

HONGKONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

24TH FEBRUARY, 1916.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR F. H. MAY, K.C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL F. VENTRIS (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. E. R. HALLIFAX (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

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

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

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

HON. MR. POLLOCK, K.C.

HON. MR. E. SHELLIM.

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK.

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

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Committees

HIS EXCELLENCY—It is usual at this meeting for me to appoint the Committees for the ensuing year. The Finance Committee will be composed of all the members of the Council, except myself. To the Public Works Committee I appoint the Director of Public Works, the Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. Mr. Wei Yuk, the Hon. Mr. Shellim, and the Hon. Mr. Holyoak. To the Law Committee I appoint the Attorney-General, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Hon. Mr. Pollock, the Hon. Mr. Landale, and the Hon. Mr. Lau Chu Pak.

Papers

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the Jurors' List for 1916; the quarterly return of excess on sub-heads met by savings under heads of expenditure; report on the progress on Kowloon Railway Station up to December 31st, 1915; and correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and H.E. the Governor, relative to the accident to His Majesty the King; and a diagram of the low levels dam under construction at Tytam Tuk, showing progress to December 31st, 1915.

Finance

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 1 to 5, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

The Tramway Ordinance, 1912

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved:—
"Whereas by the provisions of section 7 of the Tramway Ordinance, 1912, it is, *inter alia*, provided that, subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council, after timely and adequate notification by public advertisement or otherwise of the intention of the Company to apply for such approval, and after such approval has been confirmed by a resolution of the Legislative Council, the Company may construct and maintain, subject to the provisions of the said Ordinance, and in accordance with plans to be previously deposited in the office of the Director of Public Works, all such lines, crossings, passing places, sidings, junctions, turn tables and other works in addition to, or as extension of, those particularly specified in and authorized by the said Ordinance as may be approved of by the Governor-in-Council, and may work and use the same:

"And whereas timely and adequate notification by public advertisement of the intention of the Company to apply for the approval of the Governor-in-Council to the construction and maintenance of a crossing at the eastern end of Yee Woo Street in accordance with a plan deposited in the office of the Director of Public Works has been given:

"And whereas the Company has duly applied for the approval of the Governor-in-Council to the construction and maintenance of the said crossing:

"And whereas the Governor-in-Council did on the 27th day of January, 1916, approve of the construction and maintenance of the said line:

"Now it is hereby resolved that the approval of the Governor-in-Council so given as aforesaid shall be and is hereby confirmed."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded, and this was unanimously agreed to.

War Matters

The next item on the agenda was a motion by the Hon. Mr. Holyoak as follows:—"That in the opinion of this Council it is most desirable that the interned alien enemies be removed from this Colony at the earliest practicable moment."

THE HON. MR. HOLYOAK—Sir, there is, happily, now no occasion to move the resolution of which I gave original notice, since it has already become obsolete, but I trust you will suffer me to make this statement, that it was originally moved in no desire whatever to embarrass this Government in the difficult negotiations which were then proceeding. Rather was it made in the hope that it would assist them, in the knowledge that behind the resolution was the united opinion of the Colony. Nor was the resolution conceived, for a moment, in the desire on the part of any one of us to escape military duties at the camp over at Kowloon, and while it cannot be denied that the work of guarding the prisoners was never considered a "labour of love," it was cheerfully, whole-heartedly and loyally undertaken by every member of the Corps, Reserves and Volunteers, who went over as their part—their light part—in the burden of the Empire. And at the close of this great war, Sir, I ask you to be good enough to see to it that, whilst we have never for a moment asked for any

payment, nor even desired it, we shall receive that reward which is given for labour well done in the cause of Empire, in the shape of a service medal to be awarded to this Colony, and, if a "Kowloon bar" were attached to it, it would be a graceful act. I now beg to formally withdraw the resolution.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—I do not think anybody in the Colony thought, and certainly I never thought, that the movement to secure the withdrawal of the German prisoners of war was in any way due to any reluctance on the part of the Hongkong Volunteers to undertake the duty of assisting in guarding them. I know that such foolish rumours have been current outside the Colony, just as there have been very many other foolish and, indeed, slanderous rumours outside this Colony concerning a good many people, both official and unofficial, in it. As regards any rewards to the Volunteers for war, it is very early to speak about that now, and I cannot express any opinion on the subject. I had hoped by the time this Council met to be able to ask to pass the necessary vote to cover the very considerable expenditure which this removal of the German prisoners has involved. Council, as you know, undertook, in providing for the expenditure for the year, to defray the entire expenses of the maintenance of the prisoners of war, and that being so I conceived that it would be your wish that the Colony should also defray the expenses not only for the maintenance of these prisoners of war in Australia, and the preparation and accommodation for them there, but also for their transport to that part of His Majesty's Dominions, including the fitting out of the ship which had to carry them. That has been a somewhat costly business, and will involve an excess expenditure over the vote of about \$70,000—it is \$70,000 now—of about \$200,000. The necessary information as to how that sum is arrived at will be furnished to the Council in due course, and I have no doubt the Council will willingly vote the money. I would like to take this opportunity of mentioning that there is now another batch of German prisoners in the Colony, and it is proposed to send them to follow in the wake of their predecessors, and I presume that I may bind the Colony in the same way to incur the necessary expense, not only of their maintenance but also in their transport. There is another thing I should like to mention now we are

on the subject of the war. Toward the close of last year, in speaking on the subject of the appeal made by His most Gracious Majesty for recruits, I stated that there were about 100 or 150 Britishers in the Colony who might, in my opinion, serve in the Volunteers or otherwise. Shortly after I made those remarks the number was considerably reduced, and then I undertook to personally canvass the men, and I am glad to say that on January 3rd I was in a position to state that there were no Britishers in this Colony who were not either serving in the Volunteers, Volunteer Reserves or the Special Police Reserve, or who were not performing approved service for the Government in connection with the war, or who had not been exempted either on medical certificate or by myself for special reasons. I think that is a most satisfactory result. (Applause.)

False Passports

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to prevent the use of false passports, and to confer on the Governor-in-Council power to order the internment of certain suspected persons."

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

The "objects and reasons" state that the objects of Clause 2 of this Bill are to make it an offence for any person to possess a false passport and to make it an offence for any enemy subject to pass under an assumed name.

The object of Clause 3 is to give the Governor-in-Council power to intern for the duration of the war any person suspected of acting, or of being about to act, in a manner prejudicial to the defence of the Colony or to the public safety of any part of His Majesty's dominions.

Clause 4 is a formal saving clause.

Societies Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I beg to move that the Council go into Committee to consider the Bill intituled "A Ordinance to amend the Societies Ordinance, 1911."

The Bill passed through Committee with out amendment, and, on Council resuming,

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

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

Jurors' List

The Jurors' List was then considered in private.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Council stands adjourned until Thursday, March 2nd.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee followed, the Colonial Secretary presiding:—

Compensation

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$2,500 in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, compensation for the pathway along the eastern boundary of the Eurasian Cemetery.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum should really have been paid last year, but the old lease was not surrendered, and the new lease issued in time, so it is a re-vote of what should have been paid about October last.

The vote was agreed to.

Educational

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$343 in aid of the vote Education, A.—Department of Director of Education, Other Charges, Belilios Public School, Electric Fans and Light.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is really another re-vote. A sum of \$470 was provided in the estimates last year, and this sum would have been paid then, but the fans had not been purchased. This year, when the estimates were drawn up, it was thought then that these fans would have been bought last year, and therefore only \$100 has been entered in the estimates for this year. Therefore, it is necessary to re-vote this sum.

The vote was agreed to

Wireless

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$2,500 in aid of the vote Royal Observatory, Special Expenditure, apparatus for distributing wireless time signals.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is another revote, but it is necessary to take a vote for it. The Director of the Observatory was on leave, and this apparatus was not purchased. The indent for them has now been sent Home, and therefore it is necessary to take a vote for the sum which was not spent last year.

The vote was agreed to.

Philanthropic

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$313.37 in aid of Charitable Allowances—passages and Relief of Destitutes—Special Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN — Any member of the Committee who wishes to see the correspondence which necessitated this sum can do so. A certain person came to this Colony in exceptional circumstances, and it was absolutely essential that the person should be sent back to Australia. A small sum of £5 was provided to cover certain expenses. If any member would like to see the file I shall be willing to show it. The Treasurer advised that it was better to take a special vote to cover this sum than to pay it out of the vote for the Destitutes and the Relief of Distress. What is the reason for that?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER—Your could hardly describe the party as destitute.

The vote was agreed to.

Public Works Recurrent

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$3,226.10 in aid of the vote Public Works, Recurrent, Hongkong.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum of money has been incurred by an unfortunate collision which the dredger had with a lighter at the Kowloon wharf. The damage to the latter was \$350, and the insurance money which the Government were really responsible for was \$2,876.10, after certain expenses of survey and the damage had been met. It was a very unfortunate collision, but it has been thoroughly investigated. There were circumstances which would have exonerated the master of the dredger to some extent, but certainly not altogether. His services have been terminated, I think?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—Yes, sir.

The vote was agreed to.