

24TH JUNE, 1915.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR FRANCIS HENRY MAY, K.C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL F. H. KELLY, C.B. (General Officer Commanding Troops).

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN (Colonial Secretary).

HON. MR. J. H. KEMP (Attorney-General).

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

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

HON. MR. C. MCL. MESSER (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. S. B. C. ROSS (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

HON. MR. WEI YUK, C.M.G.

HON. MR. E. A. HEWETT, C.M.G.

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. E. SHELLIM.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

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

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Financial Minutes

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 20 to 27, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

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

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the report of the Finance Committee held on May 27th, and moved that it be adopted.

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

Papers

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the following annual reports:—On the Assessment for the year 1915-16; Medical and Sanitary Reports, 1914; Report of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, 1914; Report on the New Territories, 1914; and Sessional Paper 12, 1915, being an estimate of expenditure account during 1915 of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (British Section).

Dependents of Prisoners of War

Regarding financial minute 23, in which the Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$14,000 for the maintenance of the wives and families of prisoners of war,

HIS EXCELLENCY said—At the time that a number of German and Austrian residents were interned as prisoners of war the wives and families of some of them were unable to leave the Colony for various reasons. These were, therefore, placed in a Concentration Camp in the married quarters of the barracks at Gun Club Hill, and I offered on behalf of the Colony that the cost of the maintenance of those women and children should be borne from Colonial Funds. The Secretary of State for the Colonies has approved this suggestion, and I feel sure that honourable members will vote the necessary funds. The number of wives was originally 16 and of children 19. Some have since left the Colony and the numbers are now 7 women and 13 children.

A Dredging Vote

Regarding a vote of \$22,800 for public works, recurrent, repairs to dredger *St. Enoch*,

His EXCELLENCY said—In September, 1913, Sir Paul Chater represented to the Colonial Government that the Hongkong and Kowloon Wharf and Godown Co. had in contemplation the building of a new wharf to be over 650 feet long for the berthing of ocean steamers of increasing draught, but that the Company was deterred from the undertaking owing to the fact that the depth of water at the approaches to the proposed wharf is insufficient to admit of vessels of a greater draught than 28 feet making use of it. The Secretary of State for the Colonies consulted me at the time while I was in England, and I expressed the opinion that it was a question whether the Hongkong Government might not find it to the interest of the Colony to devote public funds to deepening the approaches to the wharf in the event of the Company incurring the expense of deepening the berths alongside the wharf. The Secretary of State approved of this principle on the understanding that the Government is satisfied that the additional berthing accommodation is needed, and that the site of the wharf is approved. This case fulfils these conditions, and the Government has accordingly arranged to dredge at the expense of the Company two berths alongside the proposed wharf to a depth of 30 feet at lowest spring tide, and to defray, out of the public funds, the cost of dredging an area of 231,600 square yards to the same depth, in order to provide access to this particular wharf. The cost of dredging the berths is estimated at \$12,000, and the Government has under taken to do the work for that sum. The cost of dredging the approaches is estimated at \$35,000. The present vote of \$22,800 is for putting the dredger *St. Enoch* into repair to enable her to under take the work. This dredger was acquired for the dredging of the trench for the Mongkoktsui Harbour of Refuge, and the Government hope to utilise her at no distance date in connection with the Praya East reclamation.

The Wireless Station

His EXCELLENCY — There is another matter I should like to mention to the Council.

It is one that they have taken considerable interest in; and that is in connection with the wireless station—commercial wireless station we may now call it—at Cape D'Aguilar. It is hoped that the station will be open for business early next month. The site of the Wireless Station is at Cape D'Aguilar, not far from the existing Signalling Station. Tenders for the erection of the station and quarters were called for in August, 1914, but were so excessive in amount that none of them could be accepted. The lowest was \$53,726. A tender was subsequently obtained from a firm of contractors who were executing work in Tytam Bay, amounting to \$37,845, and this was accepted in December. Messrs, Marconi's representative arrived in the Colony on the 31st December, 1914, and the erection of the masts and installation of the apparatus were proceeded with in the early part of this year. The apparatus was tested by Lieut.-Commander Gascoigne, R.N., on the 13th instant, and was certified as complying with the tests prescribed under the contract with the Marconi Co. The Station is a low-power one, as you know (5 kilowatts), and has a minimum guaranteed range by day over open water of 350 nautical miles. A much longer distance was obtained recently at night. I am informed that Nagasaki was reached. It is hoped that it will be possible to bring the station into operation early in July.

Kowloon-Canton Railway

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY then proposed the following resolution:—"It is hereby resolved that a sum of Dollars Six hundred and ninety-one thousand nine hundred and seventy-two (\$691,972) be advanced out of funds in the custody of the Government for the construction of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (British Section) during the year 1915." In doing so he said—In accordance with the arrangement arrived at last December the estimate of the amount to be spent on capital account during this year is brought before the Council at the earliest date possible. Hon. members will observe that the approved

expenditure to the end of 1914 was exceeded by a sum of \$135,731.88, but that is more than accounted for by the item Loss on Exchange. Before moving that this statement be referred to the Finance Committee, I wish to draw attention to two matters in connection with the Railway accounts. I stated in Council on the 24th December that it was anticipated that the additional land required for the extension to the Engine Shed and the Loco. Yard could be acquired by exchange of Crown land, but I regret to say that that procedure has not been found possible, and it will be necessary to acquire the six lots required by purchase. The second matter to which I wish to refer is the closing of the Railway Capital Account. I am unable to speak definitely on the subject at the moment, but it is proposed to close the Capital Account of the Railway at the figure which appeared in Column VII. of the statement which was put before the Council in December. That total was \$15,197,554, but there is a possible addition of about \$120,000 for the purchase of the six lots mentioned. Up to the end of the present year the expenditure is estimated to amount to the total of Columns IV. and VII. of that statement, that is, a sum of \$14,005,829 plus \$691,972, or \$14,697,801, leaving a balance of \$499,653 to be expended next year. It is further proposed to show this sum in the Colonial Estimates for 1916, and to meet it out of the Colonial balances, making the necessary adjustment when the loan authorised under Ordinance No. 8 of 1913 shall have been floated. By this means our final liabilities on account of the railway will be definitely known, and the state of the Colony's finances will be shown more clearly than has been the case hitherto. I beg to move, Sir, that the account be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Post Office Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to amend the Post Office Ordinance, 1900."

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

The Objects and Reasons stated that the objects of this Bill are (a) to enable searches to be made for postal articles, as defined in the

Bill, in respect of which there may be reason to believe that an offence has been or is about to be committed, (b) to provide that no letters may be sent out of the Colony except through the Post Office, (c) to give power to extend the Postmaster General's exclusive privilege to newspapers where desirable, and (d) to increase the penalties for contraventions 6 of the Principal Ordinance.

Certificates of Origin

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to amend the Certificates of Origin Ordinance, 1915."

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

The Objects and Reasons set out that the object of this Bill is to introduce certain provisions of the Customs (War Powers) Act 1915, with regard to the seizure and forfeiture of goods of enemy origing. It is also provided that in any proceedings involving any question under the proposed Ordinance or under the Principal Ordinance any certificate of a British customs or consular officer shall be *prima facie* evidence of the truth of the matters stated therein.

Council was then adjourned until Friday next.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee followed, the COLONIAL SECRETARY presiding.

The Governor recommended the Council to vote the following sums:—

Police Bicycles

Five hundred and eighty-six dollars and six cents (\$586.06) in aid of the vote Police and Prison Departments, Special Expenditure, A.—Police Bicycles.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum is in the nature of a re-vote. A number of bicycles were ordered for the Police last year, and they were on the s. s. *Ben*

Mohr, which was sunk by the *Emden*, and so they had to be ordered again. The insurance money was recovered from the National War Risk Insurance Office, and credited to the vote last year. But there was no time to utilise it, so the money has to be spent this year. Have you got the machines, Mr. Captain Superintendent?

THE HON. CAPTAIN-SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE—Yes, Sir.

The vote was agreed to.

New Instruments for the Observatory

One thousand six hundred and eighty dollars, (\$1,680) in aid of the following votes:—

Royal Observatory

Other charges, incidental expenses	\$	150
Special expenditure, new instruments .		1,530
		—————
Total	\$	1,680

THE CHAIRMAN — Last year \$1,701, money voted, was not spent owing to certain orders not being executed by the end of the year. There was a sum of \$1,580.81, Special Expenditure, which could not be utilised, and in addition there was \$150 for certain work done by the Telephone Company. This is also, as you will see, really in the nature of a re-vote.

The vote was agreed to.

Electric Lights

Thirty-five dollars (\$35) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Miscellaneous, Installing Electric Lights in Shaukiwan and Tsat Tsz Mui Police Stations and Shaukiwan and Sai Wan Ho Markets.

THE CHAIRMAN—Certain excesses were incurred in connection with the lighting of Shaukiwan, principally due to the unforeseen difficulties. Owing to inability to carry on the work while the markets were open, the workmen had to work a certain amount of overtime.

The vote was agreed to.

Maintenance of Wives and Families of Prisoners of War

Fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000) in aid

of the vote Miscellaneous Services, Maintenance of the wives and families of Prisoners of War.

THE CHAIRMAN—H.E. the Governor has already explained this to the Council.

The vote was agreed to.

Road Works

Two thousand one hundred and twenty dollars (\$2,120) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Communications, Roads, General Works.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum is required owing to the taking over of two private lanes on the East Praya, namely, Amoy Street and Swatow Street, and the total sum required for surfacing, channelling, and draining these two lanes is \$4,240. The Government, according to the ordinary terms in similar cases, pays half of the sum, that is, \$2,120. They become public streets, and a notice will appear in tomorrow's *Gazette* changing the names to Amoy Street and Swatow Street.

The vote was agreed to.

Hill District School

Eight thousand eight hundred dollars (\$8,800) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Buildings, Hill District School.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is in connection with the Peak School. What is called an open-air class-room has been made into an ordinary class-room, which was found to be necessary, at a cost of \$1,200. The original estimate of the building, \$36,311, has been exceeded by a sum of \$2,100, and certain extras are necessary such as additional walling, and fencing in the courtyard owing to alterations in the position of the building, necessitated by the shape and difficult nature of the site. It was a very difficult site to put a building on, and really it was not known where it would go until the site was made. The total required over and above the sums voted (\$30,824.68) is \$7,586, and to that has to be added \$1,200 for the new class-room, so this sum of \$8,800 is asked for.

The vote was agreed to.

A Railway Vote

Nine thousand three hundred dollars (\$9,300) in aid of the vote Kowloon-Canton Railway, Abstract A, Engineering, Maintenance of Way, Works and Stations, IV.—Repairs of Station Buildings and Structures, (2) Repairs of Staff Quarters.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum is to be spent on the house occupied by the Manager of the Railway, to which a most unfortunate thing has happened. The house was found to be infested with ticks, and the verandahs have a tendency to fall inwards. The house, when bought in 1912 was examined and, so far as we were concerned, it was found to be in good order. In fact, only the tiling of the roof was put in order, but now not only do white ants swarm in the place, but there are these ticks, which are worse. A thorough overhauling of the whole premises is necessary, the substitution of concrete for woodwork, and the removal of the skirting boards and all such places as harbour white ants. The only possible thing to do is to make a thorough job of the thing now.

The vote was agreed to.

Roads in New Territory

Ten thousand eight hundred dollars (\$10,800) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, New Territories, Communications, Roads, Tai Po to Fan Ling, including bridging river.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is caused by the change of policy on the part of the Government since this road was first undertaken. When the road was originally undertaken it was the same width as the other roads were, 14ft. I think.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The actual width is sixteen feet, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN—Since then the policy has been adopted of making main roads in the New Territories of 20ft. formation on the top. This applies chiefly to the widening of the section between Sha Tau Kok Light Railway, where the roads end, and the road beyond the level crossing. The expenditure to be made in 1915 on account of these changes is \$16,754, and the amount provided is only \$6,000, so a sum of \$10,800 is required.

HON. MR. LANDALE — Is this amount independent of the road going across the hill from Kowloon to Taipo?

THE CHAIRMAN—That is quite another item.

HON. MR. LANDALE—Well, that road is not wide enough, especially at the corners.

THE CHAIRMAN—A vote was put in this year for rounding off the corners of the Taipo road, but the work has been held over. I have not got the estimate here, but a considerable sum was put in this year's estimates for that purpose. This vote is simply for work at Fanling village.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—\$10,000 was voted for cutting off the corners, but it has been held up, and the corners have not been cut yet.

THE CHAIRMAN—That has been kept over with many other items. It is possible that some of them will be done at other parts of the year, but it depends on the state of the finances.

The vote was agreed to.

Kowloon-Canton Railway

THE CHAIRMAN—We now come to the accounts dealt with in the resolution. The Government is asking for a sum of \$691,792 during the year 1915, and the details are set out in the statement which is in the hands of hon. members, and if any hon. member wishes to ask a question regarding any of these items I shall be pleased to answer him. They are really only a continuation of the items contained in the statement laid before the Council in December last.

HON. MR. SHELLIM — This amount of \$185,000—is that final? Will it complete the station?

THE CHAIRMAN—The amount required you will find by comparing that amount with Columns 5 and 7 of the statements before you. It comes to \$213,000 odd. The \$185,000 includes the quarters to be erected at Hunghom.

HON. MR. SHELLIM—Then it is not final?

THE CHAIRMAN—No, the contract is not up till April of next year. In the statement of last December \$98,000 was spent on this station. The cost of the station has been estimated at \$250,000, and a sum of possibly \$50,000 or \$60,000 will have to be spent next year.

The Committee approved of the vote.