21ST JUNE, 1906.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR MATTHEW NATHAN, K.C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL VILLIERS HATTON, C.B. (Commanding the Troops).

Hon. Mr. T. SERCOMBE SMITH (Colonial Secretary).

Hon. Sir H. S. BERKELEY, K.C. (Attorney-general).

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

Hon. Mr. A. W. BREWIN (Registrar-general).

Hon. Captain L. A. W. BARNES-LAWRENCE, R.N. (Harbour Master).

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

Hon. Dr. Ho KAI, M.B., C.M., C.M.G.

Hon. Mr. WEI YUK.

Hon. Mr. E. A. HEWETT.

Hon. Mr. E. OSBORNE.

Hon. Mr. W. J. GRESSON.

Mr. A. G. M. FLETCHER (Clerk of Councils).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

PAPERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the following papers:—Report on the Botanical and Forestry Department for the year 1905; report on the Hongkong Volunteer Corps for the year ending 31st March, 1906; report of the Inspector of Schools for the year 1905.

FINANCIAL MINUTES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 39 to 41, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Financial minute No. 39 provides a sum of $1,000, in addition to the sum of $1,00) for which provision has already been made in the estimates, for compensation for damages caused by disinfection in plague cases, and also a sum of $2,000, in addition to a sum of $3,000, for which provision was made in the estimates, for the burial of plague corpses. These additions to the amounts that have been provided are necessary on account of the outbreak of plague this year having been more serious than in the two preceding years. The total amounts, with the provision now proposed, will be less than those spent in 1903, when the outbreak of plague was of about the same severity as it has been this year. Financial minute No. 40 is for a bonus to Mr. T. A. Hanmer, who has been acting for various officers absent or doing other duties in the Government service since the 16th of May, 1903. His services were no longer required and his engagement came to an end on the recent return of Mr. Gompertz. He applied, however, that he might be granted his pay for the rest of the month, and the application seemed to me as reasonable as I hope it will seem to members of the Finance Committee. Financial minute No. 41 is for the construction of a small post office at Kowloon. The post office will eventually be in the Terminus Station at Hunghom Bay, which will be convenient for the collection and distribution of letters. This Terminus Station, however, is not likely to be completed for two or three years, and the growing importance of Kowloon renders it advisable in the meantime that greater postal facilities should be given to that place. It was proposed to me that for this purpose a building should be rented, but on going into the question I found the cost of renting a building for three years would be nearly as much as the cost of erecting more suitable premises; consequently I decided to put up the structure now in course of erection, facing Salisbury Road. You will think it is possibly a little late for me to come to the Council for money for a building that has already been started, but the reason is, I originally sanctioned the expenditure out of Miscellaneous Works—Public Works Extraordinary. On going through the list of works being constructed on that item, it seemed to me advisable to make a rule that no building costing more than $2,500 should be started without the special sanction of this Council; consequently I propose to transfer this sum of $5,700 to the special vote I am asking for to-day, and the Director of Public Works has noted that I expect a saving of $5,000 to be made on these Miscellaneous Works item.

FINANCIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table report of the Finance Committee No. 5, and moved its adoption.

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

WORKMEN'S CARS.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—Sir, I beg leave to move the resolutions standing in my name.

The resolutions were:—

"1. Resolved that the resolution regarding the running of workmen's cars by the Hongkong Tramway Electric Company, Limited, passed by the Legislative Council on the 15th September, 1904, be rescinded as from to-day.

2. Resolved that until further notice the Hongkong Tramway Electric Company, Limited, shall provide the following number of cars

every morning and evening, at such hours not being later than 7 a.m. nor earlier than 5.30 p.m, as the Company shall think most convenient for artisans, mechanics and daily labourers, at fares not exceeding 2 cents for the single journey and 3 cents for the return journey:—

MORNING.

From Kennedy Town to Arsenal Street, 2 cars.

From North Point to the junction of Wing Lok Street and Connaught Road, 4 cars.

EVENING.

From Arsenal Street to Kennedy Town, 2 cars.

From the junction of Wing Lok Street and Connaught Road to North Point, 4 cars."

These resolutions have reference to the running of workmen's cars by the Hongkong Tramway Electric Company. The present resolution which compels the Company to run certain cars at certain times has been found to work hardly upon the Company, the workmen for whom the cars are running not taking advantage of them. The Company, nevertheless, have been obliged to run these cars. The matter has been under the consideration of a small committee upon which sat, I understand, the senior unofficial member, Hon. Dr. Ho Kai, and my friend, the Hon. Mr. Brewin. They will be able to give to the Council any further information they desire as to the reason why the resolutions which I now move should be passed in place of that passed by the Council on the 15th September, 1904. I now move the resolution be passed to the effect that the Company shall run the specified number of cars every morning and evening at such hours not being later than 7 a.m. nor earlier than 5.30 p.m. as the Company may find most convenient, for artisans, mechanics and daily labourers, at fares not exceeding two cents for the single journey and three cents for the return journey.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL — I beg to second the motion. As the Attorney-General said, these resolutions are the outcome of certain remarks by the senior unofficial member on the last occasion that a resolution on the subject was brought before the Council. The consideration of that resolution was postponed pending an inquiry into the whole question by the small committee which your Excellency appointed. That committee came to the conclusion that the reason why the cars were not availed of so much as seemed reasonable was in a great measure due to the difficulty which the workmen had in understanding that the cars existed for their benefit, which resulted in their not taking advantage of them. The committee furnished the Government with a report, and it was in consequence of that report that the present resolution was brought forward. It of course remains to be seen whether, after the recommendation of the committee is adopted, the workmen will avail themselves of these cars or not. It is the intention of the Government to invite the co-operation of the Chinese in making known as far as possible the benefits which the workmen will derive from moving to the suburbs, and taking advantage of this service of trams.

His EXCELLENCY—The gist of this resolution is that the workmen's cars going from the west in the morning should not as heretofore stop at the Central Market but should go as far as Arsenal Street, and that workmen's cars coming from the east in the morning should not as heretofore stop at No. 2 Police Station, but should go on to the junction of Winglok Street with Connaught Road. That is to say that workmen having their business in the west of the town may still come from east of it and find tramcars convenient, and workmen having their business in the east of the town may utilise the workmen's cars from the west.

The motion was agreed to.

MINING LICENCES.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to empower the Governor to grant licences to search for and prove minerals and to grant licences and leases of land for the purpose of working mines and minerals."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

His EXCELLENCY—The origin of the Bill now being introduced is an application which was received in July of last year from the Hon. Sir Paul Chater for a licence for himself and his employees with respect to minerals in the New Territory. As hon. members will be aware attempts that were made to get minerals from what are now the New Territories at a time before these territories came under British jurisdiction failed. The gentlemen who have taken up the undertaking again are, however, confident that they are likely to meet with more success in the future than has been met with in the past. Certainly if they do meet with success their operations will greatly assist the development of that part of the Colony. It is therefore necessary that the Government should give them every reasonable assistance. I was advised by the Law Officers of the Crown that I had no power as matters stood to grant the permission to mine in the Colony which was asked for. Article 12 of the Letters Patent of 19th January, 1888, constituting the office of Governor and the Commander-in-chief of Hongkong and its dependencies, sets forth the power of the Governor as regards grants. (Quotes.) No instructions have been addressed to the Governor of Hongkong with regard to the disposition of land for mining purposes, and as there are no laws or regulations in force on the subject the Attorney-General advises that the simplest way of dealing with it is for

the Council to pass a short Bill giving the Governor in Council the necessary authority to grant prospecting and mining licences and mining leases. That is the object of the Bill now introduced.

The motion was agreed to.

NAVAL AND MILITARY WORKS.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill entitled "AN Ordinance to authorize the construction and maintenance of certain naval and military works upon and over certain portions of the Crown foreshore and sea bed situate upon the harbour frontage of the City of Victoria, in this Colony." He said—The reason for the introduction of this Bill appears on the short memorandum which is attached to the Bill itself. Shortly it is to legalise the erection and maintenance of the works that may be necessary for the effective working of the Army and Navy. As everyone is aware very extensive naval works are at the present moment in progress. The Ordinance legalises what has been done in respect of any naval or military works and legalises whatever may be necessary in the future. The Bill is one that ought to pass shortly.

The COLONIAL-SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved that the Council go into Committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and this was agreed to.

On the Council resuming,

His EXCELLENCY reported that the Bill had passed through committee without material amendment.

THE DENTISTS' BILL.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL said—With respect to the third order of the day, since the last meeting of the Council when I stated that I would move the adoption of the report of the Law Committee on the Bill, I have had certain amendments suggested to me which I think are worthy of consideration. I would therefore propose that, instead of the Bill being considered by a committee of the whole Council, it be referred back to the Law Committee and brought up at the next meeting of the Council.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and this was agreed to.

ASYLUMS BILL.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill entitled "AN Ordinance to provide for the establishment of asylums for the detention, custody and care of persons of unsound mind, and others."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was passed.

His EXCELLENCY—I adjourn the Council to Thursday, 28th June.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held afterwards — the Colonial Secretary presiding. The following votes were passed:—

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of three thousand dollars ($3,000) in aid of the vote Sanitary Department—Other Charges, Plague, for the following items:—

Compensation for damages by disinfection,	$1,000
Plague corpses, cost of burial,	2,000
Total,	$3,000

BONUS.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred and seventy dollars ($170) in aid of the vote Judicial and Legal Departments, B.—Magistracy--other Charges, Bonus to Mr. T. A. Hanmer.

KOWLOON POST OFFICE.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of five thousand seven hundred dollars ($5,700) in aid of the vote Public Works Extraordinary, Buildings—Post Office, Kowloon.