

31ST AUGUST, 1917.

PRESENT:—

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

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL F. VENTRIS (General Officer Commanding Troops in China).

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN, C.M.G. (Colonial Secretary).

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

HON. MR. MCI. MESSER (Colonial Treasurer and Captain-Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. E. R. HALLIFAX (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

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

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

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

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

HON. MR. R. G. SHEWAN.

HON. MR. C. E. ANTON.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL.

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

Financial

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table, Financial Minutes Nos. 30 to 49, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Finance Minutes

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table report of the proceedings of the Finance Committee, No. 8, and moved that it be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Paper

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table copy of correspondence relating to the commercial and industrial policy to be adopted throughout the Empire after the war.

Questions by Hon. Mr. Pollock

HON. MR. POLLOCK asked:—

(1.)—What was the number of

(i.)—Junks;

(ii.)—Other vessels or boats;

which were damaged at or off Cheung Chau (Dumb-bell Island) in the recent typhoon of the 13th August, and what does the pecuniary loss represented by such damage come to approximately?

(2.)—What are the present means adopted for communicating to the Police at Cheung Chau the fact that certain typhoon signals have been hoisted in Hongkong? Is it not practicable to improve such means of communication?

(3.)—Are the Police at Cheung Chau provided with typhoon signals and, if not, will the Government consider the advisability of such provision being made?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied as follows:—

(1.)—Four licensed fishing junks were wrecked or damaged to the extent of \$2,630.

Nine licensed harbour boats under 100 piculs capacity were reported wrecked or damaged to the extent of \$578.

Several other small harbour boats were swamped or otherwise slightly damaged, but such was not reported to the police.

(2.)—There is no telephone communication with Cheung Chau. On the afternoon of the 12th August No. 1 Police Launch called and reported red signals hoisted in Hongkong. The same information was given by the ferry launch, at 5 p.m.

The Chinese boat population knew a typhoon was about and were prepared to a certain extent, but the gale veered round later in the day and blew directly into the harbour, causing the boats to drag their anchors. There was no loss of life reported.

(3.)—The police have no typhoon signals. Unless it is certain that information can always be obtained of orders for the hoisting of typhoon signals, it is best not to hoist them at all.

Compulsory Military Service for Hongkong

Council then considered the second reading of the Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to make provision with respect to military service and to provide for the establishment, maintenance and control of a local defence corps."

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Sir, I desire to state in the first place that I am not personally satisfied that any sufficient case has been made out for passing a compulsory service bill at all. It will be within the recollection of all members of this Council that only a few weeks ago we were congratulated by the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies upon the fact that voluntary service in this Colony had led to such good results. And, in view of that, Sir, and in view of the fact that undoubtedly the civil residents of this Colony have come forward very willingly and freely offered their services, it seems to me that a compulsory measure is quite unnecessary. I would also submit that the main object, apparently, which is aimed at by the regulations attached to this Bill, namely, the improvement of the organisation of the Volunteers and the Volunteer Reserves forces, could equally have been effected without the necessity of any compulsory measure. And with regard to the fusion which is sought to be brought about by this Bill, of the Volunteers and Volunteer Reserves, it would have been quite easy to have brought that about by a simple measure, such as was passed in the sister Colony of the Straits Settlements in the year 1916. However, whilst expressing these views, Sir, I think, perhaps, that under all the circumstances, I had better now pass on to the consideration of the various details in the Bill, and they are so important, Sir, that I think I had better address myself to them now, upon the

motion for the second reading of the Bill. The first point, Sir, arises in Clause 2, "Liability to military Service." Under this clause it will be noted that it is proposed to call up for military service all British subjects in this Colony between the ages of 18 and 55 years. Now, Sir, my contention upon that point is that the age of 55 is too high an age to be introduced into a compulsory service measure. The Act at Home making compulsory service, which is Act 6 and 7, George 5th, Chap. 15, makes every male British subject, ordinarily resident in Great Britain, between the ages of 18 and 41 liable to be called up for military service during the period of the war. Therefore at Home, Sir, the period for military service is laid down as between 18 and 41 years. In the Straits Settlements, although the age of 50 appears in the Ordinance of 1915, only persons between the ages of 18 and 40 are called up for military service, and are liable to military training, and persons between the ages of 40 and 55 are called Civil Guards, their duties being merely for the preservation of the peace, and they are placed under the general control of the police officials. I submit, Sir, that in Hongkong, with the conditions of the climate prevailing here, that the age limit in clause 2 of the Bill should be reduced from 55 to 45, and that of course will not prevent those who desire to volunteer, and no doubt there will be many over 55 who will desire to volunteer, coming in under clause 5 of the Bill, and asking to be accepted as members of the Hongkong Defence Corps. The next clause to which I would refer is clause 6 of the Bill, "Application of the Army Act," and here again there is a provision which is widely opposed to the spirit of the legislation in the Home country. Under the provisions of that clause, if it were passed, the effect of it will be that all persons in this Colony from the ages of 18 to 55—a much wider limit than exists at Home—would be subject to the provisions of the Army Act for an absolutely indefinite period, *i.e.*, for the duration of the war and six months thereafter. Now, Sir, as is well known, the Imperial Parliament are very loth to enact the Army Act for a long and indefinite period. There is so much regard paid at Home to the liberty of the subject that we find that even in war time, even last year, in April, 1916, under the provisions of 6, George 5th, Chap. 5, although the war had then been going on for nearly two years—and of course the war at Home affects them much

nearly than it does us—they continue the practice which has existed for centuries, I think, of only having an act applicable to the United Kingdom for the period of one year, from April 30th, 1916, to April 30th, 1917. There can be no doubt, Sir, that at Home they are very jealous upon the subject of the Army Act being put into force for a lengthy period. And, Sir, I would venture to submit that so far as any application of the Act is concerned, it would be quite sufficient in this Colony, for all practical purposes, if the provisions of the Volunteer Ordinance, No. 4 of 1893, section 17, were made applicable to this Defence Corps. I will read the first part of Section 17 to make my point clear. "With respect to the discipline of officers and volunteers, when they are under actual military service, or are undergoing drill, exercise, training or instruction, or who are doing any Volunteer duties together with His Majesty's regular force, or any part thereof, the following provisions shall take effect, namely, the provisions of the Army Act of the Imperial Parliament, or so far as the same are applicable and consistent with the provisions of this Ordinance, apply to all officers and volunteers, with the following modifications only." Then there are various modifications of the Army Act mentioned. But the point, Sir, in that enactment is this, that the Army Act shall only apply to officers and volunteers who are doing actual military service, or who are undergoing drill, exercise, or instruction with His Majesty's regular forces, or any part thereof. And under such provisions as that, Sir, I think there would be no fear that the ordinary civil rights of the subject would be likely to be interfered with. But, Sir, when we come to the clause of this present Bill we find that the provisions of the Army Act are to apply for the indefinite period I have mentioned, and there is no doubt, Sir, that considerable apprehension exists in this Colony lest under the shadow of the Army Act some derogation may take place of the natural civil rights of the citizens of this Colony. Accordingly, Sir, when the time comes in Committee, I propose to move an amendment which I think will probably be numerically Clause 12 of the Bill, to the effect that "Nothing contained in this Ordinance, or in any regulation to be made thereunder, or in the Army Act, or in the King's Regulations, shall be deemed to take away, or shall take away, the ordinary civil rights of the members of the Hongkong Defence Corps, in regards to any of the following matters, namely:—

- 1.—Right to the writ of *Habeas Corpus*.
- 2.—Right of freedom to attend public meetings.
- 3.—Right of freely criticising Government measures either by speech or by writing to the papers.
- 4.—Right of generally or separately petitioning for redress of any grievance.

It seems to me that it is very necessary that such a provision should be inserted in this Bill, seeing that it is proposed to place us under the Army Act, compulsorily, for an indefinite period, and seeing also that under Clause 8 of the Bill there is an indefinite power vested in the Governor-in-Council to make regulations for the constitution, management, training, service and discipline of the Hongkong Defence Corps. I think that it ought to appear clearly in this Bill that the civil rights of the civilian subjects of this Colony are to remain unaffected by it. I now come, Sir, to consider Clause 8 of the Bill, "Power to make regulations." I must confess, Sir, and I say it with all respect, that I was very much disappointed to hear at the last meeting of the Council what your Excellency said with regard to regulations being laid before the Legislative Council and approved by it. As I then pointed out, these regulations are regulations which affect a large and important number of the civilian residents of this Colony, and it occurred to me to suggest by way of compromise that the Governor-in-Council should make the regulations under Clause 8, but that such regulations should not come into force until approved of by the Legislative Council. In that way the actual framing of the regulations would rest with the Executive Council and the right of public criticism of these regulations would be reserved by this provision making them subject to the approval of the Legislative Council, and in that way unofficial members of this Council, as the representatives of the public, will have an opportunity of mentioning the views of the public upon the regulations. I thought, Sir, it might have been possible to accept this suggested compromise. I pass on to Clause 10 of the Bill, "Members of the H.K.V.C. and H.K.V.R. to become members of the Hongkong Defence Corps and to have their former rank." Hon. members

will remember that I pointed out on the last occasion that it was desirable, at least so it seemed to me, that service in the Hongkong Defence Corps should be deemed to be continuous service, as if in the Volunteers or Volunteer Reserves, for the purpose of long service medals. I understand that the hon. and learned Attorney-General has differed with me on that point, inasmuch as the granting of medals is an act of Royal favour. But I would point out that it is not like the conferring of a knighthood or the conferring of decorations. There are certain regulations passed at Home with regard to the conferring of long service medals for a certain period of service in the Volunteers or auxiliary forces. Therefore, Sir, it appears to me, with all due deference to the learned Attorney-General, that the proper way of dealing with this matter is for some clause to be inserted, some sub-clause inserted in Clause 10, to state that the service shall be deemed to be continuous in the way I suggest for the purpose of the long service medals. While I am dealing with the question of medals I would like to say that I have just received a communication with reference to the counting of the service of ex-army or navy men who are serving in the Volunteers or auxiliary forces, or in the Defence Corps of this Colony, for the long service medals. I frankly admit, Sir, that this is a matter which cannot be put by way of an amendment to the present Bill, but I propose in a day or two to send this recommendation to your Excellency through the proper channel, the Colonial Secretary. With regard to Clause 11 of the Bill, "Duration of Ordinance," I would suggest, in order to bring the matter home and clinch it, that the word "only" be inserted after the word "force" and before the word "until." so that the clause shall read quite clearly and emphatically, as follows:—"This Ordinance shall continue in force only until the expiration of a period of six months from the conclusion of the present war." I will now consider the question of the regulations which are attached to the Bill. Hon. members only received them this morning, and I notice that the new regulations contain somewhat less stringent forms with regard to persons of old age than the former regulations. With regard to the general principle of these regulations, while I fully admit that a good deal can be done in the way of improved organisation of the forces, I would venture to suggest that we ought to be very careful in this matter to keep before ourselves

what I submit is a wise ideal, and that is, that after all we are legislating for persons whose ordinary avocations and duty in life is to their business, or to their employers, as the case might be, and who are far more useful as civilians earning what the Prime Minister would call "silver bullets," to be contributed to the war loans, than they would be in being employed on garrison or guard duty. I notice that your Excellency on page 55 of Hansard reports for the year, on the first reading of this Bill, on August 2nd made use of the following words:—"In the correspondence with the Secretary of State which preceded the appointment of the Commission, I recommended, after consultation with His Excellency the General Officer Commanding, under date of the 22nd January, 1917, that compulsory service for local defence should be imposed, that a wider use of the local force should be made, and that a further reduction in the regular garrison should follow to a point at which every member of the existing Volunteer Force must be considered indispensable for the defence of the Colony." Now, Sir, speaking with the utmost respect, I must confess that I regard that as the wrong ideal to aim at. As is well-known, the offices of this Colony are working, most of them, with considerably reduced staffs, and I would also point out that in many of these offices, the *employés* have been out here for many years, and the war does not appear to any of us to be likely to come to an end for some time yet. Therefore, I suggest, that in the fourth year of this war it is certainly not the time for making wider use of the local forces in the sense mentioned by your Excellency, of making it possible for a further reduction of the garrison. I am quite convinced that in this reorganisation which is proposed, that the present Volunteers and Reserves will co-operate loyally so far as they can, but, Sir, it must be remembered that there are limits to human endurance, and that it is practically physically impossible for one and the same man to be soldiering by night and to perform his civilian duties by day. If it were possible, Sir, no doubt they would like to accomplish it, but my point is that
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impossible, however willing anybody might be. I know these Volunteers and Reserves are quite willing, and have come forward splendidly, but they cannot perform the impossible. It seems to me that their main sphere and object in life is to accomplish, efficiently, their civilian duties, and to carry on the trade here, to produce silver bullets either for themselves or for their employers if they are employed in offices or businesses. No doubt, Sir, in that way, they are doing their best in the interests of the Empire with regard to the successful prosecution of this great war. Of course, Sir, the civilians who are on military duty are in an entirely different position in that respect from the regular forces. If anybody in the regular forces goes on duty by day he takes rest by night, and if he goes on duty at night he takes rest by day. He has not got to divide civil and military duty, and he has not got to combine the two. There is no doubt that the reorganisation should have a beneficial effect, but I think that this is a point which should be borne in mind, that it is impossible to burn the candle at both ends, that civilians who have to perform their civilian duties by day and their military duties by night are not capable of efficiently performing their ordinary civilian duties. With regard, Sir, to musketry practice, no doubt that is the primary essential, and the only criticism I have to make on that is not made only by myself but my many members of the Reserves. Sometimes it happens that a whole number of men have been called upon to go through their musketry practice, and a great waste of time and patience has resulted. So it is no good getting a whole crowd of men to indulge in musketry practice, for it is very unsatisfactory for them to have to wait for hours in the afternoon, waiting for their turn to come on at the ranges. I am quite sure that a considerable saving of time could be effected by having less men on the range on one and the same afternoon. With regard to the question of drill, I must confess that I am not satisfied that so many drills are necessary. That seems to be the view at all events in the Colony of Ceylon, for in that happy island if a man puts in 45 drills in the course of a year he receives a special badge as a kind of order of merit, and I see that under this Bill it is proposed to make 50 drills compulsory. With regard to this question, perhaps other hon. members will

address your Excellency. Now with regard to camps. Certain persons in banks and other businesses would not be able to attend so many as eight days camp on end. I understand these amended regulations do contain some provision in some way allowing for that. At all events, if the question comes up in the future no doubt we shall have an opportunity of considering it. I hope that the musketry will always be kept in the forefront of our training. That is the really important thing, that we should all be practised in musketry. Another thing is that we should certainly have sufficient drill to enable us to move about in reasonable order, and that we should keep cool so far as we can under the circumstances of the climate, in emergencies. I would say in conclusion that whilst I have ventured to advocate caution in the way of employing Volunteers or Reserves too much on night duty, I know that they are ready and willing to do all they can, but I hope that the Government will not, because of that readiness and willingness, work them too far. I think it is a mistake to treat civilians who have their day duties to perform, as substitutes as it were for officers and men of the regular forces. I do not think we can possibly expect civilians, with day duties to perform, to take the place of officers and men in the regular forces. I shall have certain amendments to propose in Committee.

HON. MR. C. E. ANTON—I should like to say a few words in support of the second reading of the Bill. At a meeting of this Council some months ago His Excellency the General Officer Commanding made a remark to the effect that the object of war is to ensure peace. But I think there is an apter saying that to ensure peace we must be prepared for war. Great Britain has gone through a painful and terrible experience owing to her military unpreparedness and the nation must see to it that in future we are not found napping as we have been in the past. I saw it stated in a letter to one of the newspapers here that the Bill, if passed, will impose upon the community of Hongkong a militarism akin to German militarism. I do not think it will do anything of the kind. (The Governor.—Hear, hear.) German militarism is an aggressive militarism, and it has been fostered entirely for the purpose of conquest, whereas the object

of this Bill, I take it, is to make the defence of this Colony more efficient and to see to it that each individual, as far as possible, does his fair share of duty in the Empire's behalf. The working regulations under the Bill do not appear to me to be at all onerous, and no doubt if modifications are required they will be considered, and considered fully, and if finally found to be necessary will be agreed to.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL—Sir, the great objection which the Chamber of Commerce had to this Bill has been removed by the insertion of the clause limiting its duration, while the question of age-limit, which we thought too high, has been dealt with in the Regulations. I take it that the Government are satisfied that in the interests of efficiency and an equal division of the burden, the Bill is necessary, and I consequently do not desire to put any unnecessary obstacles in the way of its enforcement for the duration of the war. There is, however, one appeal which I desire to make to your Excellency on behalf of the commercial community who are working with very much depleted staffs. It is that whatever form the re-organisation under the Bill may take, it shall aim at the maximum efficiency with the minimum call upon the time of the men, and more especially with the minimum waste of that time. Speaking from my experience as a private in the Reserves, it has always seemed to my unmilitary mind that the degree of efficiency or inefficiency we have attained has been reached, I will not say with the maximum amount of waste of time, but with a very serious waste of time. I have attended many a drill when apparently, through miscarriage of arrangements or lack of arrangements, or something, we have spent most of our time doing nothing. I have attended Field Days when the same state of affairs has appeared to obtain. I endorse what the hon. member representing the Justices of the Peace said with regard to musketry. Last year I left my office at 3.30 on several occasions to spend the rest of the day at King's Park Range firing ten rounds. On one occasion I only fired seven rounds. Now, Sir, this apparently unnecessary waste of time may be unavoidable, but most of the men do not think so. It irritates them when they have arrears of work in the office to get level with, and my personal opinion is that it is at the bottom of whatever misgivings the public may have with regard to this Bill. I, therefore, earnestly hope, Sir, that if what I have said is a

surprise to you, if you cannot credit it, that you will make investigations. I am certain that the Official members of the Council, who are also privates in the Reserves, will bear out what I say. If it is possible under the re-organisation scheme to eliminate everything that is not absolutely necessary to attain the desired degree of efficiency, and above all to eliminate that waste of our time, which I maintain has existed in the past, I venture to predict, Sir, that, if at the end of this war the Government want a permanent Defence Corps, they will get it voluntarily without compulsion.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I should like to deal shortly with the special points raised by the honourable and learned member representing the Justices of the Peace. The first point he referred to was the question of the age limit. He pointed out that the age in England under the Military Service Act is from 18 to 41, and the suggested inference was that the age limit here was too high because it was 55. The objects of the two enactments are entirely different. The object of the English Military Service Act is to provide an army for the Front—an army which will take the offensive against one of the most highly-trained armies the world has ever seen and which will have to undergo very strenuous and severe fighting. The object of this Military Service Bill is to provide an auxiliary force for use in the Colony and not for offensive military operations at all. The objects of the two measures, therefore, are entirely dissimilar. Another reason, of course, why the higher age limit is taken is that the material from which this force can be built up is, in Hongkong, very restricted, and it is desirable that all the material there is—it may not be the best from a physical point of view—may be made use of for that force. The age limit in Singapore and the Straits Settlements is also 55. I think the honourable member made rather too much point of the fact that the older members of the community in Singapore are under a different organisation from the volunteers. I do not profess to know exactly in what way it is proposed that the Civil Guard in Singapore shall be used, but as far as I can gather it is merely a modified form of training which has been adopted for the older men who are less physically fit. Under the

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made in this Bill the very same principle has been adopted. Men over 45 are to undergo a modified training less strenuous than the younger men, and the men over 50 years undergo a still lighter form of training. The principle of training adopted here is essentially the same as in the Straits and of course the age in the Straits and the age proposed by this Bill are exactly the same. Then, Sir, the next point that the hon. and learned member made was with regard to the Army Act. He looked forward with a certain amount of fear apparently to the application of the Army Act to the local auxiliary forces for the indefinite period of the war, and suggested that the procedure contemplated under the Volunteer Ordinance should be continued under the new Bill. That procedure is being continued. By section 17 of the Volunteer Ordinance, 1893, it is provided that members of the Volunteer Force shall be subject to the Army Act whenever they are on actual military service, and by section 12 of the Ordinance it is provided that the members of the force shall be deemed to be on actual military service when they have been called out by proclamation. A proclamation under this section was issued immediately after the outbreak of war. When, therefore, that proclamation was issued the Volunteers came under the provisions of the Army Act and they have been under it ever since. The Bill makes practically no change in the situation. It is true that in England the Army Act is applied year by year and is not applied indefinitely for the duration of the war, but that is simply the continuation of an old practice dating back for a great many years and Parliament is merely clinging to old forms. This adherence to old forms is illustrated by a curious fact. The old Army (Annual) Acts began with a recital of the illegality of maintaining a standing army in the United Kingdom in time of peace without the consent of Parliament, and even now in the midst of this great war that old recital, which relates to times of peace, is retained. The old practice is also, I think, because it is found that the annual renewal of the Army Act is a convenient time for making amendments in the main Army Act itself. It is also useful under the system of Parliamentary Government at Home as a lever by which an unpopular Government—a Government not in sympathy with the country—might be compelled

to resign office. With a refusal to pass the annual Army Act all discipline would cease in the Army and the Government would be forced to resign. As that has been the position all along with regard to the Volunteers and Reserves since war broke out I fail to see any reason—that any case has been made out—for any special legislation for safeguarding the rights of *Habeas Corpus*, public meeting, criticism of the Government or the right to petition for the redress of grievances. All of these rights have been exercised here from time to time and have been exercised without question. As regards the proposal that, in future, Regulations, though made by the Governor-in-Council, should be laid on the table of the Legislative Council and not come into force until approved by the Council, I submit that is rather a cumbersome and slow method of legislating in matters which may very often be trifling but which are very often of some urgency. With regard to the question of decorations, the decorations are awards given by H.M. the King. They are governed by Royal Warrants and this Legislature would be going beyond its power if it presumed to interfere with the Regulations under which these decorations are given. The Warrants relating to the Long Service medal and the Colonial Service medal were issued in 1899 and they contemplate that certain Regulations would be made under the Warrants arranging the details and the conditions under which the medals might be obtained. Even this power of making regulations is limited in scope. The regulations cannot be made by the local authorities. They must be submitted by H.E. the Governor to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for the approval of the Secretary of State for War. Even in matters of minor detail no power is given to the local authorities, except that of recommendation, and it would follow that the local legislature has no power to deal with these decorations given by the Crown. Your Excellency may see fit to make recommendations on the point, but I do not think it would be proper for this Council to presume to deal with these matters under this Bill. With regard to the proposal to amend Clause 11, I do not personally see any objection to that amendment. It makes the present meaning rather clearer and does not alter it. I do not know, Sir, that I need say very much on the

question of the Regulations. I took it that the remarks of the hon. and learned member representing the Justices of the Peace were intended more by way of advice and assistance than by way of opposition or criticism of any material principles in the Regulations. Of course the Regulations will come before the Council in committee. I think the authorities will always pay due regard to the necessities of civilian life, and I am confident that they will endeavour, as far as possible, to reconcile those claims with the military claims of the colony.

THE GOVERNOR—There is only one point in the able speech of the member representing the Justices of the Peace that I need notice, and that is, the reason for compulsory military service. Well, gentlemen, there has been a great deal of discussion in this Colony as to whether we are doing our full duty in the matter of supplying manhood to take part in this great war. My own feeling, I frankly confess it, was that the best way would be to make your Volunteer forces as strong as possible and reduce your garrison as much as possible in consonance with that strength and thus release fighting men for the Front. The discussion led to the appointment of the Military Commission and they went further than I did. They recommended that compulsion for active military service outside the Colony should be introduced. Both proposals were laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies and he decided in favour of local compulsory service. This compulsion is in order to enable every single available man to come forward to do his duty and so permit of the reduction of the garrison as far as possible. Although I said in my remarks of the 2nd of August, to which the hon. member has referred, that the War Office had determined to make no further reduction of the garrison, since I spoke this war's necessity has compelled the War Office to reconsider their decision and they have actually made application to my honourable and gallant friend who sits on my right to withdraw still further units from this very depleted garrison. Now has the voluntary system given us every single man we ought to get? I am sorry to say I must answer No, it has not. There are in this Colony certain persons who up to this date have absolutely refused to come forward. I do not want to

make a point of it, but still it is only right that I should mention it, that we have not up-to-date been acting purely under a voluntary system, but have been acting under a voluntary system plus a little gentle persuasion. We have a little Bill in this Colony called Registration of Persons Bill. The instructions to the Police are to send monthly to this office a return of new-comers who have not joined the Volunteers. The next step is to write to these gentlemen and ask them if they have any valid reason why they should not join the Volunteers. Thus in December, 1915, I interviewed at Government House—that is before the Registration Bill came into effect—75 persons who might have joined the Volunteers but had not done so. I frankly confess that the majority of them were medically unfit, and I exempted various others for business reasons, but still I got a few men; that is the point. Again in September, 1916, 45 letters went out from this office under my direction asking those to whom they were addressed the why and wherefore they had not enrolled, and again, as late as January last, another 22 letters went out, and I have at the present moment a list here, a very considerable list, which requires careful examination and which will probably form the basis of the first summonses under this Bill if it is passed. Those are hard facts. As I said just now there are very few who have absolutely refused to act on the invitations which have been extended to them to join the Volunteers, but still there are a few and there ought not to be one. This compulsory measure is justified if there is one recalcitrant, because every man in this great crisis ought to come and do his duty especially when by doing his duty he is actually releasing fighting men to go to the Front. I just mention these few facts in order that the actual truth may be known. I do not wish to labour them because I am glad to see that the majority of Unofficial Members accept the principle of compulsion. The honourable member who represents the Justices of the Peace made a point that civilians in business would be better employed making "silver bullets" and that men who did night work were not fit for day work. Well, this night work does not amount to very much, thanks to the numerical strength of our local forces. I am told that a man has to put in night work about once in seven or eight weeks.

I do not think that alone will do a very great deal of harm. Anyway, I do not believe that any of the men who are doing this night work would willingly be exempted from it. They all enjoy it. As regards decorations, I do not think we can properly legislate on the point and I have written home to the Secretary of State to ask him what the position of the men under this compulsory Ordinance will be in that connection. I have stated that, of course, I take it that the services of men originally in the Volunteers will count with their services in the new force for such decorations. I will let you know the reply from the Secretary of State.

The Bill was then put to the meeting and passed its second reading. Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

On Clause 6,

HON. MR. POLLOCK—With reference to that clause I should like to have some pledge from the Government that the civilian rights referred to by me will be respected.

THE GOVERNOR—I will say that we will not depart from the policy adopted in the past.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Thank you, Sir.

On Clause 8.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—With regard to Clause 8, after listening carefully to the remarks made by the hon. and learned Attorney-General, I do not think he has given any good and sufficient reason why the ultimate approval of the regulations should not be vested in the Legislative Council. I do not think Sir, if any important regulations had to be hurried through, that it would be difficult to get a Legislative Council together to consider the special regulations. I do not imagine for one moment that these regulations will be amended so very frequently that they will add unnecessarily to the burdens of the Legislative Council. Now, Sir, the general body of citizens of this Colony have a great interest in the wording of these regulations, and I certainly think that the Legislative Council should be consulted. Therefore, I beg to move as an amendment, that the following sub-clause

be added to Clause 8.—"Such regulations shall not come into force until approved by the Legislative Council." I should say that this is a case, if there were no other case in the world, when the matter ought to be referred to the Legislative Council, as it affects the freedom of action of the civilian population of this Colony.

Subsequently the following amendment to Clause 8 (being sub-clause 3) was agreed to:—"No amendment of the First Appendix to the Second Schedule shall come into force until it has been approved by the Legislative Council."

On Clause 10,

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I was glad to hear your Excellency say just now that you had forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies the suggestion which I made at the last meeting of Council with reference to service in the Defence Corps being counted as a continuation of service in the Volunteers or Volunteer Reserves for the purpose of obtaining Long Service Medals. As regards the Service of ex-Navy and Army men counting towards a Long Service Medal, I will forward the communication received by me on that subject through the proper channel for the consideration of your Excellency.

After clause 11 of the Bill had been amended by the insertion of the word "only," on the suggestion of Mr. POLLOCK, he stated that, in view of the definite pledge by His Excellency the Governor that civilian rights would be respected in the future as in the past, he did not propose to move his intended amendment, previously mentioned by him, in connection with such rights.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill.

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

Council then adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

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

Harbour Department

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of fifteen thousand four hundred dollars (\$15,400) in aid of the vote Harbour Master's Department, *D.*—Steam Launches, Other Charges, Repairs.

The CHAIRMAN—This sum of money is the amount required for a thorough overhaul and repairs to the steam launch *Victoria*. The *Victoria* has been in service for something like 30 years, and has proved a very good launch. It was either a case of "scrapping" her or repairing her, and the opinion of the experts is that if this sum is spent she will become a very good launch and will be available for a considerable time.

The vote was agreed to.

Dredging the Harbour

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a

sum of one hundred and thirty five thousand dollars (\$135,000) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Miscellaneous, Dredging Harbour.

The CHAIRMAN—The auditor has questioned the practice which has obtained hitherto of placing the dredger *St. Enoch* in the list of unallocated stores in the Public Works Department. Some two years ago the dredger was valued at \$150,000 as unallocated stores, and it was decided to write off depreciation at the rate of \$7,500 a year. That has been done for two years, so the value now stands at \$135,000. But the auditor has expressed the view, and the Treasurer agrees with him, that it should be dropped out of unallocated stores and should be retransferred at an early date under another heading. Therefore, we took the opportunity of taking this vote and writing off the amount from the finances of the Colony so as to reduce unallocated stores to such a total as was approved, as a matter of fact, by the Secretary of State, namely, \$100,000.

The vote was agreed to.