

19TH OCTOBER, 1891.

PRESENT—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE ACTING GOVERNOR, Major-General G. DIGBY BARKER, C.B.

Hon. W. M. GOODMAN, Acting Colonial Secretary.

Hon. A. J. LEACH, Acting Attorney-General.

Hon. J. H. STEWART-LOCKHART, Registrar General.

Hon. N. G. MITCHELL-INNES, Colonial Treasurer.

Hon. F. A. COOPER, Acting Surveyor-General.

Hon. P. RYRIE.

Hon. HO KAI.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK.

Mr. A. M. THOMSON, Acting Clerk of Councils.

FINANCE.

Several financial minutes were laid on the table and referred to the Finance Committee.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

HIS EXCELLENCY—At the last meeting of the Council I mentioned that I should to-day appoint the standing Public Works Committee. At that time I appointed the Hon. Acting Surveyor-General as Chairman, and I now appoint as members the Hon. Colonial Secretary, the Hon. C. P. Chater, the Hon. J. J. Keswick, and the Hon. T. H. Whitehead.

PRAYA RECLAMATION.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY—It will be in the recollection of hon. members that a question was asked at the last meeting in reference to the Praya reclamation, and the Government was asked to lay information on the table. I then said that I had such in manuscript and I promised that it should be laid upon the table at the next meeting of the Council. I now have the honour to lay the statement on the table.

QUESTIONS.

Hon. P. RYRIE—In the absence of my friend Mr. Whitehead, I have been instructed by him to put to the Council four questions which are in the possession of the Colonial Secretary. I do not think it will be necessary to read them. I think you know what they are.

The following are the questions and the answers given to them by the Acting Colonial Secretary:—

(1.) In view of the continued existence of public gambling houses in Chinese Kowloon, which have been for a considerable time and still are a very serious cause of annoyance and injury to the inhabitants of this British colony and tend to render

inoperative recent legislation in Hongkong against gambling, will the Government lay upon the table a copy of their correspondence with the Imperial Chinese Government on the subject of public gambling in Chinese Kowloon?

His Excellency does not deem it expedient to lay the correspondence on the table.

(2.) Is it true that the Government have remitted the fines inflicted by the Police Magistrate on the contractor who had on divers days during the last month in certain streets—the Praya Queen's Road, and Ice House Lane—placed or caused to be placed large quantities of stones whereby the Queen's common highways were obstructed; and if such fines have been remitted, on what grounds has it been done?

His Excellency has remitted a fine of \$50 imposed on a Chinese contractor. In doing so His Excellency in no way reflects upon the decision of the Magistrate, but as the contractor was authorised by the late Surveyor-general to place the stones where he did, it would in his Excellency's opinion be hard to cause a pecuniary loss to the contractor under the circumstances.

(3.) Is it correct, as stated in the *Daily Press* of the 29th September last, that the military authorities take over full control of Stonecutter's Island at the beginning of next month (October, 1891), after which date no civilians will be in charge of or employed at any department on the island as has been the case hitherto; and if so, who is now in charge of the Government gunpowder depot in Stonecutter's Island?

The statement alluded to by the hon. member is not correct.

(4.) Has the place formerly set apart to be a lazaretto, viz., "that part of the northern shore of Stonecutter's Island which is bounded and contained by a line of yellow posts." been abandoned; and if so what place if any has been substituted therefor, or what provision has Government made for the suitable detention and

seclusion of passengers and other persons arriving in the waters of the colony in vessels subject to quarantine?

The place referred to has been abandoned, the hulk *Hygeia* having been completed and substitute 1 for it, in accordance with arrangements made last year with the concurrence of the Secretary of State. These arrangements do not provide for the removal from ships of persons other than those actually suffering from infectious or contagious disease.

THE SENIOR MISSIONARY OF THE LONDON
MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Hon. HO KAI—I beg to move the second reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance for the Incorporation of the Senior Missionary in Hongkong of the London Missionary Society. In moving this second reading I need scarcely say that it gives me very much pleasure. It is a very similar Bill to those which have been introduced in favour of other societies of the same nature. The object of the Bill simply is to enable the London Missionary Society to transact its business in Hongkong through its senior missionary in the place, and to authorise such senior missionary of that society to acquire land or sell the same or to obtain mortgages on the property and so on, as if the society was a corporate body. All the formalities required by the standing orders have been observed in this private Bill. It has been advertised in the *Gazette* and in one of the newspapers. I beg to draw attention to section 4, where proper reservation is made in the provision to preserve the rights of Her Majesty the Queen, her heirs or successors, or of any bodies politic or corporate, or other persons except such as are mentioned in the Ordinance or those claiming by, from, or under them. With these few remarks I beg to move that this bill be read a second time.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I beg to second the second reading of this Bill proposed by my friend on the right. It is a very great convenience to these religious societies being corporate. They are able to work better than without it, and it behoves this Council to give them this power.

The Bill was read a second time.

Hon. HO KAI—I beg to move that this Council do now go into Committee on the Bill.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I beg to second that.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I should suggest this private bill should stand over until public business of a more important nature has been taken.

Hon. HO KAI—It is very short. It would not take five minutes to pass through this Bill. If there is any controversy likely to arise I will withdraw my motion.

HIS EXCELLENCY—As there is not likely to be any contention we may as well take it.

The Bill was then read and approved clause by clause.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY—I may be allowed to point out, without having the slightest desire to hinder the progress of such a Bill as this, that I notice the clause which requires the senior missionary of the society "to place in the hands of the Governor satisfactory proof of his appointment for the time being," and I am not aware that

this has been done. This is a matter which should be done before the Bill be read for the third time, and these proofs should be placed in the hands of the Acting Attorney-general. It would be better if possible to remain in the Committee stage until these matters have been seen to. I do not intend these remarks as in any way to oppose the Bill, but I thought I had better mention it. I thought those who support the Bill would like these formalities to be complied with first.

Hon. HO KAI—I will move then that the consideration of this Bill be adjourned.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I second that.

Carried.

BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I beg to move the third reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the law relating to Bankruptcy." If any hon. member wishes the bill to be recommitted for the purpose of any specific amendment of course it can be done. Otherwise, if there is no objection, I will move the third reading.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was read a third time.

PREPARED OPIUM ORDINANCE, 1891.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I beg to move that we do now go into Committee upon the Bill entitled "The Prepared Opium Ordinance, 1891."

Hon. HO KAI seconded.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I will just mention that very shortly before the meeting of this Council to-day I received a letter from the hon. member who is absent (Hon. T. H. Whitehead), the substance of which was a request that the going into Committee on this Bill might be postponed, but as it went further than that and went into the whole principle of the Bill, which was passed unanimously at the second reading last week, I cannot see any reason why we should again consider the principle. I therefore propose that we continue the consideration in Committee to-day. But if there are any sections which any hon. member considers the hon. member who is absent to-day would wish to be considered on their own merits, I have no objection to postpone those sections in order that they may be considered when he is here. Beyond that I think we cannot delay the consideration of this Bill.

Upon clause 8 providing penalties for excise officers accepting bribes.

Hon. P. RYRIE said—I object to this clause. I think that it provides a most inadequate punishment for an excise officer who receives a bribe. He ought, I think, to receive instant dismissal and be imprisoned.

HIS EXCELLENCY—The penalty is provided for two different offences. It would be hardly proper to give such severe punishments as the hon. member suggests for an excise officer who omits to return his uniform. In one case the punishment appears inadequate and in the other excessive.

Hon. P. RYRIE—An excise officer might be bribed for \$500 and only fined \$100.

HIS EXCELLENCY—We will leave the clause to stand over for further consideration.

Upon clause 9 providing that no person shall have without a license more than two taels in weight of opium dross,

Hon. Ho Kai said—Before this clause is passed through Committee I wish to ask the Acting Attorney-general whether in view of the provision of sub-section 3, there is a scale of fixed prices which the dross farmer should pay for opium dross. It seems that no person is allowed to possess opium dross above two taels in weight. Then the dross farmer can force every person in possession of opium dross, which is of a considerable value I may say, to give him the dross for almost nothing. Otherwise the possessor of opium dross has to throw it away altogether or incur a heavy penalty. It seems to me that opium dross being of considerable value as a marketable article there should be a minimum price fixed at which the dross farmer or his licensees should purchase the dross from the possessor.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I very much object to the form in which the question is put. The hon. member has no right to ask such a question in Committee. If he moves an amendment he is entitled to speak; otherwise he is out of order.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I don't agree with you at all.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I have not been able quite to follow the hon. member, and I do not know what he has referred to. If there is any serious question on this sub-section let it stand over. I do not think a question ought to be put in that way.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I think that in Committee you can put any question you like. That has been the rule for the twenty-six years I have been on the Council, and I am astonished to hear these new-fangled ideas.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—The late Governor, Sir William Des Voeux, distinctly ruled that if you want to speak in Committee you should speak on an amendment. In my opinion it is hardly fair to put questions in this manner.

Hon. P. RYRIE—Was the late Governor a model for the management of this Council? I say not.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I must call the hon. member to order. We cannot discuss the qualifications of late Governors.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY—I would point out that the convenience of business would be best served by any gentleman who objects in Committee to any clause as it stands proposing some definite amendment which may improve the Act, which we are all so anxious to do. If any

one can move an amendment by all means let him speak upon it, but I agree with the Acting Attorney-general that any question should be given notice of. The Acting Attorney-general cannot be expected to answer every question offhand, and I think with my friend on my right that it is the usual course to propose the amendment and then speak upon it.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Does the hon. member wish to propose an amendment to that sub-section?

Hon Ho Kai—I should certainly, in view of no answer to my question, ask that the sub-section be allowed to stand over. I therefore move that this clause stand over.

Hon P. RYRIE seconded and the further discussion of the clause was adjourned.

Upon clause 10, sub-section 1, which read as follows—
"That no person except the opium farmer shall within the Colony prepare opium."

Hon Ho Kai said—Upon sub-section 1 I have to propose an amendment that after the word "farmer" and before the word "shall" there be inserted the words "or anyone licensed by him" and the sub-section then to read, "No person except the opium farmer or any one licensed by him shall within the colony prepare opium." I move this amendment for this reason. There are several different ways of preparing opium and different persons may prefer various methods. One person may like to smoke opium prepared in one way and another in a different way. It is well known to all smokers that there are different varieties of prepared opium. Some persons prepare it by putting in certain ingredients, which when boiled give it quite another taste. So the opium farmer may have certain ways of preparing opium not suitable to the palate of some of his customers, and he may wish to give licences to another man to prepare opium in a particular way. I do not see why he should not be allowed the power to do so. So far as I know there is no reason to the contrary—against the opium farmer being allowed to give power to others to prepare the opium.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I will second the amendment.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—If I am right the sole privilege of preparing opium must be given to the farmer and the words "or any one licensed by him" could not be inserted. No doubt the hon. Colonial Treasurer who has studied the question will explain it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—When speaking upon the second reading of this Bill I explained that the object of this Ordinance was to give as much power as we can to the farmer, who is the man who pays us our revenue. The last opium ordinance contained a proviso that the opium farmer might give licences to certain persons to boil opium but this was expressly cut out in

his contract, and the reason was, I am informed, ~~to~~ **not** to have raw opium distributed over the colony, to which there is still the greatest objection, but to confine it to the opium farmer's establishments. It now appears, from what the hon. member on my left tells us, that opium is prepared with different ingredients and that the opium farmer might wish to license persons to prepare different kinds. If he did desire that I should have expected to have had information to that effect, but he has never complained of the clause which gave him the power having been specially taken away. If, however, the hon. member can produce evidence that the power would be a good thing for the opium farmer to have and that it would increase the revenue of the farm—that is the great thing—then the Government would probably take into consideration the advisability of letting the opium farmer have the power to grant licences to boil opium. I think it absolutely necessary that the opium should be boiled on the opium farmer's premises and I do not suppose the Government will allow the opium to be boiled anywhere else. The hon. member states that opium is sometimes mixed with different ingredients. I always imagined that was done by the person who smoked it in his own house, but I cannot be aware of every detail. Perhaps your Excellency would have no objection to the sub-section being left over, for the time being, so that further enquiries may be made, as the great object is to make the farm as valuable as possible and if this proposal will do so, and there is no other objection, it may be possible to allow it to be inserted. I think, however, there can be no question that such boiling must take place in the opium farmer's establishment.

HIS EXCELLENCY—If this is done would it be necessary to have any licence?

The COLONIAL TREASURER—I think so decidedly.

Hon. P. RYEIR—The opium farmer did appoint sub-licensees some years ago. Whether it worked well or not I do not know.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL — I support the recommendation that this clause be left over for further discussion. A Chinese gentleman called upon me the other day and spoke to me on this very question. He informed me that if the Ordinance was altered in this way, the farm would be greatly increased in value. I support the suggestion that the clause should stand over.

The clause was thereupon adjourned for further discussion.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—Clause 12 sub-section 4 had been inserted at the wish of the opium farmer, but he does not want it in now, and in consequence the two sub-sections, 1 and 2, will have to be altered, and sub-section 5 will become sub-section 3, and I move the substitution of the following section in place of sections 1 and 2:—"Every person selling prepared opium, not being dross, shall deliver, &c." That section practically re-enacts all section 16 of Ordinance 1 of 1884

The COLONIAL TREASURER—I second.

Carried.

Upon section 15, dealing with opium farmer's licences,

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL suggested that the sub-section be considered along with sub-section 1 of clause 10 which they had already postponed. The question was one of the opium farmer's power to grant licences and he thought it would be proper to consider them together.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY—In sub-section 1 of section 10 it has been proposed that anyone licensed by the opium farmer be allowed to prepare opium. What I understand the Registrar-general to say is that if we make that new regulation it would be as well to put the same power in this clause. Supposing it should be determined at the next meeting that the opium farmer should be allowed to give licences it would be necessary to make this alteration in this clause.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—It is necessary if we follow the old Ordinance in one section that we should in another. The old Ordinance said that the opium farmer might grant licences at his own discretion. I don't think it is necessary for the clause to stand over to-day. If it is found necessary to add anything next meeting we can easily put in the words of the amendment to the previous section. If the amendment is carried the Acting Attorney-general and myself will go through the Bill, and find where it ought to be put in throughout the Ordinance. I don't think we ought to put off section after section for what may never come off.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—I only called attention to the point as worthy of attention, though the Acting Attorney-general did not seem to think so.

The clause was passed.

With reference to section 28, which gives power to the incoming and outgoing farmers to bring an action for the settlement of any difference if either of them prefers it, instead of submitting to arbitration.

Hon. HO KAI said—I move that this section stand over. It seems to me rather absurd to provide in section 21 that the incoming opium farmer is bound to take over the opium, furniture, implements, and fittings of the outgoing farmer and yet at the same time he is only to pay the fair market value. Who is going to fix the fair market value? There must be arbitration. If you allow the incoming farmer to go to Court then you will have to let him get his case settled before he can carry on the farm, and in the meantime the Government will be losing money. You cannot wait for a decision in a Court.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I have no objection to the clause standing over. I do not

quite know the history of this new clause, nor do I quite follow what the hon. member means.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—The question of making arbitration permissive instead of compulsory was specially inserted by my predecessor in the Treasury. I am not able to find among my notes any reason for making it so, nor am I in a position at present to state why it was made permissive. However, if the clause stands over I will try and get what information on the point I can for the hon. member.

The clause was allowed to stand over.

With reference to clause 31, which provides for the searching of a ship (such ship not having the status of a man-of-war) by a Police or excise officer without warrant.

Hon. P. RYRIE said—I object to that clause. The Government of this colony have given to small Chinese cruisers the status of ships of war, and very wrongly so, I think. It is well known that they are concerned in the suppression of smuggling and as much as thirty chests has been found on some of them. I refer to the very small vessels. It is really absurd that they should be treated as ships of war. They are not ships of war in any sense.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—Really I do not know what the hon. member objects to.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I object to the whole clause.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—If the hon. member would only state whether he objects to the whole clause or to a part of it or to certain words.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—There is nothing new in the clause. It has been in force since 1884.

Hon. P. RYRIE—If you are going to pass such a sweeping Ordinance you should not leave out ships of war.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY—The objection of the hon. member appears to be rather to the class of ship included as a ship having the status of a man-of-war than to the clause itself. It may be a question for another place or another time whether such ships should have that status, but not now. For the present we must leave the law as it stands on that point.

Hon. P. RYRIE—My remarks were made in the interests of the Opium Farmer. I do not press any amendment.

The clause was passed.

With regard to section 32, which empowers excise officers to search any house or ship, when armed with a warrant.

Hon. Ho KAI said—I wish to propose an amendment to this clause. At the end of the clause, I propose to add the words, "provided that immediately before entering such dwelling house, or other place, if the warrant be directed to an excise officer, the said excise officer shall be searched by a Police Officer not under the rank of Sergeant." I mentioned this point last week and I consider it a very important one. I am very glad to find that the present Opium Farmer has been writing to the newspapers on the point and states that these excise officers are so searched. What the Acting Attorney-General said therefore about it

not being practicable to have the officers searched does not hold good because the Opium Farmer declares that the officers subject themselves to a search.

Hon. P. RYRIE seconded the amendment.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—Since the last meeting of Council I have made enquiries as to what does actually take place on these occasions. I have enquired at the Magistracy and of the Magistrate. He tells me that when an informer comes to the Police Station, he goes before a European constable and tells him where the house is which he suspects. Before he actually sets out he is searched by an European officer and an European officer accompanies him to the house where the search is to be made, so that there is very little chance of his getting opium into his possession on his way to the house that is going to be searched. On the other hand I have made enquiries and I find that the defence, if it can be called a defence, that opium was introduced into the house surreptitiously, is set up as it were in the way of a suggestion only, and so far as the Magistrate could inform me, he did not know of a case where any tittle of evidence had been brought to support the statement.

Hon. Ho KAI—Under what authority is the searching done?

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I really don't know. It has been a practice ever since the Opium Ordinance has been in force.

Hon. Ho KAI—Well, since the searching is done now, can there be any objection to putting it in the Ordinance?

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I have already stated that I think it is unnecessary, and I think it very improbable that the evil alluded to by the hon. member has a real existence. As I am not sure whether before an excise officer executes his warrant he is searched, I will make further enquiry.

The clause was allowed to stand over.

On clause 34, which deals with the liabilities of masters and owners having smuggled opium on board.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK said—In connection with this clause it seems to me that if passed it would give rise to an immense amount of ill-feeling and injustice and inflict a considerable amount of hardship on the persons with whom it deals, namely masters and owners. In the neighbouring Colony of Saigon there are many vexatious clauses in connection with opium and other articles which give rise to no end of trouble and which it would be regrettable to introduce here. Chinamen form a large part of our crews on the coast and it is very difficult to prevent them smuggling opium in small quantities, and instead of doing as this clause proposes to

do I think it would be very much better to offer a reward to them for any opium found on board. I think it would be very much better to do that than fine the master or owners \$1,000 for what they might be powerless to help. Take for instance the case of a vessel coming out here from London or Liverpool. The vessel may not be in the habit of coming out here. A Chinese crew is engaged in London and as soon as they get to Singapore they commence smuggling opium on board. They are probably pretty well acquainted with the ways that this can be done and they secrete it in the most out-of-the-way places, under the boilers and so on, and I cannot see how any officer is going to find it. You cannot search these men as they come on board. They crowd on from the wharf, and besides there are the coolies working the ship who are, especially the inexperienced in these waters, the means of introducing this opium into the hands of the crew. I think you will be imposing a fine on an innocent person if you fine the owner or master. If one could reach the actual smuggler well and good, but you don't do that. I think the best plan would be to offer to the officers and crew a reward for any opium found. I have not had time to go into this subject but I hope the few remarks I have offered will appear sufficient to justify the clause standing over.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I beg to second the motion for the clause standing over. It is perfectly ridiculous. You are making the consignee responsible, a man who sits in his office and never sees the vessel. He probably sees the captain once or twice a day, but he knows nothing about the ship. You might as well expect the Attorney-general to go into the street with a bludgeon and a revolver and catch thieves. I do not think the owner should be held liable. Hold the men who smuggle liable and punish them by imprisonment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—I do not wish to oppose the clause standing over and I think it is hardly necessary for me to reiterate what I have said on the subject. The clause may be ridiculous or it may not, but it works well in Singapore. It has been introduced because shipping companies do not seem inclined to help the Government to prevent smuggling into the Colony. The Opium Farmer has complained bitterly, and from independent enquiries I have made he appears to have reason to do so, of the quantities of opium that are smuggled from Macao and the Chinese frontier. This clause is not meant to apply solely to the shipping companies. It includes junks and sampans and sailing vessels and has been introduced because it was thought right to protect the Opium Farmer as well as possible and in order to make the ships take some care. The clause is not nearly so strict as is the law at Singapore. There if the law is infringed the vessel is liable to confiscation. If the hon. member thinks this clause ridiculous the law in Singapore must appear to him the acme of absurdity. Besides, it is provided that if it can be shown that proper precautions have been taken the master is held free from blame, the only exception being if the crew are engaged in smuggling. Those affected are only asked to take the same precautions as they would if the

vessel were going to Singapore or Canton. If a ship is sent to Canton and opium is discovered on board the ship is liable to be sent away from the port. Very stringent measures are taken to prevent smuggling into Canton, and there is no reason why this Colony should not be treated in the same way, but so long as shipping companies want to wash their hands of all responsibility, so long will this Colony lose a great deal of its revenue.

Hon. P. RYRIE—On board the vessels of the Hongkong, Canton, and Macao Steamboat Company there is a special man with a staff under him to look after this and see there is no smuggling. I don't know what is done in other Companies but that is what done in the Company of which I have the honour to be Chairman.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—Yes, that is just the point. He takes care that no opium goes into Canton, but he is not so careful about its not coming in here.

Hon. P. RYRIE—How do you know that? He gets well paid and he is constantly on the lookout for opium.

The clause was allowed to stand over. Several other clauses were passed without discussion and the Bill was left in Committee.

THE RAW OPIUM BILL.

The Council went into Committee on the Bill.

Section 6 was omitted. On section 7, which restricts the movement of opium at night,

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that some of the leading importers in the colony had taken objection to this clause because they thought it would interfere with the import of opium. He had pointed out to them that this clause only dealt with movement under sections 10 and 11 of the principal Ordinance. Section 9 of the principal Ordinance applied to import opium and that section was not referred to in the clause complained of. Section 10 applied to exports and section 11 to local removal. He understood that the importers were satisfied with this explanation and had withdrawn their objection.

In lieu of section 6, which required the weight of opium in each chest to be given, a fresh clause (14) was inserted requiring the weight to be given of all opium with the exception of Bengal opium at the time of sale. With reference to this section.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said what the Opium Farmer really wished to guard against was the abstraction of opium from the chest by dealers after it had left the importers' hands. This he would do by comparing the weight at the time of sale as declared with that subsequently

found to exist at the time of its leaving the Colony. The only point to which importers called attention was that opium was liable to shrinkage and that after it had been some time in store it would not weigh exactly the same as when put in. He did not think there was any danger of anybody being punished in such a case. Importers appeared to fear that persons might be accused of abstracting when really shrinkage was the cause of the diminution, but, as the accused could easily clear himself in such a case by expert evidence the Opium Farmer in his own interest would not be likely to take a course that would only serve to discredit him with regard to the next case he might bring.

A clause stating that the Ordinance would come into operation on a date to be named by the Governor was inserted and the Bill left in Committee.

The Council then adjourned to the 26th inst.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

At the conclusion of the Council meeting, a meeting of the Finance Committee was held. The Acting Colonial Secretary presided.

CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE.

The CHAIRMAN moved a vote of \$240 for conveyance allowance to the superintendent and first clerk of the imports and exports office. At the beginning of the year it was arranged that the superintendent of imports and exports should from time to time make surprise visits to the different opium hong. He had made many of these visits

accompanied by the first clerk, with good effect, and he applied that he might be allowed conveyance allowance.

The vote was agreed to.

THE FIRST CLERK'S SALARY IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

The CHAIRMAN moved a vote of \$288 to cover the increase to the salary of the First Clerk in the Police Department, being 35 per cent. instead of 20 per cent. over his pay, as previously sanctioned. There had been some dispute as to whether he was entitled to 35 or 20 per cent. His Excellency had represented the matter to the Secretary of State, who had sanctioned the increase.

Vote agreed to.

QUARTERS FOR THE BOTANICAL SUPERINTENDENT.

A vote of \$7,600 for the construction of quarters for the Superintendent of the Botanical and Afforestation Department was agreed to.

PRAYA RECLAMATION.

The CHAIRMAN moved a vote of \$50,000, being the Government share for the Praya Reclamation. \$50,000 had already been paid and it was contemplated that another \$50,000 would be required before the end of the year. The work as they knew was being done at the expense of the marine lotholders. The Government were treated the same as the others and had to pay their quota.
