

9TH OCTOBER, 1902.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, Sir HENRY A. BLAKE, G.C.M.G.

Hon. Colonel L. F. BROWN, R.E. (Senior Officer Commanding the Garrison).

Hon. F. H. MAY, C.M.G. (Colonial Secretary).

Hon. Sir HENRY SPENCER BERKELEY, KNT. (Attorney-General).

Hon. A. M. THOMSON (Colonial Treasurer).

Hon. Commander R. M. RUMSEY, R.N. (Harbour Master).

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

Hon. F. W. CLARK (Medical Officer of Health).

Hon. Dr. HO KAI, C.M.G.

Hon. WEI A YUK.

Hon. C. S. SHARP.

Hon. C. W. DICKSON.

Hon. G. W. F. PLAYFAIR.

Hon. R. SHEWAN.

Mr. C. CLEMENTI (Acting Clerk of Councils).

HON. R. SHEWAN'S RE-ELECTION.

Hon. R. Shewan was re-sworn a member of the Council, having been re-elected to represent the General Chamber of Commerce.

SPEECH BY THE GOVERNOR.

HIS EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR said—Gentlemen, — Since I last addressed you, there have been many changes in the membership of this Council, and while I have to express my regret at the loss of the able assistance that this Council has received in its deliberations from the Members both official and Unofficial who have vacated their seats, I welcome most cordially the Honourable Members by whom they have been replaced, possessing, as they do, a high standard of legal and business capacity that commands the confidence of the community. During my visit to England I had the honour of being received in audience by the King and of hearing from His Majesty's lips his appreciation of the loyalty that has always distinguished Hongkong and of obtaining His Majesty's gracious permission for the erection of the statue proposed to be presented to the Colony by Sir Paul Chater, while His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales expressed his approval of the erection of his statue similarly offered by Mr. Bell-Irving, then a Member of this Council. The grave illness of the King on the eve of the Coronation day has happily terminated without permanent injury to His Majesty's health, and the manner in which it was borne has served intensify if that to were possible the loyal affection for the

person of His Majesty among his people, who admire the kingly qualities of fortitude and courage displayed at that most trying juncture. I was glad to learn by the telegrams that Hongkong was not behind the other portions of the Empire in its demonstrations of joy at the Coronation of the King and Queen, and I hope that the King's Park then dedicated to the use of the public will in future be an open space as attractive as it will be valuable to the inhabitants of Kowloon. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Commerce arranged at Shanghai between Great Britain and China the Inland Navigation Regulations have been revised in accordance with the views put forward by the Hongkong Chamber of Commerce, and the Ports Kowloon on the West River and Weichow on the East River have been opened as Treaty Ports. I congratulate you on this arrangement, for which I have striven for the past three years. Some of the provisions of the Treaty have been adversely criticised on the assumption that the Chinese Government will be unable to perform the obligations accepted by them. It must, however, be apparent, that such assumption would preclude any arrangement whatever, the necessary condition preliminary to any Treaty being an assumption that each of the contracting Powers is able and willing to carry out the obligations agreed upon. The past year has been one of great importance to this Colony, for during the year careful enquiries have been made into its water-supply, its sanitary condition, its education, and its Public Works. The report on the educational system is still under consideration. That on the Public Works Department shows the necessity for an increase in the Public Works staff. Provision in the Estimates has been made for a portion of the proposed increase the remainder is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The failure of the rainfall during the year brought the question of the conservation and distribution of the Water Supply into prominence, the immediate result of which was the passing of a Ordinance dealing with the subject, under which it is hoped that waste may be checked, But apart from the prevention of waste the time has come when the collecting area must be largely increased to meet the requirements of an increasing population. How the expenditure is to be met I will explain later on. In response to representations made last year to the Secretary of State for the Colonies the services of Mr. Osbert Chadwick, the well known engineer, and Dr. W. Simpson, M D., who has been specially employed in India and South Africa during the epidemics of Plague, were obtained to report upon the sanitary condition of Hongkong, especially in relation to plague, the annual recurrence of which in epidemic form had

baffled the efforts of our Medical and Sanitary Officials. Action has already been taken upon Mr. Chadwick's exhaustive report on the Water Supply and Drainage as to which the following passage appears in Professor Simpson's reports: "With reference to the Water Supply and Sewerage they are stupendous works which the Government may well be proud of." Professor Simpson also reports that neither the scarcity of water nor the system of drainage has anything to do with the Plague epidemic, which he attributes mainly to its propagation by rats. The joint report of those eminent experts on the question of the Housing of the Population of Hongkong shows that too many houses are crowded on too small a space; that the tenement houses are occupied by too many people, and that the design of Chinese tenement houses hitherto authorised by law is so faulty as to be in a high degree insanitary. The recommendations of these two gentlemen have been embodied in a Bill that has already been read a first time. Its provisions will involve a very large expenditure of money and the displacement of a number of people estimated at 40,000, for whom accommodation must be provided elsewhere. The ultimate reconstruction of the City on a more sanitary system must necessarily be a slow process. I have placed the sum of \$100,000 upon the Estimates for the purpose of resumption and compensation during the coming year. Apart from the defective plan of the ordinary tenement house, the lamentable loss of life caused by the collapse of newly built houses during the past summer has demonstrated the necessity of making contractors personally responsible for work that does not satisfy the requirements of the law as to quality of materials. This has been dealt with by the new Building Ordinance. While I was in London the question of the purchase of a site for a new Post Office on the Praya was submitted to the Secretary of State and on my recommendation was approved, the payment of the purchase money, \$508,000, being made out of the balance in hand. A sum of \$20,000 for the preparation of the foundations has been placed upon the Estimates and I hope that in a short time the Colony will have the benefit of this much needed improvement. The ordinary Revenue for 1903 is estimated to amount to \$4,583,295, and the ordinary Expenditure to \$4,714,501 leaving a deficit of \$131,206. In addition to this the Estimated Expenditure upon Extraordinary Public Works amounts to \$931,100, while the Estimated Revenue from land sales is \$350,000, leaving a further deficit of \$581,100. The total deficiency to be made good is therefore \$712,306. It is not expedient to raise this sum solely from additional taxation, I therefore propose, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to raise a Loan on account of certain productive Public Works, the total cost of which has been estimated by the Director of Public Works to be \$2,250,000, the Expenditure being spread over five or six years. The sum to be spent on these works in 1903 would amount to \$5,62,000 leaving a deficiency of \$150,306 to be met by additional taxation. To this amount must be added, assuming that the Loan is authorised. Interest and Sinking Fund on Loan \$25,290, Additional Military Contribution \$61,650 and a necessary surplus of \$71,004 making a total of \$308,250 to be provided.

This sum I provide in the following manner:—

Increase in Spirit Licences	\$173,000
Auctioneers' Licences, Billiard Tables,	
Chinese Undertakers, Money-Changers .	3,000
Chinese Passenger Ships' Licences	1,750
Dog Licences	3,500
Marine Store Dealers	6,500
Stamp Duties, all duties other than <i>ad</i>	
<i>valorem</i>	84,000
Bills of Health	3,500
Registration of Deeds	24,000
Examination of Masters	3,000
Registry Fee and Survey of Steam-Ships	6,000
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	\$308,250

Those matters, with the Bills to be laid before you I commend to your careful consideration with earnest hope that the result of your deliberations will forward the best interests of this important community, whose progressive energy has made Hongkong one of the principal ports of the World. (Applause).

FINANCIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table Financial Minutes (Nos. 51 to 59) and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the report of the Finance Committee (No. 12) and moved its adoption.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

PAPERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the Report on the Blue-Book for 1901, and Papers on the subject of the introduction of sterling salaries into the Government service of Hongkong.

HOUSE COLLAPSES.

Hon. C. W. DICKSON asked the following question:—Is it a fact that the houses which have recently collapsed were built in accordance with the Building Ordinance in force in this Colony and were so certified by the Director of Public Works?

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—Certificates under Section 53 of Ordinance No. 15 of 1889 were issued in respect of the following

buildings where collapses occurred:—Nos. 129 and 131, Des VOEUX Road West, No, 45, Praya East, and No. 30, Kowloon City Road.

Hon. G. W. F. PLAYFAIR asked:—As, in the Colonial Secretary's reply to my question at the last meeting of Council, he admitted that there were no regulations on the subject of holding enquiries into collapses of houses, and as section 6 of Ordinance 17 of 1888 only permits the Magistrate to enquire into cause of death and does not compel him to do so, I beg now to ask if the Government will either introduce a separate Ordinance dealing with the whole question or add further sub-sections to clause 228 of the new Public Health and Building Ordinance making such enquiries compulsory, to be held immediately after the occurrence and giving authority for really heavy fines, and not nominal ones, to be inflicted on all concerned.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Sir, on the completion of the enquiry now being held the matter will be considered.

WATER ACCOUNTS.

Hon. G. W. F. PLAYFAIR asked:—(1) Why the Water Accounts for January, February and March were not sent out till 25th of September? (2.) With whom does the responsibility for the delay rest? (3.) Is want of a sufficient staff the reason? (4.) Will an assurance be given that such delays will not be permitted in future?

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The replies to these questions are as follows:—I, The delay in sending out these accounts was altogether exceptional and was due to the following exceptional causes:—(1) The severe drought, which added greatly to the duties of officers engaged in connection with the water-works. (2) The visit of Mr. Chadwick, who required a great amount of information to be compiled for his use, thus further adding to the duties of the officers referred to. (3) The delinquency of a meter-reader in returning fictitious readings of meters, which caused an immense amount of trouble to rectify. II. On the head of the Department. III. Partly and partly the causes already given. IV. Steps are being taken to expedite the issue of water accounts in future.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Before we proceed farther, I think I had better announce to the Council that I have appointed the following Committees under the Standing Orders:—Finance Committee: all the members of the Legislative Council except the President, the Hon. Colonial Secretary being chairman; Law Committee: the Hon. Attorney-General (chairman), Hon. Colonial Secretary, Hon. Dr. Ho Kai, Hon. C. S. Sharp and Hon. G. W. F. Playfair; Public Works Committee: Hon. W. Chatham (chairman), Hon. R. Shewan, Hon. C. W. Dickson, and Hon. Wei Yuk.

FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills were read a first time, on the motion

of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY:—

An Ordinance to amend the Tramway Ordinance, No. 10 of 1902; an Ordinance to amend the Chinese Emigration Consolidation Ordinance, 1889; an Ordinance to amend the Dogs Ordinance, 1893; an Ordinance to repeal the Land Registry Office (Fees) Amendment Ordinance No. 3 of 1844 entitled "An Ordinance to provide for the Registration of Deeds, Wills, Judgments and Conveyances affecting real or immovable property in Hongkong"; an Ordinance to amend the Liquor Licences Amendment Ordinance, 1900; an Ordinance to amend the Stamp Ordinance, 1901.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded by the COLONIAL TREASURER, the following Bill was read a first time:—A Bill entitled an Ordinance to apply a sum not exceeding four million seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand nine hundred and forty-two dollars and twenty-three cents to the public service of the year 1903. In connection with this Bill the Colonial Secretary laid on the table the Draft Estimates for 1903 and usual papers relating thereto.

NATURALISATION BILL.

A Bill entitled an Ordinance for the Naturalisation of Tsang Hon Cho, otherwise known as Tsang Ming Tsoi, otherwise known as Tsang Yiu Wing, was read a first time, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the Bill was read a second time.

The Council afterwards went into Committee on the Bill. On resuming, the Standing Orders were suspended and the Bill was read a third time and passed, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Council adjourned.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held immediately after the Council, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. F. H. May, C.M.G.) presiding.

MARINE EXPENSES.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$400 in aid of the vote of \$1,800, "Government Marine Surveyor, other Charges, Coal, Oil, and Repairs to Steam-launch.

The CHAIRMAN said this vote was rendered necessary by the greater distances which the marine surveyor's launches had to travel.

The recommendation was approved.

MEDICAL CHARGES.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$6,130 in aid of the following votes under the heading "Medical Departments, Other Charges":— Health Officer of Port—

Coal, &c., for launch	\$100.00	
Repairs to launch	<u>250.00</u>	\$350.00
Government Civil Hospital —		
Provisions for patients	\$4,800.00	
Medical comforts	270.00	
Incidental expenses, &c.,	<u>250.00</u>	5,320.00
Government Lunatic Asylums —		
Provisions, &c.	<u>\$300.00</u>	300.00
Government Nursing Institute— Fuel and Light	<u>\$160.00</u>	160.00
Total		<u>\$6,130.00</u>

The CHAIRMAN remarked that with reference to the first item there had been more infected ports and therefore more coal used. Under the head "Government Civil Hospital" the increase was occasioned by there being more patients in Hospital this year and also by there being 28 more beds in Hospital. Under "Lunatic Asylum" there were more European patients and under "Government Nursing Institute," there were two extra Sisters brought out of the Plague Hospital at Kennedy Town.

The vote was agreed to.

PREPARATION OF PLAGUE SERUM.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$635 to cover the initial cost, \$290, and upkeep for three months of the current year, \$345, of four horses for the preparation of anti-plague serum by the Government Bacteriologist.

The CHAIRMAN explained that this serum was in anticipation of the plague next year.

The vote was passed.

CORONATION ILLUMINATIONS.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$517.45, in aid of the vote of \$3,600 taken under Financial Minute No. 17 of 1902, being cost incurred for illuminating certain public buildings in connection with Coronation celebrations in the Colony.

The CHAIRMAN said that the excess here was due to the postponement of the illuminations.

The vote was agreed to.

BONUS TO DR. LOWSON.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of £500, being the amount of a bonus for good service
p r o p o s e d t o b e g r a n t e d

to Dr. J. A. Lowson, on his retirement through ill-health.

The CHAIRMAN read a despatch with referenc to this vote from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who expressed his appreciation of the energy and devotion with which Dr. Lowson had served the Colony.

The recommendation was adopted.

HONORARIUM TO DR. CHUNG.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$500 as an honorarium to Dr. Chung King-Uein consideration of the faithful services rendered by him to the Government and the community as House Surgeon to the Tung Wah Hospital, which services had been terminated by serious sickness.

The CHAIRMAN stated that Dr. Chung had been obliged to retire owing to consumption: he was in poor circumstances and had a wife and family; therefore the Council were asked to vote this comparatively small sum for his assistance:

The vote was approved.

VICTORIA GAOL.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$800 in aid of the vote of \$3,600 for "Fuel and Soap for Victoria Gaol."

This vote was also approved.

FIRE BRIGADE.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$4,100 in aid of the vote of \$3,000, "Repairs to Engines, Hose, &c., and Gratuities, Fire Brigade."

The CHAIRMAN mentioned that this vote was due to the large expenditure of coal used for the engines, there being no water in the mains during the long water famine; and also for coolie hire in dragging the engines to the scene of operations.

The vote was sanctioned.

THE GOVERNOR'S PEAK RESIDENCE.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$3,000 for the purchase of new furniture for "Mountain Lodge" Government House for the current year.

The CHAIRMAN said this was a new house, and it was necessary to furnish it.

The vote was agreed to.

Hon. G. W. F. PLAYFAIR—Have you got beside you, sir, the totals of all these financial amounts from the beginning of the year, because I understand they are all extra on last year's estimates.

The CHAIRMAN—I have not got them beside me.

Hon. G. W. F. PLAYFAIR—Can they be given to us at next meeting?

The CHAIRMAN—Yes.

This was all the business.