.)

„ PHINEAS RYRIE.

„ WILLIAM KESWICK.

„ THOMAS JACKSON.

„ FREDERICK DAVID SASSOON.

„ WONG SHING.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment.

Minutes read and confirmed.

PAPERS.—The Colonial Secretary, by direction of His Excellency the Governor, laid on the table the following papers:—

- (1.) The Colonial Surgeon's Report for 1884.
- (2.) Despatches respecting the proposed Incorporation of the Vicar Apostolic of the Roman Catholic Church in Hongkong.

QUESTION.—The Honourable P. RYRIE, pursuant to notice, asked, with reference to the resolution passed at the Meeting of Council on 1st April, what replies, if any, have been received from the Home Government?

His Excellency the Governor addressed the Council as follows:—

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—As I have already intimated to my Honourable Friend, I have not as yet received the reply of the Imperial Authorities with reference to the subjects of the Resolution passed by this Council on the 1st April. The Council may rest assured that I will always communicate to them forthwith every decision of the Imperial Government affecting the interests of this Colony. I am glad, however, that the Honourable Gentleman has asked this question, for it gives me an opportunity of laying before you a further official statement on the matters to which it refers. As you, Honourable Gentlemen, are already aware, a paternal Governor had anticipated your wishes in the matters referred to in the Resolution of the 1st April, as also with regard to the fortification of Hongkong generally; and what has been done already, and is now doing for our Defences, is mainly due (as there is abundant documentary evidence to prove), to my constant and urgent representations during the two years of my administration here, both in official despatches, and in private letters to my personal friends among English Statesmen and among the chief Military Authorities in England. It was very satisfactory to me to observe that all the speakers at the recent discussion in this Council fully recognised my foresight, energy, and perseverance in promoting the true interests of this Colony in these and in all other matters; and to hear the Honourable Gentleman who represents the Chamber of Commerce declare that "a time "of emergency has now arisen, and it is in times of emergency that we should all act together "and rally round the Governor for the common good."

It will be recollected that I expressed a hope that the Resolution of the 1st April would be passed unanimously, because it would add force to the representations which I had already made to the Imperial Authorities on the subjects of which it treated. Accordingly, on the 2nd April, I telegraphed to the Secretary of State that the Legislative Council, as well as the Admiral and General Commanding Her Majesty's Forces on this Station, concurred with me on the points in question. As I said just now, I have
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to my telegram of the 2nd instant. I must here remark that if Honourable Gentlemen knew, as well as I do, through my experience as Governor for above a quarter of a century, the length of time required for official correspondence between the different departments of the Imperial Administration, they would not be so sanguine in the expectation of speedy answers in matters of this nature. From the official papers which I laid before you a fortnight ago (No. 14), you will have perceived that it required nineteen days to receive a reply on the much simpler matter of the *calibre* of the Ordinance to be mounted on the new Forts. Now the questions treated of in the Resolution of the 1st April, viz.: (1) the provision of direct telegraphic communication between Hongkong and Singapore, and (2) the provision of "a Flotilla of Torpedo-boats, fully equipped,"—would require an exchange of official correspondence between the Colonial Office, the War Office, the Admiralty, the Directors of the Telegraph Company, and, above all, the Imperial Treasury, the approval of which is necessary for the expenditure of public money in each and all of the public Departments. However, I yesterday telegraphed once more, urging an early reply showing the decision of Her Majesty's Government concerning direct telegraphic communication, and a further supply of Torpedo-boats; and also asking when the heavy Ordinance for the new Forts may be expected to arrive.

I will now make some further observations on each of the two matters treated of in the Resolution:

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(1.) With regard to the proposed Telegraph to Singapore, I have been in correspondence respecting it with the Manager, and find that the Eastern Extension Company would require a guarantee of £20,000 a year, for twenty years, before undertaking to lay a direct cable. You already know that the Executive Council of Hongkong, while agreeing with me and with this Council as to the importance of a direct cable, has advised that, especially in the present condition of our revenue, this Colony is wholly unable to offer any substantial aid to this project. I have already stated, moreover, that the Acting Governor of the Straits Settlements has informed me that the view of his Government is similar, and that it would not be prepared to give material assistance. It remains to be seen what will be the decision of the Imperial Government on my strong representations, afterwards supported by this Council.

(2.) I now come to the second proposal, which I, and most others who have given thought and attention to the matter, consider to be more likely to prove feasible, viz., the provision of a Flotilla of eight Torpedo-boats, which the Naval Authorities consider to be amply sufficient. As I have already informed you, Admiral Sir W. DOWELL has left the four Torpedo-boats now on this station to strengthen the Naval defence of our harbour. I have, as you know, asked that four more Torpedo-boats may be sent out; but, though I have not as yet received the decision of the Imperial Government, I learn from other sources that it is very improbable that any more Torpedo-boats can be spared for this Colony, while many of the chief ports of the United Kingdom, and of the other Colonies, remain wholly unprotected; and that, at all events, no more boats of this kind could reach us for many months to come. I am strongly of opinion that we should prefer to look to our own resources on the spot, which (as I am assured), could be made available in a few weeks, and at a very small cost. I have ascertained that two of the Steam-launches belonging to the Civil Government, and two of the Steam-launches belonging to the Military Departments, could be easily and speedily fitted for Spar and Whitehead Torpedoes. I have been in correspondence on this head with Commodore MORANT, who has written to me as follows:—"I have the honour to inform your Excellency that these fittings could be made and fitted to the launches in question at a cost of about fifty-five pounds (£55) each; and that there are in store torpedoes which, with the Commander-in-Chief (Admiral DOWELLS) sanction, could be supplied, should your Excellency determine to have these boats so fitted."

I have already informed Commander RUMSEY, R.N., the Commandant of our Auxiliary Flotilla, that two of our steam-launches will be used for Torpedoes, so soon as the crews are sufficiently drilled; and I have assured the Military Authorities that the Colonial Government will be ready to pay also for the fittings of their two launches. It will thus be seen that a valuable addition to the Torpedo Flotilla can be secured at a cost to this Colony of about £250.

In conclusion, I would repeat that, on the completion of the works now in hand, and with the great "defensive power" in Ships, Torpedoes, and Submarine Mines, permanently attached to the harbour, one of the highest Official Military Authorities in England has recently assured me that "you (at Hongkong) should laugh to scorn the possible attacks of all the ships now in the China Seas." One word more, and I have done. I am confident that I interpret rightly the mind of every member of this Council when I say that nothing can be further from your wish and intention than to countenance any feeling of panic at the present moment. I believe that, like myself, you simply desire to see this first-class Naval and Military Station and great Mart of Commerce, placed, once for all, in a condition of practical and permanent security;—and that on the principle of the old Roman Maxim, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*.

THE BILL ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VICAR APOSTOLIC OF HONGKONG.
—On the motion of the Attorney General the Council went into Committee on this Bill.

CLAUSE 1.

The Attorney General moved, and the Colonial Secretary seconded, that after the words Vicar Apostolic the words "of Hongkong" be struck out, and the words "of the Roman Catholic Church in Hongkong" be inserted in lieu thereof.

The Honourable W. KESWICK, seconded by the Honourable P. RYRIE, moved as an amendment, that the first six lines be struck out and that there be substituted in place thereof the words "The Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith shall be a body Corporate in Hongkong."

THE COUNCIL DIVIDED.

<i>For.</i>		<i>Against.</i>
The Honourable WONG SHING,		THE REGISTRAR GENERAL,
" F. D. SASSOON,		THE SURVEYOR GENERAL,
" W. KESWICK,		THE COLONIAL TREASURER,
" P. RYRIE		THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,
		THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,
		THE CHIEF JUSTICE.

The Honourable T. JACKSON did not vote.

For, 4; Against, 6; Majority, 2.—Motion lost.

The original motion was then put to the vote.

THE COUNCIL DIVIDED.

<i>For.</i>		<i>Against.</i>
THE REGISTRAR GENERAL,		The Honourable F. D. SASSOON,
THE SURVEYOR GENERAL,		" W. KESWICK,
THE COLONIAL TREASURER,		" P. RYRIE.
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,		
THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,		
THE CHIEF JUSTICE.		

The Honourable T. JACKSON and the Honourable WONG SHING did not vote.

For, 6; Against, 3; Majority, 3.—Motion carried.

A few verbal amendments were also made.

The Bill having been reported as amended, the Attorney General gave notice that at the next meeting he would move that the Bill be read a third time.

BILL ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 16 OF 1873, (TRADE MARKS).—FIRST READING.—The Attorney General moved the first reading of this Bill.

The Colonial Secretary seconded.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a first time.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE OTHER ORDERS OF THE DAY.—The Attorney General moved the postponement of the other Orders of the day.

Question—put and passed.

The Council adjourned until Wednesday, the 22nd instant, at 4 P.M.

G. F. BOWEN,
Governor.

Read and confirmed, this 22nd day of April, 1885.

ARATHOON SETH,
Clerk of Councils.