

24TH JUNE, 1909

PRESENT:—

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

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

Sir HENRY BERKELEY, K.C. (Attorney-
General).

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

HON. MR. P. N. H. JONES (Director of
Public Works).

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

HON. MR. F. J. BADELEY (Capt-
Superintendent of Police).

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

Hon. Mr. E. A. HEWETT.

Hon. Mr. E. OSBORNE.

Hon. Mr. W.J. GRESSON.

Hon. Mr. MURRAY STEWART.

Hon. Mr. WEI YUK, C.M.G.

MR. C. CLEMENTI (Clerk of Councils).

Minutes

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

Papers

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by
command of His Excellency the Governor, laid
on the table the report of the Assessment of the
Colony for the year 1909-1910; and the report
of the Harbour Master for the year 1908.

Financial Minutes

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by
command of His Excellency the Governor, laid
on the table Financial Minute No. 28, and
moved that it be referred to the Finance
Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded,

and the motion was agreed to.

Financial

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by
command of His Excellency the Governor,
brought up the report of the Finance
Committee (No. 7) and moved its adoption.

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

Stamp Ordinance Amendment

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the
first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to
amend The Stamp Ordinance 1901 as amended
by The Stamp (Amendment) Ordinance 1902.

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

Prison Amendment Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the
second reading of the Bill entitled An
Ordinance to amend the Prison Ordinance
1899. In doing so he said—The object of this
Ordinance is to make it an offence for an
officer of the prison to give a prisoner any
article which by the rules of the prison he is
forbidden. The Prison Ordinance at the present
time is defective in that respect.

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

Council then resolved itself into a
Committee of the whole Council to consider
the Bill clause by clause.

On resuming—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL asked the
Council to consent to a suspension of the rule
and to allow the Bill to be read a third time, as
it was very expedient that the Ordinance
should be amended in this respect as soon as
possible.

The Bill was then read a third time and
passed.

Tramways Ordinance Amendment

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend The Tramways Ordinance 1883. In doing so he said—The object of this Bill, as stated in the memorandum, is to compel persons who travel by trams to give up their tickets when requested to do so by officials or to pay their fare from the place whence they started. There is a clause in the Bill which empowers officials to arrest any person who declines to show his ticket or to pay his fare.

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

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

On resuming—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the Bill be read a third time.

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

Public Service Transfer of Duties Ordinance.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that Council should go into Committee on the Bill entitled An Ordinance to transfer to certain Officers of the Public Service certain duties at present performed by other Officers.

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

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — We left clause 6 over for further consideration, and I now propose to strike it out altogether because the transfer it has been proposed to effect by clause 6 can be effected under the provisions of the existing Ordinance.

Council then resumed, and the Attorney-General moved the third reading of the Bill.

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

Patents Amendment Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the postponement in the Committee stage of An Ordinance to amend the Patents Ordinance 1892. The Bill had, he said, been sent to the Law Society for consideration and such observations as they may desire to make.

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

Prepared Opium Ordinance Amendment

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I move that Council resolve itself into Committee of the whole Council for further consideration of the Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Prepared Opium Ordinance 1891.

HIS EXCELLENCY—We had got as far as the end of clause 2.

On clause 11—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—There are one or two verbal alterations. In sub-section 8 I propose to insert the word "European" before the word "officers" in the third line so that it shall read "such other European officers to inspect the farm."

HON. MR. HEWETT—Wouldn't the word "Occidental" be better than the word "European"?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — The word "European" is always used even in speaking of Americans. Americans came from Europe and in that sense the Americans are Europeans.

HON. MR. HEWETT—A citizen of the United States of America might not be a European. He might be an Occidental. It seems that Occidental is a better word and has the same meaning as European. You might have a man from Canada who would not be a European although he was a Canadian.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—He would certainly be a European. Any boy born of European parents here is not a Chinese. We are dealing with race of descent.

HIS EXCELLENCY — All these sub-sections are taken verbatim from the Straits Ordinance which does not contain the word "European," but the Farmer has asked us to put that word in.

HON. MR. HEWETT—Say non-Asiatic. You might appoint an Australian. You may have Australians, New Zealanders or South Africans in the Government service at the present moment. They surely could not come under the heading of Europeans.

HIS EXCELLENCY — Do you wish to propose an amendment?

HON. MR. HEWETT — No, I simply wanted to raise the question as to whether the word "European" was comprehensive enough or not.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — It is not absolutely comprehensive, but it is the most comprehensive word I could get.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—There are very few European officers who can read Chinese books.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — I am afraid my friend does not understand the system under which this Colony is run. Europeans do not read the books themselves, but they know enough to superintend the reading of books.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—I take it that if you want to see the Opium Farmer's books to find out what profit he makes you want an officer who is able to read Chinese accounts.

HIS EXCELLENCY—If necessity should arise for inspecting the Farmer's books the Government will appoint an officer capable of doing it. If the word "European" were not put in the Farmer thought that his books might be inspected at any time by Chinese who might disclose particulars.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—It takes an expert to understand books kept in the European way. It would want a very expert man to understand Chinese accounts.

HIS EXCELLENCY — What would you propose? If you do not insert the word "European" it may deteriorate from the value

of the farm, through the fear of Chinese inspecting the books and giving away information.

HON. MR. HEWETT—I think we may assume that the Government will always have one official of European origin capable of understanding Chinese books.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — I should say we have six.

HON. MR. HEWETT—I was putting it at a minimum.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — The object of this alteration is to inspire confidence on the part of tenderers for the next farm.

The amendments were assented to.

On clause 15—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I propose, Sir, to substitute for sub-section 3 a clause more fully setting out what is to be prescribed and I would ask that the clause as printed be deleted and the following substituted—To prescribe the keeping of such books and registers and the making of such returns by the Opium Farmer or dross farmer as may be considered necessary or desirable to permit of thorough investigation being made by the Government of the manner in which the farm business is conducted and the profits or losses derived therefrom.

HIS EXCELLENCY — The section as it stands is verbatim with the corresponding section of the Straits Ordinance.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — This, Sir, has been amplified at the request of the Farmer.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—Is there any penalty attached to the keeping of false accounts by the Opium Farmer?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — There is general penalty for breach of the provisions of the Ordinance.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—There is nothing to say that the Farmer shall keep correct accounts. The clause simply says he shall keep accounts.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — The Governor in Council makes rules for the keeping of accounts.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—And the method of accounts. Is that covered?

HON. MR. OSBORNE—The whole object of looking at the Farmer's accounts is to see what profit he makes.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Or loss.

HON. MR. OSBORNE—If there is ever a loss. Therefore it is to his interest to hood-wink the European officer who goes there to examine his books, and if it is to his interest he will certainly do it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — Some European companies do that.

HON. MR. GRESSON—Chinese keep two sets of books at any rate.

HON. MR. HEWETT—The man is under contract with the Government and surely if he cooks his books he is liable to the ordinary results of a criminal act.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—This law is part of his contract.

HON. MR. HEWETT—And if he breaks it by falsifying his books he is liable to the criminal law of the Colony.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — When the time comes the wording of the regulation will be such as to ensure that the books will be kept correctly.

On clause 17—

HON. MR. STEWART—I move the following amendment to this clause—the insertion after the word "forthwith" of these words—"Section 10 shall not come into operation until it has been approved by a resolution of the Legislative Council subsequent to the passing of the Appropriation Bill for 1910." I beg the Government to consider whether this suggestion does not offer a reasonable means of compromise between the unofficial and official positions in this matter. The official position I take to be this. Until tenders for the new farm have been received it is impossible to ascertain the direct loss to revenue due to closing the divans in March next.

Until this direct loss has thus been ascertained it is impossible to approach the Home Authorities with a request more narrowly to define the promised contribution towards it. To arrive at the exact sum of the direct loss it is necessary to get the new tenders in. To obtain these it is necessary to make the new conditions known. In order to make the new conditions known this Bill must be passed. That, as I understand it, is the official position, as revealed in the debate on the second reading. The objection of it, from the unofficial point of view, is that this method of making known the new terms ignores the protest contained in the resolution unanimously supported a year ago by the unofficial members "against any steps being taken to carry out the order announced in Parliament on the 6th May before this Council shall have been called upon to consider the methods by which it is proposed to readjust the burden of taxation." If this Bill goes through in its present form it will be an irrevocable step taken before we have had an opportunity of considering these methods. But if its present form were to be altered in the manner I suggest, by the insertion of a clause making the contemplated step subject to a subsequent resolution in Council, this objection would be removed. It may be urged against this that unless Section 10 is made absolute at once an element of uncertainty would enter into the bargain with the new farmer. But if the terms of the advertisement for the tender are fixed and definite I do not see that there would be any such risk. There would be no risk to prospective farmers. The terms offered to them would be just the same as if the clause were made absolute now. And there is no real risk to Government, inasmuch as Government has absolute power and can exercise it on the occasion of the eventual resolution in Council, with just as much effect as now, and with a much better grace. That is the point. I invite some concession to the difficulty of our position, the unofficial position. The practical benefit of the concession which I suggest may not be apparent to those who lightly regard the position of the unofficial members of this Council, it will be best appreciated by those who imagine that we are intended to represent the wishes of the community. To display consideration towards the wishes of the community as

represented by us in this particular case—and in the general question we can claim to have the community behind us—would have a certain practical effect towards making the policy palatable. That was held to be a desirable object a year ago. Now that we are face to face with the material consequences it is no less desirable. Indeed, the community may be thought to have a claim to be treated with greater consideration now than then. It is hateful to be reduced by circumstances into haggling about money when appealed to on grounds of paramount duty to civilization. But the duty that lies nearest us in this Council is duty to this Colony, and my conception of that is to claim the right to discuss matters affecting our revenue, before, and not only after, they have been settled over our heads. The Colony must have been relieved in a measure to learn from a telegram in the morning paper that the Opium Conference has had the effect of suggesting to the world the great difficulty of the opium question. The authority for this statement is the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The difficulty thus revealed to the world was seen and stated long ago, in certain remote parts of the world, among others in this Colony. But previous to the receipt of this telegram there was some doubt as to how these difficulties were to be solved, or in any degree removed, by holding a conference which did not confer, a commission which did not inquire, a mere series of formal meetings whereat set speeches were read or recited by delegates debarred from discussing freely the merits of the question as a whole. It seemed as if an unnatural union between religious sentiment and political expediency were to issue in nothing but a litter of resolutions—still-born. Now, however, we are told that there is a larger and a happier issue out of the affair—a widening of the bounds of knowledge of the subject dealt with. This Colony will have reason to feel grateful if the results include a better appreciation of the difficulty and complexity of the question dealt with, inasmuch as that our difficulties and perplexities, and our uncertainty as to the beneficial result of the drastic measures forced upon us, will be to some extent shared and sympathised with by the wider world. This newly acclaimed prospect of a more widespread knowledge and understanding of

the matter encourages me to press for the small concession which will be made if Your Excellency can see your way to accepting my amendment.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — I understand, Sir, that the object of the hon. member's speech is to postpone the operation of section 10, clause 10, until such time as we may have had consideration of the estimates for next year.

HON. MR. STEWART—We, of course, know that we can discuss the present Bill after the estimates, but then it is a *fait accompli*. We shall be discussing something which has been done. My point was that by a resolution brought up a year ago we asked that we might be allowed to discuss the Bill before any steps were taken.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—You want to postpone the operation of section 10.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — Until Council has approached the Home Government to make good our losses.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—The hon. member must understand that it is time the preparation of the estimates was begun, but before we do so we must call for tenders for the Opium Farm, and two months' notice must be given in newspapers in order to give a reasonable time to tender. You wish to advertise tentative tenders? I maintain that would be, Sir, from a mercantile point of view a piece of absolute folly, because we would never get a reasonable tender.

HON. MR. STEWART — The Government invites tenders on certain conditions. If a man accepts the conditions it is nothing to do with him whether they have yet been made law or not.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—Most of the conditions of the tender are in law and always have been.

HIS EXCELLENCY — Any discrepancy between the words used in the tender and the law of the Colony is avoided by stating in the tender that the conditions are as prescribed by the Ordinance.

HON. MR. STEWART—I don't see any objection at all to making a tender in the ordinary way as a tender is made in busi-

ness. There is nothing behind the terms that you offer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — What terms are we going to offer?

HON. MR. STEWART — You offer terms adopting the phraseology from this Bill exactly the same as if it went through without this suspensory clause. The unofficial members have asked for that amount of consideration and it should be granted them. It makes no difference to the Government except, as far as I can see, in point of face.

In reply to the suggestion that two tenders should be called for, one with and the other without divans, Mr. Murray Stewart stated that he could not support this proposal. Tenders called for must be *bona fide*.

HIS EXCELLENCY — If there was any way of meeting the wishes of the unofficial members the Government would be most glad to adopt it. The only effect of the proposed amendment would be to place doubt in the mind of a tenderer on a subject in which there is no doubt whatever. If, as you suggest, we tender in the precise terms of this suspended clause, and accept a tender, the matter is as much decided before the resolution you desire to bring forward by-and-by as though the clause were passed now. When you brought forward your resolution you would know that a tender based on the abolition of divans had already been accepted. What, then, would be the object attained?

HON. MR. STEWART — The terms of the tender being fixed and definite, a man cannot, as I understand it, have any doubt in his mind of the terms under which he was tendering.

HIS EXCELLENCY — He might think that the holding over of clause 10 implied a doubt. Whether divans might not be allowed after all.

HON. MR. STEWART — If he reads the debate he would be in no doubt.

HIS EXCELLENCY — I think the un-official members will have exactly the same opportunity of discussing this on the budget debate, as they would on a separate resolution brought forward at the same time stating their

views on this question.

HON. MR. STEWART — The step will then have been taken, but if this resolution is agreed to now it will remain to be taken.

HIS EXCELLENCY — I see your point, but I do not agree with it. Since we know that in any case the step will have to be taken.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — The tender must be stated exactly.

HON. MR. HEWETT — I do not see why you should not call for alternative tenders, and it is just as easy to call for tenders now. The plea put forward by the Colonial Secretary about time getting on, and that we must not waste any more, seems to me a futile one. The Government have known for the last fourteen months what the intention of the Home Government was, and there is no reason why this Bill should not have been before Council six months ago. We have rather been taken unawares, and we are asked to pass this Bill although the Government are perfectly well aware that we are opposed to it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY — You knew a year ago that it was to be passed, and have had plenty of time to discuss it.

HON. MR. HEWETT — Knowing what the opposition of the Colony is, I think this Bill should have been put before us earlier, and I think it is a very poor argument that the Government should come forward now and ask us to rush the Bill through before a certain date. I for one, representing the unofficial members of the community, wish to make my protest.

HON. MR. GRESSON — I cannot see why you want a definite tender. If you agree to do what we are asking you can get all your figures together, and the Treasurer can get on and prepare the estimates. I cannot see how it affects a man who is going to tender to make the thing legal: it does not seem to me to make the slightest difference.

HIS EXCELLENCY — There is no question about making the tender legal. What we wish is not to create any doubt in

the mind of a tenderer that the divans will be kept open as a result of this clause being held over.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — It is a question of destroying the value of the offer to be made. Section 10 deals with the prohibition of opium divans.

HIS EXCELLENCY—We have not only got to call for tenders but to accept a tender based on the abolition of divans, although you propose that the Council should defer its consent to the clause abolishing divans.

HON. MR. STEWART—Outside the hope is that there may be some modification of section 10.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I don't think you take my point. It is a matter of principle. The Government, being compelled to make up its estimates, would have to definitely accept a tender while the Legislative Council had not yet passed this clause. A resolution would still be necessary to bring it into operation. That is to say, Government would have to ignore this amendment.

HON. MR. GRESSON—Cannot you put a clause in to accept the tender some months afterwards?

HIS EXCELLENCY—I fail to see what object is achieved, because by what has already been said at this table, the only object is to raise the question again. You can do that on the debate on the estimates.

HON. MR. HEWETT—Presumably you won't put your estimates before the Council for some months. In the meantime the debate will go home to the Secretary of State and he may be induced to modify the views already expressed.

HON. DR. HO KAI—When we receive tenders we shall know what we have to lose. Then it will be easy enough to telegraph home and ascertain whether we shall have a substantial part of that loss made good to us.

HIS EXCELLENCY—The Government, as I endeavoured to point out, has got to accept a tender before making up the estimates, which

we could not do if the resolution was carried.

HON. MR. STEWART—Then we should be discussing a thing after it has been done.

HIS EXCELLENCY—It practically has been done already. We have the definite assurance of the Secretary of State that he will make good a substantial part of the loss.

HON. MR. GRESSON—If the Secretary of State is so kind to us to say he will give us this substantial amount, it seems to me that it would be very simple to give it a name.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I propose to say a few words on that point on the third reading. I will put the hon. member's motion to the vote.

The motion on being put the vote was lost by the casting vote of the Governor, all the officials voting for, and all the un-officials against it.

On Council resuming the Attorney-General reported that the Bill had passed through Committee with slight amendments. He said—In view of the importance of getting the estimates for the coming year framed and laid before the Council at the earliest, and of the necessity of having tenders for the Opium Farm advertised, and in view of the fact that the Bill has been fully discussed by this Council, I beg to move that it be read a third time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to second the motion, and I may say that the advertisements calling for tenders for the Opium Farm are already one month later than on the last occasion and the occasion before.

HON. MR. HEWETT—Your Excellency, the unofficial members do not propose to defer the third reading, because we do not wish to appear to be unnecessarily obstructive in the passing of the measure, but it is true that we do propose to vote against the third reading for reasons very fully explained at the last meeting and also while in Committee on the Bill this afternoon. We consider, in the first place, that before His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies peremptorily ordered the Colony to adopt a certain policy, he should at least have had

the courtesy to offer the community an opportunity of presenting reasoned opinion against the proposed resolution and allowing the matter to be discussed. That was not done, but certain orders were sent out here in a peremptory manner and the result is the passing of this Bill. We further consider, as fully explained this afternoon and last Thursday, that before the Bill is passed we should get definite assurance from the Home Government as to what they mean by a substantial contribution. For these reasons, Sir, the unofficial members propose to vote against the third reading.

His EXCELLENCY—Gentlemen, when this Bill was read a second time the un-official members unanimously voted against it, and the representative of the Chamber of Commerce has just told us that they intend again to-day to vote against the third reading. I hope that after the few words I have to say they may alter that intention.

I explained before that it is necessary to pass the Bill, in order to call for tenders which are already delayed, as my hon. friend on the left has told us, about a month beyond the usual date. They have, as you know, to be forwarded to Singapore and elsewhere and we require to know the amounts tendered before we can complete the estimates. I did not wish to frame the conditions of tender and to circulate them before this Bill had been discussed in Council, in order that hon. members should have every opportunity of discussing the conditions on which the tenders would be based. Had the tenders been circulated earlier in anticipation of this Bill its terms would practically have been settled without reference to Council. Moreover, it is possible that some discrepancy might have been found later between the words of the tenders and the terms of an Ordinance passed subsequently, and this might have led to claims for compensation or the repudiation of his contract by the Farmer. It is now an urgent matter to pass the Bill as soon as possible, and Council has agreed to take the third reading this afternoon.

It is clear from the speeches which have been made by different unofficial members that they have not opposed the Bill because they failed to recognise the urgency of calling for tenders for the Farm, or that they had any

objections to the proposals embodied in the Bill, for in none of the long speeches delivered by hon. members was a single exception taken to the provisions of the Bill itself. During its passage through Committee none of the principles of the Bill were called in question. The dissentient votes were clearly stated to have been recorded as a protest against the action of the Imperial Government, and in order to obtain a more precise wording of the promise made by the Secretary of State. That protest was made on the second reading, and it was emphasised by the unanimous vote against the Bill of the unofficial members. But they do not show themselves hostile to the provisions of the Bill and I trust therefore that they will not vote against the third reading, since their protest has been already recorded in the minutes of the Council. I would remind you that if a majority did throw out this Bill, we should be in a situation in which I think no unofficial member desires that we should be placed; that is to say, tenders would have to be deferred and the estimates hung up.

I am not aware myself that any difference of opinion on the general opium question does exist between the unofficial members and the Government. We are all agreed that opium should be gradually suppressed and the unofficial members in their speeches particularly emphasised their concurrence in this view. Their object, as was clearly stated, was to press for a more precise and definite wording of the Secretary of State's promise. On the one hand it was suggested that the Secretary of State had only promised to ask Parliament and possibly Parliament might refuse. Lord Crewe in the despatch which I read to this Council did not say that he as Secretary of State for the Colonies would ask the Treasury's sanction for a grant. That is a form of request which is quite familiar and which in my own experience I have known to be unsuccessful. The words used, however, were to any one conversant with the language of State departments very different indeed. He said that His Majesty's Government would ask Parliament, that is to say, that the writer spoke as a member of the Government and declared that Government would go to Parliament for a certain object. If Parliament refused the request of the Government, it would mean the defeat of the Government, and we all know that the

defeat of the Government is a serious matter. That is how I read the despatch, and that is why I stated to Council that I considered the promise as definite as it could be.

In the second place, it has been suggested that a definite proportion should be asked for, but I think that on second thoughts the hon. member who made this suggestion will agree with me that such a request is not a feasible one. I think that no business man at this table would pledge himself to give a definite proportion of a loss when the basis of calculation is not yet settled. The hon. member at the end of the table (Hon. Mr. Stewart) pointed out as I myself did in the memorandum, which I laid upon this table, that the opium trade has wide ramifications and that its extinction will involve loss in many different channels. But the loss on this trade does not depend on the policy adopted in this Colony but upon the policy adopted in India. In any case these are more or less indirect losses and the Secretary of State has only pledged himself to make good a substantial portion of the direct losses. Still I think it quite conceivable that a difference of opinion might arise as to what losses could properly be called "direct". I may say that were I myself undertaking a pledge in the name of the taxpayers of this Colony similar to the one which Lord Crewe has taken on behalf of the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, I should certainly not commit myself, until I know the amount or at least the exact basis of calculation of the loss, and I can say with confidence that I do not think there is a business man at this table who would not take the same line.

The position as it now stands is, as I gather from the speeches which have been made, that this Council unanimously agrees that this Bill should be passed, in order to call for tenders, and that we may know as soon as possible what deficit we shall have to make good in our estimates. The unofficial members desire to record their protest upon an aspect of the question which touches the Imperial Government rather than the local Government. In these circumstances I hope that they will unanimously vote for the third reading of the Bill in order to show that there is no divergence of opinion between us either as regards the general opium policy or as regards

the necessity for the passing of this Bill (Applause.)

After the unofficial members had consulted with regard to the Governor's speech—

HON. MR. HEWETT—May I speak again in reply to your remarks just now?

HIS EXCELLENCY — There is no rule against it.

HON. MR. HEWETT—When the un-official members came here this afternoon they had arranged, in order to emphasise their protest against what they considered unfair treatment on the part of the Home Government, to vote against the third reading. But in view of your Excellency's remarks the unofficial members are prepared to vote for the third reading, as we entirely endorse what Your Excellency said, that our protest was made against the action of the Imperial Government and has nothing to do with local Government. We trust that while voting for this third reading of the Bill, Your Excellency will put it on record that although we withdrew opposition to the third reading in response to Your Excellency's personal appeal, we do protest against the Bill being passed in the manner it has been. Our object in protesting against the third reading was to emphasise the protest made at the second reading. Our protest still stands; we merely withdrew our opposition to the third reading in deference to Your Excellency.

The Bill was then read a third time and passed.

HIS EXCELLENCY — Council stands adjourned until next Thursday.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE.
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A meeting of the Finance Committee was then held, the Colonial Secretary presiding.

The following vote was passed:—

Charitable Services

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of two hundred dollars (\$200) in aid of the vote Charitable Services, Passages and Relief of Destitutes.

THE CHAIRMAN—This was to pay the passage of a destitute. When the question of a passage arose we found that the vote was exhausted. Then we found \$28 for the passage of a deportee to Singapore, with the additions of a certain sum to keep the Colony going in the transportation of these destitutes until the end of the year.
