

5TH MARCH, 1908.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR — SIR
FREDERICK JOHN DEALTRY LUGARD,
K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

HON. MR. F. H. MAY, C.M.G. (Colonial Secretary.

HON. MR. W. REES DAVIES (Attorney-
General).

HON. MR. A. M. THOMSON (Colonial
Treasurer).

HON. MR. W. CHATHAM, C.M.G. (Director of
Public Works).

HON. MR. A. W. BREWIN (Registrar-General).

HON. COMMANDER BASIL R. H. TAYLOR, R.N.
(Harbour Master).

HON. DR. HO KAI, M.B., C.M., C.M.G.

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK, K.C.

HON. MR. WEI YUK.

HON. MR. E. OSBORNE.

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

Minutes.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read,
and confirmed.

Financial Minutes.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by direction of
His Excellency the Governor, laid on the table
Financial Minute No 8, and moved that it be
referred to the Finance Committee.

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

**Public Health and Buildings Ordinance
(Amendment) Bill.**

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the first
reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend
the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903,
and the Public Health and Buildings Amendment
Ordinance, 1903.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
seconded.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I rise to speak to a Bill of
somewhat unusual interest and importance—an
Ordinance to Amend the Public Health and
Buildings Ordinance of 1903. The Commission
which my predecessor appointed reported as long
ago as 18th April, 1906. It may seem that a
somewhat unusually long time has elapsed since
the Government was in a position to bring forward
the present Bill, but I would remind you that an
Ordinance was passed in June last to deal with
certain of the questions raised, such as open spaces,
scavenging lanes, and other urgent matters. The
Officer Administering the Government found it
necessary to appoint a committee to make more
precise recommendations in the matter of cubicles.
The report of the committee was received in
August last. Then the question as to the relations
between the Sanitary Board and the Building
Authority was a matter which necessitated
exhaustive inquiry by experts, and the report of
those who were appointed to deal with that
question has only been comparatively recently
received by the Government. Many of the earlier
recommendations of the Commission involved
executive action which did not necessitate any
amendment of the law, and in many respects this
executive action has been taken, or is being taken.
Finally the Bill incorporates a large number of
amendments which were found necessary, from
time to time, since the Principal Ordinance was
passed in 1903, and these have taken considerable
time and work.

I could wish that my predecessor had been here
to carry through this legislation which he may be
said to have inaugurated. He would have dealt with
it with great ability, and with more fluency of
speech than I am able to command. But I will not
yield to him in the fullness of my endeavours to
study the interests of the colony, or in the efforts
which I have used to that end.

I would first remind you of the history and
constitution of the Commission whose report may
be said to be the immediate precedent cause of the
present legislation. Complaints had been made by
the unofficial members of the Sanitary Board and
others that the hands of some of the subordinates

of the staff of the Sanitary Department were not as clean as they might be, and that bribery and corruption existed. The idea was conceived by my predecessor of appointing the unofficial members of the Sanitary Board to investigate those charges, more especially because those who were accused were government officials. The terms of reference to the committee were expanded into an inquiry into the administration of the sanitary law, but Sir Matthew Nathan, in the preceding correspondence, expressly said he had no intention of modifying the law, and that the committee was not appointed to that end. The terms of reference included an investigation into the "inconsiderate action of the officials" in enforcing the law and into certain charges of irregularity and corruption, and secondly whether the administration of the existing law was satisfactory—not whether the law was adequate, which, as I have said, was expressly excluded. An investigation into the conduct of the officials could not, of course, be conducted without the power to compel the attendance of witnesses and to take evidence on oath, and therefore the committee became a commission.

I have laid some stress on this point because I think it has been assumed that the Commission was a representative one with unlimited scope of investigation. That was not so. No Government official sat upon it, and no member of the community other than those on the Sanitary Board. If the scope of its investigations had been unlimited I think we might naturally suppose that a larger sphere of interest and experience would have been included on the Commission than were represented by the able public-spirited and experienced gentlemen who formed the unofficial members of the Sanitary Board. I have, gentlemen, nothing but admiration for the way in which the Commission attacked the problems before it. For a space of nearly a year they gave up their private time to the investigation, and they brought to bear on that work great capacity, industry, and large local knowledge. The scope of their enquiry extended over the ground that had been covered by two previous Commissions from England, in 1881 and 1902, by Messrs. Simpson and Chadwick. They have made many very useful suggestions, some of which are embodied in the Bill before us; and some of which have already been given effect to by executive action. I would remind you that one of these Special Commissions to which I have alluded—the second of them—submitted a draft Bill on Public

Health and Buildings which formed the basis of our Public Health and Buildings Ordinance of 1903.

The report of the Commission gradually assumed the form of a severe criticism both of the past and present action of the Government. It included matters which had been settled by the Secretary of State, but as there was no official sitting on the Commission who was familiar with the correspondence between the Governor and the Secretary of State, and who might therefore have been able to correct misapprehensions, old controversies were awakened which had been sifted by different Governors at different times, and to which the remedies that appeared most suitable had been applied with the concurrence of the Secretary of State. But it is impossible to rise from a perusal of the report, and the evidence which supports it, without feeling that the Colony owes a very great debt of gratitude to these public-spirited gentlemen, who, as I have said, devoted such a large portion of their time to the investigation of these public questions. Since, however, the Commission was not representative of the whole community honourable members will, I think, agree that it was my bounden duty to consider the more carefully their various recommendations before the Bill was produced which is now before us. I have given very careful consideration and much thought to the report of the Commission and with some of their proposals I do not find myself in agreement—I speak of some only of their proposals—nor do I think that they represent the wishes of the entire community. Of these I will speak presently.

The Bill before you, like the report of the Commission itself, deals with a vast amount of detail, into which I do not propose to enter. I will confine my observations to the larger principles. Attached to the Bill is a statement of the objects and reasons of each clause, and we shall be able to consider these in committee when we discuss the Bill clause by clause. There is, of course, no clause in the Bill referring to corruption or bribery, for that matter involves executive action, but no alteration of the law. In no direction, however, did the Commission do better service than they did in exposing certain malpractices. You will recollect that

the Government took immediate and effective action in regard to the disclosures made. I think myself the best way to prevent such malpractices in future is the appointment of a working head of the department who will be able to keep the subordinates under his immediate discipline and control.

That brings me to the question of the administrative head of the department and the Presidency of the Sanitary Board. No change is intended, or is contained in the Bill now before us, in the general principle which was embodied in Section 3 of Ordinance 23 of 1903. Experience has proved, and the Commission very forcibly pointed out, that it is not advisable for the Principal Medical Officer to combine the duties of administrative head of the department with the many arduous and responsible duties he has as Principal Medical Officer. Nor do I think myself that it is sound in principle that the expert of the Board, whose views may be set aside for reasons of finance or policy, should himself be president of the Board. The Principal Medical Officer agrees with this view. But if he is to be effectually relieved of his duties as administrative head of the department and president of the Board and to resume his proper position as independent adviser to the Government he should, I think, no longer be a member of the Board at all, nor do I think that having been president he should be relegated to any less responsible position. I see myself no reason why the Medical Officer of Health should not have a seat on the Board. It has been urged that he is a servant of the Board, responsible for carrying out the decisions of the Board, but the president is no less a servant of the Board to carry out its decisions. It seems to me to be no anomaly that he who carries out the decisions of a corporate body should be a member of that body. It seems to me rather an anomaly that he should not be so. The fact that he has a vote is likely to enhance his sense of responsibility. His opinions are made public and recorded in the proceedings of the Board. The Sanitary Board weigh this expert opinion against questions of finance and policy, and the majority decide what shall be the issue. The Bill before you substitutes the Medical Officer of Health for the Captain Superintendent of Police. I am well aware that this point is arguable and has been argued before, and I do not feel disposed to insist upon it if the views of the majority are obviously against it.

The Government propose that the new head of the department to take the place of the Principal Medical Officer shall be a cadet officer with experience of the Chinese, and their language, and of proved administrative capacity. In this view I believe the Commissioners agree.

It would however, gentlemen, be idle for me to burke the issue which the Commissioners have raised—whether the administrative head of the department should be responsible to the Sanitary Board or to the Government. I have given very careful consideration to this point, and I cannot see how an officer who is appointed by the Crown and paid by the Crown—an officer who holds his position at the pleasure of the Crown and whose career is bound up in the efficiency of the department, and who can only be censured or removed by the Government he serves—can be responsible to any other body but the Government. It is not analagous to quote the case of a company, whose chairman is a servant of the directors. A chairman of a company can be removed or deposed at any time by the directors. If he has been appointed under the articles of association as a permanent chairman these articles can be altered at any time by a meeting of shareholders. A company administers its own funds. The executive head of a department is the senior officer among many others who are also appointed and discharged by Government. It seems to me that the head of the Sanitary Department must be like every other head of a department, amenable to the Government. The recommendations of the Commission on this point were signed by the whole of the members, but I think I am correct in saying that more than one agree more or less with the views which I have stated. The working head of the department must, in my opinion, be given full powers of discipline and control of the day to day routine of the department, more especially as the Sanitary Board itself only meets once every fortnight.

The Commissioners say that Ordinance 23, the first amending Ordinance of 1903, when passed by this Council, was not fully understood. The memorandum of the hon. Colonial Secretary which was laid on the table of this Council goes to show that the matter was very fully debated, and it seems to me that the complaint of the Commission is somewhat chimerical and groundless when

you recollect that by their own showing in their evidence they were unaware for some three or four years that they had been deprived of the power which they now consider to be so essential. It was not until they began to take evidence that they found out that they had lost the power. However this may be, it is interesting to recall the history of the Amending Ordinance 23 of 1903. The original draft of the Bill (I mean of the principal Ordinance) provided for a "Sanitary Commissioner" as head, because Messrs. Simpson and Chadwick, the experts sent out from England, said that Hongkong was peculiar in having no individual responsible to the Governor for the administration of the sanitary law of the Colony. The section, however, appointing an administrative head was deleted and the Principal Medical Officer was made chairman of the Board but without any powers. The Secretary of State, in conveying the approval of His Majesty to the Ordinance, pointed out in very forcible terms the practical difficulties which must ensue from having set aside this recommendation of the special commissioners and therefore Ordinance No. 23 was introduced with, I believe, the primary intention of creating an administrative head of the department. Those therefore who view this question from an atmosphere less heated by local controversy and who bring to the aid of their judgment the experience they have gained in other countries, have come to the conclusion that, in order to maintain the efficiency and practical utility of the department, a working head is necessary. The Secretary of State, with his advisers; Messrs. Chadwick and Simpson with their experience; and I may add myself with whatever experience I have gained of administration; are fully convinced that to work successfully and to maintain discipline—which the Commissioners said was lamentably deficient—there should be a working head who shall devote his whole time to the task. A head who shall be vested with adequate powers and responsibility, and whose career shall depend upon the efficiency of the department and who, like his subordinates, shall be responsible to the Government. He will be responsible for the proper spending of the votes for the Sanitary Department under the control of the Treasury, and of the Audit Department.

The appointment, however, of the new head of the department which is provided for in this Bill,

does not in any way diminish the very large powers which the Ordinance confers upon the Sanitary Board. I propose that the head of the department shall, before the 31st March of each year, lay the estimates before the Sanitary Board for discussion, together with any proposal which he may have to make regarding works of a sanitary nature included in the vote for public works extraordinary. I propose that he shall consult the Sanitary Board on any suggested changes in giving effect to sanitary Bye-laws; that he shall inform the Board of any change in the organisation of the staff; that he shall inform them regarding any recommendations for appointment, leave, or dismissal of the European staff; and that he shall lay before them any complaint of the public regarding the staff.

I have spoken of the financial responsibility of the head of the department, and since I am endeavouring to lay before you a final exposé of the action of the Government in connection with the report of the Commission I will refer also to their suggestions on this subject. The Commissioners suggested that the Sanitary Board should have unrestricted power to spend the entire sum voted for the sanitation of the colony. The sum voted for sanitation, gentlemen, is divided under various votes which are authorised and allocated by this Council. If the Sanitary Board is to deal with the sum as a lump sum then the power of this Council is taken away and conferred upon the Sanitary Board. A large portion of these votes are concerned with the personal emoluments of officials. These are assigned under the terms of agreement or appointment made by the Crown, and it is not legally possible for any corporate body to alter these salaries. For the rest they already have full powers over all "other charge" votes. The Commission also suggested that the Board should have the power of appointing and discharging officers, but it is not possible for any corporate body to dismiss officers appointed under the Crown whose rights are safeguarded to them through the representative of the Crown with an ultimate right of appeal to the Secretary of State. Neither do I think it would be to the benefit of the department to be run as a separate concern from the rest of the Civil Service. You would not get the same class of men; you would not get continuity,

which I consider to be the

key to efficiency, since it is based on accumulated experience. At the present time, gentlemen, I think that as part of the British Empire we prefer to be governed by a trained Civil Service with a legislative Council on which the community is represented by its most distinguished members, and not by a majority of the Sanitary Board.

I pass now to another of the principal questions dealt with in this Bill. The Commissioners complained that there had been great delay in the passing of plans and in other matters connected with the Building Authority. They propose as a solution that the Sanitary Board should control its own staff of engineers. This must necessarily mean duplication and of course additional cost, and I think that hon. members will agree with me that at the present time our efforts should be directed towards reducing instead of increasing expenditure, especially now that the initial work in connection with sanitation has been surmounted. The memorandum prepared by the hon. Director of Public Works and laid on the table of the Council dealt with the arguments advanced by the Commission in clear and concise terms. He pointed out the overlapping which must occur and the difficulty of discriminating between the sphere of action of the Public Works Department and of the engineering staff of the Sanitary Board. I need not repeat these arguments in detail which appear to me as they did to my predecessor to be convincing. I recognise, however, the justice of the complaint of the Commissioners, and I agree that the best way to remedy this is that there be no division of control and that the Building Authority should be under one department. I think that department should be the Public Works and that the Director of Public Works should be responsible for the duties under the Ordinance which come under the purview of the Building Authority. The Bill provides for this, and it will be necessary to transfer such officers as are employed under the Building Authority from the Sanitary Department to the Public Works Department.

In future in order to expedite business plans will not have to be signed by the Medical Officer of Health, and the Director of Public Works will wherever possible dispense with plans altogether. Financially this arrangement will effect a considerable saving. The scheme of a separate engineering staff was in fact part of what the Commissioners called a "quasi municipal"

scheme which I do not think myself is compatible with the conditions of this Colony. The chief engineer of the Sanitary Board would have to be an officer of equal standing with the Director of Public Works, because the Sanitary Board themselves have not the technical knowledge to control a man of lesser standing and experience. That of course would involve increased cost and it is inevitable that there would be friction. I think also that the Building Authority should be a Government department which has no bias towards property owners who are necessarily largely represented on the Sanitary Board, and whose interest it is to serve the community as a whole and to carry out the wishes of the Government. Intending purchasers of land desire to know how they will be dealt with under the Ordinance, and they would not wish their proposals to be made public, as they must be, if laid before a public body like the Sanitary Board. Similarly with regard to alterations of boundaries, and resumptions of land by Government, it is not desirable that they should be prematurely made public. The Building Authority must know, otherwise plans would be passed which would interfere with designs, Roads, main drains, and water works are under the Public Works Department, and it is part of their duty to verify boundaries, and to deal with covenants in conditions of sale. If the engineering department of the Sanitary Board were separated from the Public Works Department a building might be authorised which would interfere with the levels and alignments of these roads. I agree with the Commissioners that it is absolutely necessary that the Building Authority should be under one department. In order to give effect to this I propose to transfer the senior sanitary surveyor and two clerks from the Sanitary Department to the Public Works Department, and when the post of a junior sanitary surveyor falls vacant an assistant engineer will be appointed in his place in the Public Works. Two drainage inspectors will also be transferred as overseers in the Public Works Department. All these officers are intimately associated with the Building Authority. The cost of the engineering staff proposed by the Commission was £3,260 and to

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we should have to add the additional pay required for a more senior engineer, and the amount involved by incremental rises.

Under the new scheme the minimum cost will be £2,790, and the maximum £3,345, but that maximum can never be reached, as it is impossible that all officers will be simultaneously drawing the maximum rate. There will therefore be a considerable saving. In practice the Public Works Department will serve notices against property owners for certain nuisances such as deficient window area, absence of open spaces, illegal cock lofts, obstruction in back yards, and that class of nuisances which fall under the purview of the Building Authority. Notices of plans will as now be deposited with the Public Works Department showing how it is proposed to deal with the nuisance. All other notices referring to sanitary questions will be issued by the Sanitary Board, as heretofore. Similarly the Public Works Department will deal with house drainage which is part of construction. In future owners will have no trouble or expense with regard to plans as to drainage; it will not be necessary to have duplicate plans, and there will only be need for one certificate of completion. Since all structural work will be under one department there will, I hope, be no further delays.

The Commissioners also advocated an increase in the number of Medical Officers of Health and a decrease in the number of Inspectors. Of the three assistant Medical Officers of Health whose salaries are provided for in the current estimates, one post has been vacant now for a very long time, and during the past year one officer has been on leave. The Medical Officer of Health has also for some time past been acting as Civil Veterinary Surgeon, yet there has been no complaint of neglect of work or overstrain. That, I daresay, may be due largely to the great personal energy and experience of the present Medical Officer of Health. In future, by the appointment of a working head of the department, the Medical Officer of Health will be relieved of a great deal of correspondence. I see, therefore, no necessity for filling up the vacancy which exists and still less for increasing the staff of Medical Officers of Health. It is not possible to substitute medical officers for inspectors. That class of man would not consent to personally supervise cleansing operations, inspect nuisances, or control

gangs of colliers nor do I think in many cases he would be physically fit to do so, nor has he the training for such work. Since, however, I do not propose to increase the staff of medical officers of health the Commissioners would no doubt not recommend so large a decrease in inspectors.

They proposed to abolish senior inspectors. These men each supervise two districts with two district inspectors under them. The system seems to me to have been a good one as affording a check on district inspectors, giving opportunities for promotion, and introducing some elasticity. The Medical Officer of Health advocates it, but since the Commission urged it and laid great stress upon it I have decided to give it a trial. It can be effected in two ways, either by increasing the number of districts, or by relieving the district inspectors of some of their duties, since it is clearly impossible that two men can do the duty of three men who were already fully employed. In Kowloon, being a new and progressive area, we propose to create a new district as was recommended by the Commission, but in Hongkong the creation of new districts would involve such inextricable confusion in land records and in statistics that I do not think it would be advisable to do so. The Medical Officer of Health gives it as his opinion that if this method were adopted the number of districts would have to be increased from 12 to 18 so that there would be no decrease in the number of inspectors required. The alternative is to relieve the district inspector of some of his duties by appointing, say, four inspectors for special duties. These additional men will also be very much required in order to provide for vacancies by illness, or by the absence on leave of district inspectors. The pay of inspectors will be from £240 to £270 per annum, increasing by £15 triennially, that is if they are fully qualified in Chinese, otherwise from £165 to £225. It is not possible to raise this rate of pay as otherwise subordinates in other departments of similar grade would have a claim also to have their salaries raised. It is considered enough as it is increased by certain allowances. The Commissioners did not recommend the decrease of plague inspectors and these remain as before. With regard to cattle depôts the Commissioners suggested that there should be two inspectors, but the Medical Officer of Health is of opinion that three are necessary: one for

Kowloon and two for Kennedy-town—one for day and one for night duty. The Commissioners propose that there should be two inspectors for cemeteries, but since the laying out of the cemeteries will now pass to the Public Works Department as the work of the Building Authority, one will probably be sufficient. The Commission recommended two inspectors for disinfecting, but probably one will suffice: only one has been employed hitherto and no difficulty has occurred. They urged also that prosecuting inspectors should be abolished. The Medical Officer of Health opposed this on the ground that the time of the district inspectors would be greatly wasted by hanging about the Courts, and that they would not be able to cope with their duties. I think that by appointing special hours and special days we will be able to satisfactorily arrange, and therefore prosecuting inspectors will be abolished. The present staff of inspectors is 18 for 12 districts. Under the new scheme there will be 13 for districts and four extra inspectors for scavenging and replacements. Five plague inspectors will remain, also the three inspectors for depôts. There will be one disinfecting inspector as before, and only one inspector for cemeteries. The three prosecuting inspectors, the market inspector, and one limewashing inspector will be abolished. Thus we have abolished eight of the inspectors as recommended by the Commission, leaving a total of 27 as against 35. Some of these have already reverted to their duties in the Police, from which service they were temporarily taken. In the matter of lime-washing the Commission recommended that half yearly limewashing should be discontinued and we have now arranged that it should be carried out once a year only, since periodic cleansing is enforced, and any houses which are found to be dirty may be ordered to be cleansed. The Commission also advised the reduction of the number of interpreters from 17 to 15. We propose that only 14 should be retained. These changes, of course, together with those I have indicated with regard to the Building Authority, cannot be brought into operation in their entirety at once, as the engagement of men already employed cannot be arbitrarily cancelled. Our object is primarily reform and not reduction, though the saving which will accrue from the changes I have indicated will amount to between £9,750 and £14,240, that is to say the latter sum is what will be saved when full effect has been given

to the whole of the changes.

There are many other matters of detail on which the Commission made recommendations and which involve executive action and not any alteration of law. Some have already been carried out as you will have seen from different sessional papers laid on the table of this Council, such for instance as the matter of open spaces. In the matter of cubicles, the recommendations of the Committee which reported on this matter last August have been practically adopted *in toto* with the exception of Paragraph 9, which referred to pulling down the upper storey of every third house. This was not intended to be carried into operation forthwith, but to be kept in view as a theory and as an ideal to be aimed at. Both for structural and financial reasons no action in that direction can be taken at the present time, but the recommendations, with which I agree in principle, will be kept in mind. At the time when the Commission presented their report the Sanitary Board had not, I think, realised their powers under the proviso to Section 154 of the Ordinance on the subject of cubicles, as was pointed out by the hon. member at the end of the table on my left (Mr. Keswick). In the years 1903 to 1906 the average number of cases presented to Government for exemption or modification under the Ordinance was 2.75 per annum. Since the date on which the Government pointed out the powers of the Sanitary Board the number of modifications and exemptions which have been recommended involved 4,179 floors contained in 2,247 houses. The Government has recognised the principle that cubicles are a necessity among the Chinese, and has taken such steps as are in their power, by a house-to-house inspection which is now nearly completed, to harmonise as far as possible the interests of the people with the dictates of sanitation.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I would say on behalf of myself and the Civil Servants who collaborated in preparing the Bill now before you, that no effort has been spared to sift to the bottom every recommendation made by the Commissioners, or which has come from any outside source, and to give effect in the fullest possible way to every point which appeared to us to be for the public good. I recognise with admiration the public spirit of the unofficial members of the Sanitary Board who devote so much time to the discussion

cussion of public affairs. Nothing in this Bill will diminish the large powers given them under the Act with the exception of the transfer of the Building Authority to the Public Works Department, which has been done in order to promote economy and rapidity. The Sanitary Board will still retain its power of criticism and of making known its wishes. The Bill, as I have said, deals of course only with matters which necessitate an alteration in the law. But many of the recommendations of the Commissioners involved executive action only, and the extent to which these have been given effect does not appear from the terms of the Bill. The discussion of some of these points may seem, in some cases, irrelevant, but I have considered that I would be best fulfilling the wishes of the Council and of the Community outside these walls if I travelled somewhat beyond the clauses of the Bill and explained, as fully as I am able to do, not only the legal, but the executive action, which the Government has taken, and is at present taking, or is about to take, to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission.

Generally speaking the aim of the Bill and of the executive action of the Government has been to introduce such reform into the law and the procedure as the investigations of the Commission have shown to be necessary; secondly to introduce such other amendments as have been shown to be necessary since 1903; and thirdly to relax wherever possible, without danger to the community, the stringency of our methods where they seemed to weigh too heavily on the Chinese community, and to encourage them by inviting their co-operation in our campaign against disease. I think that the appointment of a working head, whose office will be a bureau of information to Chinese inquirers, and who will work in close co-operation with the Registrar General, will be a new factor in enlisting the goodwill of the poorer class of Chinese, while the street committees, the dispensaries, and the services of lectures to instruct the people in simple hygiene, will tend in the same direction. I trust that the unofficial members of the Sanitary Board will not relax their efforts to the same end. There is no doubt that our methods in the past, no matter how necessary when an epidemic raged in our midst, have created considerable misgiving in the minds of the poorer classes. Land values have decreased. It is our object to disarm that suspicion among the uneducated portion of the community, and to impress on the educated class their responsibilities,

and to induce them to co-operate with us.

Before I resume my seat I would wish to add one word to what I have said with regard to the work of the Commission. It is to express my own personal deep regret, a regret which I know is shared by all hon. members, at the absence of the member who represents the Chamber of Commerce in this Council. As Chairman of the Commission, working for ten months, he had acquired a profound knowledge of these subjects, which he had kept up-to-date as a constant member of the Sanitary Board. Not we alone, but the whole community, are losers by not having his assistance and valuable criticism in our deliberations on this subject (applause).

HON. DR. HO KAI:—I do not propose to make any remarks upon the Bill now before us. It is not usual to discuss it at this stage. But as the Bill is of a very important character, and will make a great many alterations in existing law, and especially in view of the able and exhaustive address from Your Excellency, I think the second reading of the Bill should be postponed for at least a month or six weeks to enable members to thoroughly digest the Bill. I only wish that there should be a promise or undertaking from the Government that the second reading of the Bill will not be proceeded with until this day month.

HON. MR. WEI YUK—I have great pleasure in seconding that.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I will gladly assure the honourable member that the Bill will not be proceeded with for the space of one month as he asks.

The Bill was then read a first time.

Chinese Emigration Ordinance.

THE ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to Amend the Chinese Emigration Ordinance 1889.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the Bill was read a third time.

HIS EXCELLENCY — The Council stands adjourned till this day fortnight.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

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

Public Works.

THE GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of Twenty-two thousand one hundred Dollars (\$22,100) in aid of the vote, Public Works Recurrent, Miscellaneous, Typhoon and Rainstorm Damages.

Railway Construction.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY brought forward the Resolution regarding expenditure on railway construction for the current year. He explained that the amount stated in the Resolution might now be reduced to \$4,020,000 in view of the omission of the item for Workshops as explained by His Excellency the Governor in his address to the Council on the subject of the Railway. The Council recommended the adoption of the resolution as amended.
