

23RD AUGUST, 1897.

PRESENT:—

His EXCELLENCY the Governor, Sir WILLIAM ROBINSON, G.C.M.G.

His EXCELLENCY Major-General BLACK, C.B. (Officer Commanding the Forces.)

Hon. J. H. STEWART LOCKHART (Colonial Secretary).

Hon. W. M. GOODMAN (Attorney-General).

Hon. T. SERCOMBE SMITH (Colonial Treasurer).

Hon. W. CHATHAM (Acting Director of Public Works).

Hon. F. H. MAY, C.M.G. (Captain Superintendent of Police.)

Hon. R. MURRAY RUMSEY (Harbour Master).

Hon. C. P. CHATER, C.M.G.

Hon. HO KAL.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.

Hon. E. R. BELLIOS, C.M.G.

Hon. J. J. BELL-IRVING.

Hon. WEI A YUK.

Mr. J. G. T. BUCKLE (Clerk of Councils).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

PAPERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid the following papers on the table:—The report of the Secretary of the Sanitary Board for 1896; the Colonial Surgeon's report for 1896; the report on the 1897 census; the assessment for 1897; and amended statements of water account for 1896.

FINANCIAL MINUTES.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY financial minutes Nos. 15, 16, 17, and 18 were referred to the Finance Committee, and the report of the Finance Committee No. 4 was adopted.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEES REPORT.

The ACTING DIRECTOR of PUBLIC WORKS moved the adoption of the Public Works Committee's report No. 3. The motion was carried.

RETRENCHMENT.

In pursuance of notice Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question.—With reference to the Report of the Retrenchment Commission will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the despatches and instructions received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in relation thereto, and in connection with applications in respect of salaries similar to those recently referred by His Excellency the Governor to a Committee?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The despatches, which have been in the hands of the Committee appointed to inquire into certain applications for increases of salary and which have only just been returned, will be printed and laid on the table as desired.

GOLD PAYMENTS.

In pursuance of notice Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—Will the Government lay upon the table a return shewing all sterling payments made in England for any purpose or in the colony on a gold basis with the equivalent dollar amounts disbursed by the Treasury in respect thereof, such return to commence with 1890 and to include the estimated payments for 1897 and 1898?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to lay upon the table the report asked for by the hon. member.

TAIPINGSHAN.

In pursuance of notice Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—What steps do the Government now propose to take with a view to the speedy disposal of the Crown land available at Taipingshan and what were the causes of the failure of the Government to obtain a bid for any lot at the recent sale by public auction?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The Government proposes to adopt the usual course and to wait for applications to sell the land by auction. With regard to the latter portion of the question I regret that it is not possible to state to what causes the failure alluded to by the hon. member was due.

GOLD LOANS.

In pursuance of notice Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—Will the Government lay upon the table a detailed statement or account of the loan of £200,000 raised in 1887, shewing separately in sterling and in dollars all receipts and all payments in connection with or in respect of the principal, interest, and sinking fund, with the dates and the rates of exchange at which each item was converted from sterling into dollars or *vice versa*, in short, a detailed account shewing how much interest per cent. per annum the ratepayers have paid for the loan in question, and a similar account to date in respect of the last loan of £200,000 floated in 1894, shewing in addition what amount thereof is still available, if any, how and in what way the monies have been expended, and what are the available assets in respect of said disbursements? The statement to shew in what securities the sinking fund has been invested, the cost thereof in sterling and in dollars, the annual revenue derived therefrom and the present market value of the securities.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to lay upon the table the statement asked for by the hon. member.

TYPHOID FEVER.

In pursuance of notice Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—Will the Government direct the Medical Officer of

Health to report:—(1.) Upon all cases of typhoid fever which have occurred in the colony during the last 12 months; and (2.) As to whether or not he has instituted any enquiry into the history of these cases, adding thereto the causes which have led to the recent greater prevalence of this disease in the colony, and with what results?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The report of the cases which occurred in 1896 of the disease termed by the Medical Officer of Health "enteric fever" is contained in the Annual Report of that officer published in the *Government Gazette* of the 14th inst. I now lay upon the table another Report by the Medical Officer of Health on the cases of the same disease which have occurred this year. An inquiry into the history of each case has been made. The results of such inquiry are embodied in the Reports of the Medical Officer of Health.

PREPARED OPIUM ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance to further amend the Prepared Opium Ordinance, 1891. I may mention that this Ordinance is not intended to affect the present farm, so that it need not create any anxiety to its effect upon the present farm.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a first time.

WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' PENSIONS ORDINANCE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions (Amendment) Ordinance No. 28 of 1895.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded,

Bill read a first time.

NATURALIZATION ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved and the COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance for the naturalization of Ho Mui Sz alias Ho Lin Shing.

Bill read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council then adjourned until Thursday next.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was then held. Hon. J. H. Stewart Lockhart (Colonial Secretary) presided and all the members were present.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

PUBLIC WORKS EXPENSES.

The first minute was one in which the Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$103,000 to meet the following expenses during the current year:—

Public Works Annually Recurrent Expenditure. —

Repairs to Buildings, \$12,000, Maintenance of Telegraph,
\$ 1 , 0 0 0 .

Public Works Extraordinary.—Water and Drainage Works, Miscellaneous, \$42,000 (chargeable to loan), Taipingshan Improvement, \$40,000, Forming and Kerbing Streets, Victoria, \$3,000, Gardener's Cottage, \$5,000. Total —\$103,000.

Vote recommended.

THE NEW PEAK ROAD.

The next minute was one in which the Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$5,000 for the construction of a new road at the Peak District, from Plantation Road to Magazine Gap.

The CHAIRMAN—Hon. members will remember that the Director of Public Works, at the meeting of Council that has just been held, laid upon the table the report of the Public Works Committee with regard to this new work. That report gives the reasons why the Committee considered it desirable that this work should be carried out, and the amount recommended in this vote, \$5,000, is considered necessary to defray certain preliminary expenses. The Director of Public Works will give any further information that may be desired on this subject.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—What will be the total cost?

The ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS —The total cost of the road, including concreting, will be \$28,000, and the necessary sewers and water mains will cost \$10,000.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—Is this \$5,000 this year's expenditure?

The ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS —It is to enable the work to be gone on with at once.

The CHAIRMAN—The Public Works Committee thought it desirable to have the work put in hand at once.

Vote recommended.

FIRE EXTINGUISHING APPLIANCES AT THE GAOL.

The third minute was one in which the Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$523 to meet the cost of certain fire extinguishing appliances at the gaol.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the Superintendent of the gaol reported that the fire extinguishing appliances were not in a satisfactory condition and that in order to carry out the necessary improvements this sum was required.

Vote recommended.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSE AND DEPOTS.

The last minute was one in which the Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$349.30 in aid of the vote "Slaughter-House, Sheep and Pig Depôts, including Pier."

Vote recommended.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Committee then adjourned.