

28TH FEBRUARY, 1918.

JOINT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS.

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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. 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. SIR PAUL CHATER, C.M.G. (Member
of the Executive Council only).

HON. MR. E. H. SHARP, K.C. (Member of the
Executive Council only).

HON. MR. MC.I. MESSER (Captain
Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. H. E. 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).

HIS EXCELLENCY—I have asked you to

meet together to-day in order to pass the
following resolution:—

"The Executive and Legislative Councils
of Hongkong desire to record their heartfelt
sympathy with the relatives and friends of
all those who perished, or suffered injury, in
the catastrophe occasioned by the collapse
and burning of the matsheds at the Happy
Valley on the 26th instant."

I suggest that we can best signify our assent
by standing in silence.

The members then stood.

The Late Sir Henry Blake

HIS EXCELLENCY—I wish, also, with
your permission, to take this opportunity of
moving a resolution of condolence and
sympathy with the widow and family of the
late Sir Henry Blake, G.C.M.G., one time
Governor of this Colony. The services he
rendered to the Colony are comparatively
recent and I will not refer to them particularly,
but I would like to say that I know the late Sir
Henry's name is held in grateful remembrance
by the Chinese, for the close co-operation he
succeeded in establishing between the
Government, European, and Chinese
communities in dealing with Plague. I propose
the following resolution:—

"That the members of the Legislative and
Executive Councils of Hongkong desire to
record their deep sympathy with the widow
and family of the late Sir Henry Blake,
formerly Governor of Hongkong."

THE HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK seconded,
and the resolution was passed in silence, all
standing.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Sir Paul Chater, C.M.G., and Mr. E. H. Sharp, members of the Executive Council, then left the Council Chamber, and a meeting of the Legislative Council was held.

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Coroner's Abolition Ordinance, 1888

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Coroner's Abolition Ordinance, 1888."

The "objects and reasons" state:— The object of this Bill is to amend the Coroner's Abolition Ordinance, 1888, so as to enable juries for the purposes of that Ordinance to be drawn from the Special Jurors' List in exceptional cases.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — I must apologise to hon. members for the fact that a copy of the Bill has only just been laid before them, but I hope I shall be excused in view of the urgency of the matter. The reason for the introduction of the Bill is, of course, the sad catastrophe which happened on Tuesday afternoon. The Bill is rendered necessary by certain provisions of the existing law relating to coroner's enquiries. Under the existing law a jury at a death enquiry must be drawn from the Common Jurors List, and it seems clearly desirable that in the enquiry that the magistrate proposes to hold in this case he should be assisted by as strong a jury as possible. This Bill, therefore, gives the magistrate power in special cases to requisition for a special jury for the purpose of a death enquiry. I propose to move the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the Bill to be passed through all its stages, for it is clearly desirable that the enquiry shall be held as early as possible.

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

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL then moved the suspension of the Standing Orders, in order to enable the Bill to be passed through its remaining stages at the same meeting.

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

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL then moved the second reading of the Bill.

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

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

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment, and, on Council resuming.

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

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK—I take it that this amendment to the Ordinance will not, in any sense, prevent the fullest enquiry into the circumstances which have led to this unfortunate catastrophe? Otherwise, I shall move for a commission of enquiry.

HIS EXCELLENCY—The sole object of the legislation just being passed is to facilitate the holding of an enquiry which, I hope, will satisfy the entire community.

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

Council then adjourned *sine die*.