

30TH JANUARY, 1919.

**PRESENT:—**

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN, C.M.G.

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

HON. MR. A. G. M. FLETCHER (Colonial Secretary).

HON. MR. J. H. KEMP, K.C., C.B.E. (Attorney-General).

HON. MR. C. MCI. MESSER, O.B.E. (Colonial Treasurer).

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

HON. MR. E. D. C. WOLFE (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

HON. MR. HO FOOK.

HON. MR. R. G. SHEWAN.

MR. A. DYER BALL (Clerk of Councils).

**New Member**

The Hon. Mr. R. G. SHEWAN took the oath on becoming a member of Council.

**Committees**

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT — This meeting has been called in order that certain questions put by hon. members may be answered. The hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce requested some time ago that answers to questions asked should not be unduly delayed through having no meeting of Council, so, although there is no legislation proposed at present, it was necessary to call this meeting to answer the questions of which notice has been given. It is usual at the first meeting of the year to appoint the various Committees. The Finance Committee will be composed of all the members of this Council except myself. The Public Works Committee

will consist of the Hon. the Director of Public Works (Chairman), the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. Mr. P. H. Holyoak, the Hon. Mr. Ho Fook and the Hon. Mr. R. G. Shewan. The Standing Law Committee will consist of the Hon. the Attorney-General (Chairman), the Hon. the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Hon. Mr. H. E. Pollock, K.C., the Hon. Mr. Lau Chu Pak and the Hon. Mr. David Landale.

**Financial Minutes**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table Finance Minutes 1 to 8 and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded and this was agreed to.

**Questions and Answers**

HON. MR. D. LANDALE put the questions standing in the name of the hon. member who represents the Chamber of Commerce. The answer in each case was read by the Colonial Secretary.

**Men at Kirkhee**

Q.—What steps has the Government taken and what further steps does the Government propose to take to obtain the prompt release from military service of then sent to India under the "General Military Service Ordinance, 1918"?

A.—On the 17th December a request was preferred to the Military Authorities that steps might be taken to secure the release of the men from Military Service and their return to the Colony at as early a date as possible. On the 16th January a telegram was sent to the Viceroy of India stating that the return of the men was urgently required. A reply was

received to this telegram on the 22nd January, to the effect that arrangements were already being made for the early return of the men. The General Officer Commanding had in the meantime received a telegram from the War Office, dated the 18th January, to the effect that the men would be returned to Hongkong as soon as possible. They would be demobilised but not discharged. In the circumstances it seems unnecessary to take further steps.

### **Rickshas**

Q.—Will the Government arrange for a supply of pneumatic-tyred modern rickshas for the Colony and state the maximum price in fares it is prepared to allow for a minimum distance?

A.—In June, 1914, the Captain Superintendent of Police arranged with the jinrikisha proprietors of Victoria to put ten pneumatic-tyred jinrikishas on the streets of Victoria as an experiment. They plied for hire for three months at ordinary rates after which they were taken off the streets. They were apparently not a success and the proprietors state that after three months' use the tyres were worn out. The present jinrikisha proprietors of Victoria have expressed their willingness to undertake in combination the provision of such new and improved jinrikishas as the Government may think desirable. The Government has the matter under consideration, but it is not at present prepared to formulate a new scale of fares. The Government will be glad to consider any suggestions on the subject that members of this Council may wish to put forward.

### **Sai Ying Pun School**

Q.—What steps have been taken to carry out the wishes of the Unofficial Members expressed during the "Budget Debate" on the 17th October last to improve the general condition of the Sai Ying Pun School?

A.—No steps have yet been taken because the only effective scheme is to erect a new school on a new site and no suitable site is available at present.

### **Civil Service Salaries**

Q.—What steps have been taken by the Government to revise the Civil Service salaries and conditions of service?

A.—A Commission to enquire into the emoluments of the Public Service has recently been appointed. The matter was not dealt with at an earlier date because it was desired to offer a seat on the Commission to Mr. Ede, who returned to the Colony on the 23rd January.

### **Victoria Hospital**

Q.—Is it not a fact that for some time past, owing to the illness of the "P.C.M.O.", there has been no practising resident Physician or Surgeon at the Victoria Hospital, Barker Road, and that patients are entirely dependent upon daily visits from another medical officer of the Government, and will the Government state what other duties this Medical Officer has to perform?

A.—Dr. Johnson went on sick leave on the 14th December. It was at first thought that his absence from duty would be very temporary, but as soon as it was known that he would be incapacitated for some time the Military Authorities were approached, and they lent the Services of Captain Macaulay, R.A.M.C. From the 14th December to the 8th January, Dr. McKenny was in charge of the Victoria Hospital which he visited once, and nearly always twice, daily. During the same period he was Superintendent, Government Civil Hospital, and Visiting Medical Officer to the Tung Wa Hospital. He was Medical Officer to Victoria Gaol from the 14th to the 20th December, and he had charge of one convalescent patient at Kennedy Town Hospital between the same dates. Capt. Macaulay has been in charge of the Victoria Hospital since the 9th January. He lives at the Peak Hotel, and it is proposed that he shall go into residence at the hospital as soon as the quarters there are vacated by Dr. Johnson, who is about to go on long leave. During the period (14th December-9th January) the daily average number of patients in the hospital was seven. Dr. McKenny reports that the patients were in no case in such a condition as to be likely to require immediate medical assistance.

### Search of Passengers

Q.—Will the Government state whether there is at present any system for searching passengers and passengers' luggage entering the Colony, whether by boat or train, for arms and ammunition? If not, in view of the numerous outrages and armed thefts which have occurred in this Colony recently, will they take immediate steps to provide for such a search?

A.—All steamers, river steamers, passage boats, and launches arriving in the Colony and some trains arriving at Kowloon are searched for arms and ammunition. It is not possible to search more than a certain percentage of arriving passengers without serious inconvenience to the vessels searched and to the public. The greatest ingenuity is shown as regards methods of concealment, arms being upholstered into chairs, ammunition being placed in false bottoms, and so on; and a completely exhaustive search would involve practically the stripping of each passenger and great destruction of property. Detectives scrutinize passengers arriving both by ship and by train for the purpose of picking out known criminals, persons returning from banishment, and suspicious characters. It must be remembered that the neighbouring province of China has been for some time past in a state of great disorder.

Council then adjourned *sine die*.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee followed, the Colonial Secretary presiding.

### Moorings in Victoria Harbour

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of three thousand five hundred dollars in aid of the vote Harbour Master's Department, A.—Harbour Officer, Special Expenditure, Acquisition and re-arrangement of moorings in Victoria Harbour.

THE CHAIRMAN—It was found that new moorings were required at Wanchai.

The vote was agreed to.

### Underground Telegraph Lines

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of five hundred and forty dollars in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services. Rent of Underground Telegraph Lines.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is to carry out an arrangement with the Telegraph Company for direct lines from the Observatory to the Cable Office and from the Post Office to the Cable Office.

The vote was agreed to.

### Medical Department

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand one hundred and seventy dollars in aid of the vote Medical Department, A.—Staff, Other Charges, Conveyance Allowances to Matron, Sisters and Probationers.

THE CHAIRMAN—Up till the end of last year a fixed sum was paid which was divided among the Sisters who happened to be on the Staff at the time. The probationers, I think, got nothing. They are now being given a small conveyance allowance which necessitates this increase for the current year. The Matron and Senior Sisters at the Peak receive \$15; Sisters \$10; probationers at the Peak \$7.50 and probationers at the G.C.H. \$5.

The vote was agreed to.

### Charitable Allowances

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of five hundred dollars in aid of the vote Charitable Services, Charitable allowance to Shin Lok-shang, son of Sin Yan-wai, late of the Education Department.

THE CHAIRMAN—The Council voted at the beginning of last year a sum to cover expenses up to the end of 1917. This vote is for five terms at the University. Mr. Shin Lok-sang was for a long time in the service of the Government. His son won a Canton scholarship at the University and the Government has undertaken to pay the fees for his course there.

The vote was agreed to.

**Mrs. Glendinning**

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of five hundred and thirty-six dollars and sixty-four cents in aid of the vote Charitable Services, Charitable Pension.

THE CHAIRMAN—This vote represents the difference in the amount due to Mrs. Glendinning, the widow of Sergt. Glendinning who was murdered at Tai O, from the Widows' and Orphans' Fund and £104 to which sum her pension has been raised.

The vote was agreed to.

**Typewriter**

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred and two dollars in aid of the vote Royal Observatory, Special Expenditure, Typewriter.

The vote was agreed to.

**Children's Shelter at Kowloon**

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two thousand two hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Kowloon, Miscellaneous. Shelter in Children's Playground.

THE CHAIRMAN—The total cost has been \$6,800. The extra sum is required partly because of the rise in the price of materials and partly to provide a fence around the enclosure.

The vote was agreed to.

**Frontier Police Stations**

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of ten thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, New Territories, Miscellaneous, (47) Miscellaneous Works.

THE CHAIRMAN—This vote is required to protect the frontier police stations with barbed wire and iron shutters. The great unrest over the border has made it desirable to put protective fences round the outlying police stations.

The vote was agreed to.