

14TH, MAY 1908.

**PRESENT:—**

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

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS, COLONEL C. H. DARLING.

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. E. A. IRVING (Registrar-General).

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

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

SIR HENRY BERKELEY, K.C.

HON. MR. WEI YUK.

HON. MR. H. W. SLADE.

HON. MR. MURRAY STEWART,

MR. C. CLEMENTI (Clerk of Councils).

**Minutes.**

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

**New Member.**

Mr. H. W. SLADE took the oath and assumed his seat as a member of the Council.

**Papers.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by direction of His Excellency the Governor, laid on the table the Report of the Superintendent of the Prison for the year 1907.

**Financial Minutes.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by direction of His Excellency the Governor, laid on the table Financial minutes Nos. 19 to 23, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

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

**Financial.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by direction of H. E. the Governor, laid on the table the report of the Finance Committee (No. 7), and moved its adoption.

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

**Basement Bye-laws.**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY proposed that the amendment to the Basement Bye-laws under section 16 of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance of 1903 be approved.

THE ATTORNEY -GENERAL seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

### **The Opium Divans.**

HON. MR. MURRAY STEWART asked the following questions standing in his name:—

1. Is it true that His Majesty's Government has announced in the House of Commons an intention of issuing immediately to the Government of this Colony orders to close all opium houses forthwith?

2. Did the Imperial Government communicate this intention to the Colonial Government before making the announcement; if so, how long before; and why was information of such capital importance to the Colony withheld from members of this Council?

3. Has the Government now any explanation to offer, or any information to impart, on this subject?

H. E. THE GOVERNOR—On May 5th the following telegram was despatched by the Secretary of State and it reached me on May 6th:—

"Matter most urgent. His Majesty's Government has decided that steps must be taken to close opium dens in Hongkong, as they recognise it is essential in dealing with the Opium question in Hongkong we must act up to the standard set by the Chinese Government. I propose to make a statement on those lines in Parliament to-morrow night. Despatch follows by mail. CREWE."

The statement was, you will observe, to have been made on the evening of the day on which the telegram reached me. I cabled at once to the Secretary of State asking him to defer the statement in the House and to await the receipt of a despatch from me. I explained at some length the position in which the revenues of this Colony would be placed and that I required a reasonable time, and I explained some of the difficulties involved. The Council will appreciate the reasons which make it inadvisable for me to quote this telegram in full. On May 11th I received a reply from the Secretary of State which was marked confidential and I am therefore not at liberty to quote it in full. It informs me that it was not possible to defer the statement in Parliament as the matter was the subject of debate on that day, and assured me that His Majesty's Government appreciated the difficulties to which I had referred and awaited the arrival of my despatches. From the form in which the questions are couched it would seem that the honourable member was under the impression that there had been, or might have been, a desire on my part to

withhold from the Council information on these matters which so vitally affect the interests of the Colony. I need hardly say that there has been no such intention. The Council will observe that the first intimation of any kind that I received regarding this matter was on Wednesday last. The questions now put were in fact received before the Secretary of State's reply to my telegram had reached me. That reply reached me on Monday evening. No time therefore has been lost in acquainting the Council with the decision of the Secretary of State. I may add that the Government is engaged in ascertaining what losses will be incurred by closing the divans. (Applause).

### **Brewery Licences.**

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend the provisions of the Liquor Licenses Ordinance, 1889, and to provide for the grant of brewery licenses.

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

### **Evidence Ordinance.**

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend the Evidence Ordinance 1889.

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

### **Opium Ordinance.**

THE ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to prohibit the Exportation of Prepared Opium to China.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

HIS EXCELLENCY—The Bill before the Council is an ordinance to prohibit the exportation of prepared opium to China. The object of the bill is to prohibit the trade in prepared opium between Hongkong

and China, each country to take measures to prevent the import into its own territory. On September 4th last I received a telegram from the Secretary of State instructing me to undertake this without any delay, in consultation with His Majesty's Minister in Peking. I ascertained from the Opium Farmer that he was perfectly ready to agree, provided that the Chinese took effective measures for the same purpose. It is, in fact, entirely to his advantage since the price of prepared opium in Hongkong is about double what it is in Canton, and therefore any prepared opium smuggled into Hongkong is, of course, to the detriment of his monopoly. I informed the Minister at Peking that as Hongkong is a free port and as we have no preventative service here the Government could not itself undertake any very effective measures for preventing the import into Hongkong, but as the opium farmer had promised to co-operate, I hoped that exclusion would be practically effective. On March 27th I received a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Peking informing me that a memorial had been presented on the 23rd to the Throne and that it had been followed by an Imperial rescript sanctioning the proposal and instructing the provincial authorities. The Viceroy of Canton instructed all customs and likin stations and also the local authorities to take steps to prevent the export of prepared opium to Hongkong. He also issued a proclamation prohibiting this illicit trade. This was confirmed by the Wai Wu Pu on the 24th. I think therefore we may take it that China has taken effective steps towards carrying out her part of the bargain. Therefore, on the instructions of the Secretary of State, this bill is now brought forward in this Council. It will not appreciably affect the trade of this Colony and, if the steps taken by China are effective to prohibit smuggling into Hongkong, it will benefit the opium farmer.

The motion was agreed to.

#### **Registration of Chemists.**

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to provide for the registration of Chemists and Druggists and to regulate the Sale of Poisons.

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

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE.**

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

#### **Miscellaneous Services.**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Eleven thousand seven hundred and ninety-one dollars (\$11,791) in aid of the vote, Miscellaneous Services, Other Miscellaneous Services.

#### **Registrar General's Department.**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Two thousand three hundred and ninety-six dollars (\$2,396) in aid of the vote, Registrar General's Department, for the following items:—

#### *Personal Emoluments.*

Emigration Sergeant, at £160 p. a. for 9 months=£120 at 1/101/2= .....	\$1,280
3rd Grade Interpreter, at \$960 p. a. for 8 months=.....	640
Interpreter, at \$144 p. a. for 8 months=.....	96
2 District Watchmen, 1 at \$180 and 1 at \$150 p. a. for 8 months=.....	220

#### *Other Charges.*

Photography of Rejected Emigrants .....	160
Total .....	\$2,396

#### **Transvaal Emigration Depot.**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Three thousand dollars (\$3,000) in aid of the vote, Miscellaneous Services, Purchase of Transvaal Emigration Depot for Quarantine Station.

#### **Language Allowances.**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Six hundred and thirty dollars (\$630) in aid of the vote, Police and Prison Departments, A.—Police, for the following items.—

<i>Other Charges.</i>		The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Ninety dollars (\$90) in aid of the vote, Education, Department of Inspector of Schools, Saiyingpun Anglo-chinese School, Other Charges, Language Study Allowance (Chinese) to Head Master.
Language Bonus .....	\$450	
Language Study Allowance (Punjabi) to Assistant Superintendent.....	180	
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Total.....	\$630	

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