

16TH MAY, 1907.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER
ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, Hon. Mr. F.
H. MAY, C.M.G.

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

Hon. Mr. H. H. J. GOMPERTZ (Attorney-
General).

Hon. Mr. C. McI. MESSER (Colonial
Treasurer).

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

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

Hon. Mr. F. J. BADELEY (Captain-
superintendent of Police).

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

Hon. Mr. WEI YUK.

Hon. Mr. E. A. HEWETT.

Hon. Mr. W. J. GRESSON.

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were
read and confirmed.

NEW MEMBER.

Mr. C. McI. Messer took the oath, and
assumed his seat as a member of the Council.

HIS EXCELLENCY'S ADDRESS.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Honourable Members of
the Legislative Council:—I have asked you to
meet to-day in order to begin a short session in
which with your assistance I hope to dispose of
some outstanding business and legislation. The
Financial Minutes that will be laid will be
explained to you in the Finance Committee by
the Colonial Secretary. Among the Bills that
appear on the Orders of the Day is the
Supplementary Appropriation. The only item in
the Estimates for last year shewing an excess of
expenditure is Miscellaneous Services, due to
the loss of a large quantity of Subsidiary
Coinsent home last year to be sold. Among the
Papers to be laid on the Table are the Financial
Returns for the year 1906 which show a surplus
of \$202,400 on the working for the year, and an
excess of assets over liabilities on the 31st of
December of \$652,236, not including arrears of
Revenue and over-payments amounting to
\$143,260.65, making a total excess of assets of
nearly \$800,000. These figures show a
satisfactory financial condition. (Applause.) In
addition we have had a large windfall this year
in the shape of the probate duty amounting to
over \$260,000 on the Estate of the late Sir
Robert Jardine, whose name has been long and
honourable connected with the history of this
Colony. (Applause.) This sum enables us
without any difficulty to provide at once the
Government's contribution to the Typhoon
Relief Fund. That contribution will be devoted
to the construction of a new Typhoon Shelter.
Thus what we gain by the demise of an old and
justly respected colonist we are not
inappropriately devoting to the benefit of the
shipping of the Colony in building up whose
prosperity his enterprise and ability

had a very large share. (Applause.) Among the Reports to be laid is that of the Commission which was appointed in May last to enquire into the administration of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance and into the existence of corruption on the part of the officials entrusted with the administration of the Ordinance. The Report together with a minute on it by myself, in the capacity of Colonial Secretary before the departure of the Governor, which is not as full as I could have wished as it had to be prepared at short notice before the Governor's departure, is laid at this the first Meeting of the Legislative Council at the express wish of Sir Matthew Nathan, and his direction was that I should print with the report as much of the evidence which is extremely voluminous, as would render the report intelligible. I intended to print the whole of the evidence of the European and other principal witnesses, but this would have delayed the report another two months. I have therefore only had printed as much of the evidence as is specifically referred to in the marginal notes of the report, and in two cases in the minutes upon it. But a typed copy of the evidence of the more important of the witnesses on the point principally of the administration of the Ordinance is laid on the table and can be consulted by Members or by the Public in this room, but must not be removed therefrom. The whole evidence, to give you an idea of the voluminousness of it, and the work entailed, is contained in those nine volumes. Gentlemen, this is not the time for me to offer comment in detail on the report. While open to no little criticism on many points, its recommendations are receiving the most serious consideration of the Government. The most valuable part of the work done by the Commissioners, is in laying bare a very widespread corruption among the subordinate officials of the Sanitary Department. The evidence furnished by the Commissioners has already resulted in the dismissal of a number of Officers, many of them English Sanitary Inspectors in enjoyment of very good salaries, while the cases of others are still under investigation. It is humiliating to read of Englishmen in the position of these men so utterly devoid of all self respect and lost to all sense of honour as to allow themselves to sink into such a life of dishonesty as is evidenced in the report. Their conduct, gentlemen, drags the name of Englishman of which every Englishman ought to be proud, into the mire, and tarnishes the national honour. On the other hand the conduct of a certain section of the Chinese population in offering and even pressing filthy bribes on men who in many instances never even asked for them is most reprehensible. We take trouble and spend money in teaching the principles of hygiene in our schools. I am taking steps to have the rising Chinese generation in Government Schools at any rate taught that it is as wicked to give as to receive a bribe. (Applause.) Gentlemen, the thanks of this Honourable Council and of the Community at large are due to the Commissioners, and more especially to the Chairman

of the Commission, for the enormous labour they have devoted to the work they have now accomplished, and it is my earnest hope that improvement in the administration of the Sanitary Laws and a more healthy tone in the subordinate branches of the Department may follow on their investigation. (Applause.)

FINANCIAL MINUTES.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 14 to 20, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded. Carried.

COLONIAL CEMETERY BYE-LAW.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to lay on the table the additional bye-law made by the Sanitary Board under Section 16 of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 19 3, and move its adoption. It refers to the schedule of fees for burials in cemeteries.

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

PAPERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table the following papers:—Report of the Captain Superintendent of Police, and the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade for the year 1906; Report of the Botanical and Forestry Department for the year 1906; Report of the Director of the Hongkong Observatory for the year 1906; Report on Queen's College for the year 1906; Report on the Census of the Colony for the year 1906; Report on the Widows and Orphans Pension Fund for the year 1906; Report of the Harbour Master for the year 1906; Report on the study of Hygiene in Hongkong Schools for 1906; Report on the Blue Book for 1906; Report on the Police Magistrates Courts for the year 1906; Financial Returns for 1906; Report of the committee appointed to inquire whether earlier warning of the typhoon of September 18th, 1906, could have been given to shipping.

QUESTIONS.

Hon. Mr. HEWETT, in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Pollock, asked the following questions standing in the latter member's name:—

1 (a) When will work on the new harbour of refuge be commenced?

(b) How long is such work likely to take?

2 (a) What was the cost of erecting the retaining wall on the south side of the Signal Station at Blackhead's Point?

(b) Who has ultimately to bear the cost of such retaining wall?

3 (a) Has the Government received any report from Mr. Hallifax with reference to motor fire engines or an improved system of fire-alarms?

(b) If the Government has received such a report, will the Government lay it upon the table?

ANSWERS.

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, in reply to the first and second sets of questions, said:—

1 (a) It is anticipated that the work of constructing the breakwater can be begun in about five months from the present time.

(b) On fuller investigation, the scheme originally proposed, with some important alterations based on the experience gained from the recent typhoon, is found to be much more costly than originally estimated. In view of this fact a modification of the scheme is under consideration. But it is hoped that a beginning will be made with the work in about five months' time. The time occupied in carrying out the work will be from three to four years, according to the scheme finally settled.

2 (a). \$20,325.59.

(b). The Colonial Government. About 1887, the Government entered into an arrangement with the holders of Garden Lots to convert their holdings into Inland Lots on payment of premium and Crown rent at certain rates. The plan, on which the offer was based, showed a road in the position of Middle Road, and the lessee of the lot bounded by it has demanded ever since that this road should be constructed. The Government demurred to constructing it on account of the great cost involved. The sale of Kowloon Marine Lots 74 and 75 in 1902 provided an opportunity of getting the hill cut down free of cost and this was availed of, the purchasers of these lots being required to do the necessary cutting under their conditions of sale. It proved necessary to construct a retaining wall to support the hill, which is the property of the War Department, and the wall has been constructed accordingly.

The CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, in reply to the third question, answered:—

Mr. Hallifax enquired into the systems of street fire alarms in use at several large towns in England and Scotland. He did not enquire into motor fire appliances. He has reported to me as Head of the Department but the report being of a confidential nature cannot be laid on the table. The matter of which system to adopt is now under consideration. It is hoped that at least 12 alarms of the selected system will be in position before the end of the year.

APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to authorize the Appropriation of a Supplementary Sum of Four hundred and seventy-seven thousand, eight hundred and forty-nine Dollars and fifty-three Cents, to defray the Charges of the Year 1906," and that the reading of the title be sufficient for the purposes thereof.

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

VALIDITY OF A JUDGE'S DECISIONS.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to remove doubts as to the validity of the proceedings of the Supreme Court of this Colony during the time that Alfred Gascoyne Wise, Esquire, held the office of Puisne Judge of such Court from the 25th day of June 1902 down to the present time," and that the reading of the title be sufficient for the purposes thereof.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was carried.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE AMENDMENT ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Bills of Exchange Ordinance, 1885," and that the reading of the title be sufficient for the purposes thereof.

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

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY AMENDMENT ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Married Women's Property Ordinance, 1906," and that the reading of the title be sufficient for the purposes thereof.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was carried.

PROBATES AMENDMENT ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Probates Ordinance; 1887," and that the reading of the title be sufficient for the purposes thereof.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was carried.

HONGKONG COLLEGE OF MEDICINE.

Hon. DR. HO KAI moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance for the incorporation of the Hongkong College of Medicine," and that the reading of the title be deemed sufficient for the purposes thereof.

Hon. Mr. WEI YUK seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Gentlemen, before we adjourn I would like to inform you that the hon. member who sits at the bottom of the left

side of the table (Hon. Mr. Gresson) has asked for leave to proceed home to England on furlough. I am sure that I voice the sentiments of hon. members when I say we shall miss one whose urbanity, uprightness of character, and business capacity render him as popular as he is respected (applause). We wish him a good holiday and a safe return to this country. The Council stands adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was then held, the COLONIAL SECRETARY presiding. The following votes were passed:—

POSTAL EXPENSES.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Six hundred and fifty-nine Dollars (\$659) in aid of the vote Post Office, Shanghai Postal Agency, Other Charges, Incidental Expenses.

POSTAL AGENCIES.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of One hundred and sixteen Dollars and ninety-seven Cents (\$116.97) in aid of the vote Post Office, B.—Postal Agencies in China for the following items:—

Amoy, Other Charges, Incidental Expenses.....	\$54.22
Swatow, Other Charges, Incidental Expenses.....	62.75
Total.....	<u>\$116.97</u>

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I suppose it is the usual thing—the dollar is going down and the expenses are going up.

COMMISSION EXPENSES.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Eight hundred Dollars (\$800) in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services, Public Health and Buildings Ordinance Commission.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—This is owing to extra printing.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of Two thousand Dollars (\$2,000) in aid of the vote Public Works Extraordinary, Drainage, Large Flushing Tanks for Main Sewers, &c.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—This is in effect a revote, but Sir Matthew Nathan declined to

sanction as revotes any unexpended balances on continuing services such as this.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of Seven hundred and fifty Dollars (\$750 at 2/- =£75.0.0.) in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services, Grants-in-aid of Other Institutions:—Imperial Institute.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—New cases are required for Hongkong exhibits.

POLICE AND PRISON DEPARTMENTS.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of One thousand three hundred Dollars (\$1,300) in aid of the vote Police and Prison Departments B—Fire Brigade, Other Charges, for the following items:—

Coolie hire,.....	\$600
Incidental Expenses,	200
Repairs to Hose and Other Plant,.....	500
Total.....	<u>\$1,300</u>

LAND RESUMPTION.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of Two thousand five hundred and eighty-one Dollars and eighty-five Cents (\$2,581.85) in aid of the vote, Miscellaneous Services, Compensation for resumption of Taxlord lots in the New Territories.
