

# HONGKONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

8TH FEBRUARY, 1923.

## PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR REGINALD EDWARD STUBBS, K.C.M.G.

H.E. THE GENERAL OFFICER IN COMMAND OF THE TROOPS, MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN FOWLER, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

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

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

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

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

HON. MR. E. A. IRVING (Director of Education).

HON. MR. T. L. PERKINS (Director of Public Works).

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

HON. MR. E. V. D. PARR.

HON. MR. A. G. STEPHEN.

HON. MR. CHOW SHOU-SON.

HON. MR. NG HON-TSZ.

MR. A. G. M. FLETCHER, C.M.G., C.B.E. (Clerk of Councils).

## Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting of the Council, held on December 28th, were approved and signed.

## Standing Committee

HIS EXCELLENCY—This being the first meeting of the year, gentlemen, it is necessary to appoint the one Standing Committee not already provided for by the Standing Orders—that is the Standing Law Committee, which will this year

consist of the Hon. Attorney-General, the Hon. Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. Mr. Pollock, the Hon. Mr. Holyoak, and the Hon. Mr. Ng Hon Tsz.

## Rents Restriction Ordinance

H.E. THE GOVERNOR said—I should like to take this opportunity of giving notice that at an early meeting of the Council, it will be moved on behalf of the Government that the Rents Restriction Ordinance be continued in force for a further period of twelve months. The progress of the provision of houses is going on very well, but there still seems to be a considerable shortage. The question of the withdrawing of the Ordinance is one that requires consideration, and such consideration will be given to the matter by the Council in due course.

## Finance

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial minutes Nos. 1 to 9 and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

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

## Regulations

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor laid on the table the following Regulations made by the Governor in Council:—

Regulations under Section 4 of the Stamp Ordinance, 1921.

Order under Section 9 of the Post Office Ordinance, 1900.

Order under Section 24 of the Rent Ordinance, 1922.

Notification relating to rates of postage on newspapers.

Notification under Sections 90 and 92 of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903.

Notification under Section 25 of the Tramway Ordinance, 1902.

Order under Section 3 of the Licensing Ordinance, 1887.

Notification No. 42, under the Societies Ordinance, 1920.

Notification No. 44, under the Highway Ordinance, 1910.

(All the above orders and notifications had appeared in the *Government Gazette* since the last meeting of the Council.)

Quarterly return of Excesses on Sub-Heads met by savings under Heads of Expenditure for the fourth quarter of 1922.

Report of the *Sui An* Piracy Commission.

#### **Medical Registration Ordinance**

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend further the Medical Registration Ordinance, 1884. He said: Under the Ordinance of 1884 persons could be registered as medical practitioners irrespective of where their qualifications were acquired and the right to registration did not depend on whether those qualifications would or would not be recognised by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom. The 1914 amending Ordinance adopted the principle of accepting for registration here only those medical practitioners whose qualifications would be accepted in England. The short effect of clause 4 of the Bill is to give the Governor in Council power to remove from the register any persons who would not be qualified for registration now and who have discontinued practice here for a period of five years. That is the main clause of the Bill. Clauses 2 and 3 make minor amendments in the principal Ordinance and the amending Ordinance. Clause 2 repeals a temporary provision inserted in the 1914 Ordinance for the purpose of safeguarding certain possible rights. That provision has been in force for eight years and it has never been found necessary to use it, so that apparently it

may safely disappear from the statute book. Clause 3 repeals a section in the 1884 Ordinance which ought to have been repealed by the amending Ordinance of 1914. I beg to move the first reading.

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

1.—Sub-section (3) of section 3 of the Medical Registration Ordinance, 1884, as enacted by section 3 of the Medical Registration Amendment Ordinance, 1914, has never yet been used. Clause 2 of the bill, therefore, proposes to repeal it.

2.—Section 11 of the Medical Registration Ordinance, 1884, should have been repealed by the Medical Registration Amendment Ordinance, 1914, as the whole question of the right to registration is dealt with in the section added to the principal Ordinance by section 5 of the amending Ordinance. Clause 3, therefore, proposes to repeal this unnecessary section.

3.—Under the Ordinance of 1884, persons could be registered wherever their qualifications were required, and the right to registration did not depend in any way on the standard set up by the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom. The amending Ordinance of 1914, introduced the principle of accepting only those qualifications which would be recognised by the General Medical Council. The effect of clause 4 of the bill is to enable the Governor in Council to remove from the register any person who would not be qualified for registration now, provided that such person shall not have been in continuous practice in the Colony for a period of three months at any time during the period of five years next preceding the publication in the *Gazette* of notice of proposal to make the order. Notice is to be sent, if possible, to the person proposed to be affected.

#### **Maintenance Orders Ordinance**

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend the Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Ordinance, 1921. He said: This Bill is intended to correct an error which occurred in the drafting of Ordinance No. 3 of 1922. The error is explained in the "Objects and Reasons" and the matter is purely a technical one. I beg to moved the first reading.

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

By an oversight in drafting, the new section introduced by Ordinance No. 3 of 1922 was made a section of that Ordinance instead of being inserted as an additional section of the principal Ordinance. The result is that it is doubtful whether a proclamation issued under that section would have the effect of extending the principal Ordinance to the possession referred to in the proclamation. This bill therefore makes the section in question an additional section of the principal Ordinance, and it repeals Ordinance No. 3 of 1922.

### The Mui Tsai Bill

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to regulate certain forms of Female Domestic Service.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK, K. C. said—Your Excellency,—As the Senior Unofficial member of the Legislative Council, I have been asked by my British Colleagues to address this Council on the subject of this Bill. What I am saying, therefore, must be regarded as our joint views. The Senior Chinese Unofficial Member will address the Council on behalf of himself and his Chinese Colleagues. I should add that the Chinese Members of Council concur in and support what I am about to say, and that we British Unofficial Members also concur in what the Senior Chinese Unofficial Member is about to say on behalf of the Chinese members. We regret to find that a great deal of misunderstanding has gathered round this subject. The Mui tsai system is neither so benevolent as the more extreme of its supporters have sought to maintain, nor, on the other hand, is it so wholly wanting in good points as the opponents of the system would have us believe, and we are content to accept the following language of the Attorney General, in moving the first reading of this Bill—"Many of the mui tsai—I think the majority—are contented with their lot and are fairly well off."

We, therefore, start with a system which viewed as a whole, has not worked badly; which has been practised in China for several thousands of years right up to the present time, and which has its root in a superfluity of daughters due to the ancestor worship imposed on a man's oldest son as a filial duty (medical science not yet having discovered any means whereby a parent can select the sex of the child whom it is desired to bring into the world.) Whilst, however, we regret to find that the evils of the working of the system have been grossly exaggerated to the detriment of the good name of this Colony, we agree with all the provisions for the protection of mui tsai from ill-treatment which are contained in the present Government Bill, and are prepared, as will presently appear, to make those provisions against cruelty even stronger than they are at present.

Clause 2 of the Bill is all-important, and may justly be regarded as the charter of freedom of the mui tsai, for it shatters at one blow the mui tsai system, as defined by Chinese custom, and as it has existed for some thousands of years. The "certain persons" referred to in that clause as the persons who have "erroneously supposed that the payment of money in return for the transfer of a female child confers certain rights over her" are the three or four hundred millions of Chinese who compose the inhabitants of China.

Clause 6 which provides for the good treatment of mui tsai is, as far as it goes, good; but it does not go far enough, and we shall suggest, in Committee, with the view of protecting mui tsai from gross cruelty the insertion of the following clause:—

"In every prosecution for overwork or ill-treatment of a mui tsai medical evidence shall be given before the Magistrate trying the case as to the injuries received by such mui tsai, and the magistrate shall find whether such ill-treatment amounted, in his opinion, to gross cruelty or not.

"In the event of such Magistrate finding that such ill-treatment amounts to gross cruelty, the offender shall not be given the option of paying a fine but shall be sentenced by the Magistrate to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year."

In our view the strict enforcement of such a clause against gross cruelty to mui tsai is what is really required, and a few cases of imprisonment with hard labour as a punishment for gross cruelty to mui tsai would, in our opinion, do more to protect them than any amount of legislation. In order to deal with cases of cruelty by parents to their own children, one would naturally look for some tightening up of the laws against cruelty rather than for some legislation prohibiting parents from bringing their children into the Colony after the commencement of the Ordinance.

This brings us to consider clause 4 of this Bill. The Attorney General in seeking to justify the passing of that clause, says—"the system lends itself to abuse, and grave abuse, in the hands of evil and unscrupulous person". On this point, I have ascertained that the Attorney General meant to refer, in addition to cruelty, to a possible seduction of mui tsai by the employer or his family or to her being sold for immoral purposes. But, Sir, surely the proper way to meet this latter evil is to put prominently into the forefront of the Bill (as the Unofficial Members propose to do by amendment in Committee) the fact that mui tsai are entitled to the same protection as are other young girls under the provisions of the Women's and Girls' Protection Ordinance, 1897. That Ordinance (the provisions of which, together with the fact that it applies to mui tsai, should be widely published by the Government) deals in the minutest possible manner, and under very heavy penalties—including in many cases the punishment of flogging—with traffic in women and girls (sec. 3), procuration of women and girls (sec. 4), defilement and procuring defilement of women and girls (secs. 5, 6 and 9), receiving or harbouring girls for immoral purposes (secs. 18 and 19), rape (sec. 21), and abduction (secs. 22 to 27). And, whilst we are on the question of publication, we would express the hope that means will be taken by the Government to advertise, in the interests of mui tsai, not only the above provisions of the Women and Girls' Protection Ordinance, but also the provisions of the present Bill, as they cannot be too widely known.

Let us now consider whether clause 4 of the Bill is desirable. As regards this point, the Attorney General has pointed out that there is

the danger that in attacking the practice of employing mui tsai, we may increase the risks of neglect, kidnapping and prostitution. We, therefore, consider that clause 4 is undesirable. Clause 4 of the Bill is also wholly unnecessary, in view of the language of clause 2 of the Bill which completely abolishes the whole system of employment of mui tsai, as defined by Chinese custom, and entirely eliminates any vestige of proprietorship or quasi-proprietorship in the employer. This aspect of the matter has engaged the most earnest and anxious attention of the Unofficial Members of Council, with the result that they have arrived at the conclusion that it is desirable to alter the language of clauses 12, 13 and 14 of the Bill in Committee so as to make it abundantly clear that any mui tsai *of any age* has the rights referred to in those three sections. For the protection of the mui tsai from evil-disposed persons, it is necessary to insert in clause 12 some words similar in effect to those at the end of clause 13 of the Bill, and it is therefore proposed to move in Committee the insertion between the word "may" and the word "leave" of the following words, namely:—"with the sanction of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs," and to insert the following new paragraph at the end of clause 12:—

"In granting or withholding such sanction, as the case may be, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs shall pay regard solely to the interests and welfare of the mui tsai."

Clauses 4 and 5 of the Bill are also, in our opinion, objectionable because, for their effective working, they appear to involve some system or registration. In regard to the question of objections to registration, we desire to associate ourselves entirely with the remarks which will be made presently by the Senior Chinese Member. We feel that it is very easy and simple for Britons both here and in England, and also for the numerous Chinese in this Colony who do not employ mui tsai, to adopt a philosophic attitude on such matters,

seeing that such registration cannot possibly give them personally the slightest inconvenience. In this connection we are forcibly reminded of the old story of the absentee Irish landlord, who wrote to the Land League as follows:—"If you think that you are going to frighten me by shooting at my Agent, you are very much mistaken." Moreover, Sir, in regard to these same matters, we cannot help recollecting that, only about six months ago, when the question came up in this Council of the Europeans of this Colony being compelled to register their names as being able to carry out certain essential duties in the event of a general strike there was so much general opposition raised by the Europeans in this Colony to compulsory registration that the Unofficial Members felt it incumbent upon them to move in this Council that that Bill be withdrawn: and that Bill was withdrawn accordingly. In the face of such a precedent, we think that the Government cannot consistently insist in this Bill on compulsory registration.

Accordingly, the course which the Unofficial Members would now ask the Government to adopt is as follows:—

- 1.— To go into Committee of this Council forthwith.
- 2.— To put clauses 4 and 5 of the Bill into Part III.
- 3.— To transpose the sections of clause 6 of the Bill and to re-number it as 4, and to insert two new clauses, to be numbered 5 and 6, for the better protection of mui tsai.
- 4.— To put the whole of clause 7 of the Bill with the exception of (1) (a) into Part II.
- 5.— To leave Clause 7 (1) (a) and clauses 8, 9 and 10 in Part III. of the Bill.
- 6.— To put clauses 11 to 15 in Part II. of the Bill, subject to certain amendments to clauses 12, 13 and 14, in the interests of the mui tsai.
- 7.— To leave clause 16 in Part III. of the Bill.
- 8.— To pass Part IV. as it is, subject to a slight necessary consequential amendment at the beginning of clause 17.

9.— To omit clause 19.

these same matters, we cannot help

In asking Your Excellency to put clauses 4 and 5 into Part III. of the Bill, we would urge that, in view of the time and trouble spent by the Unofficial Members upon the consideration of this Bill, they are at least entitled to have their views on those clauses and on the registration clauses laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, before the solid weight of the Official Vote is brought to bear in opposition to the unanimous views of the Unofficial Members. We do not ask for any further or longer delay than is necessary for the above purpose, and in the meantime (in fact, this very day) the other provisions of this Bill which contains all its vital principles will be placed on the statute book of this Colony. There are two vital principles in this Bill and the unofficial Members of Council accept both of them. The first is the abolition of the mui tsai system, and this is effected by clause 2 of the Bill, which gives the death-blow to the mui tsai system as hitherto recognized and practised by Chinese custom.

The second principal is the provision for good treatment of mui tsai. This is dealt with by clause 6 of the Bill. All of the amendments which the Unofficial Members will move in Committee on this Bill are framed for the purpose of furthering and strengthening the above two vital principles of the Bill and for the protection of mui tsai.

HON. MR. CHOW SHOU SON—Sir, The Honourable Senior Unofficial Member having expressed the joint views of all the Unofficials, I would, ordinarily, have contented myself with merely endorsing his remarks; but in this case my Chinese colleague and I have promised both the supporters and opponents of the Bill to repeat here their respective arguments, and to express our own views on this important subject which so intimately concerns the Chinese. I would, therefore, crave the indulgence of this Honourable Council for so doing.

Since the Bill was read for the first time, meetings have been held by various sections of the Chinese community to discuss it—by the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, by the Kaifong at the Tung Wah Hospital, by thirteen

Chinese Commercial Unions, the Anti-Mui Tsai Society, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., and by the Chinese Labour Guilds. Views on the measure have also been enunciated in both the English and Chinese Press. As representatives of the Chinese Community, the Honourable Mr. Ng and I welcomed such views which have helped us to no small extent in arriving at our own conclusions. The views expressed have resolved themselves into two broad divisions—one in support of the Bill almost in its entirety with certain amendments designed to strengthen it; the other in opposition to it as it now stands, though recognising that the mui tsai system has its evils.

Briefly the supporters of the Bill argue that:—

- 1.— The sale and purchase of human beings is a degrading and inhuman custom. It is tantamount to treating human beings as chattels and beasts, and it encourages kidnapping, licentiousness and other serious abuses.
  - 2.— Mui tsai are slaves, because they are deprived of their rights and liberty, are not paid for their labour, and can be re-sold at any time.
  - 3.— There have been innumerable cases of ill-treatment and neglect of mui tsai. There have also been some cases of employers seducing their mui tsai, or selling them for immoral purposes. In all such cases it is very difficult for these girls, owing to their ignorance, to defy their employers.
  - 4.— Child-drowning bears no relationship to the mui tsai system inasmuch as in child-drowning the victim is invariably one or two days old, while girls sold as mui tsai have generally attained the age of five or six years, an age at which they can be useful to their purchasers.
  - 5.— The argument that the abolition of the system would lead to the starvation of a large number of poor children can be met by the argument that when employers lose the services of their mui tsai they would have to employ paid servant-girls to take their place; and so the daughters of the poor, instead of being sold as chattels, would become paid servants.
- 6.— Mui tsai keeping is not charity but, on the contrary, tends to encourage selfish and mercenary men to part with their children in order to enable themselves to be more self-indulgent.
  - 7.— To pass a law with the object of merely preventing cruelty would mean the preservation of the poison in the system by neglecting the source of the disease.
  - 8.— Registration should not cause undue inconvenience and trouble. At present, schools, companies, births and deaths, and medical practitioners have to be registered, and no inconvenience has been experienced by the parties concerned.
  - 9.— The system was abolished by law in China towards the end of the Manchu regime, and again at the beginning of the Republic; and if such could be done in so vast a country as China, there is no reason why it should not be done in this small Colony.
  - 10.— Even if there were some flaws in the draft Bill, the proper way would be to point them out in order to have them remedied, instead of asking that the whole Bill be withdrawn.

The arguments of the other side for the withdrawal of the Bill are, roughly, as follows:

- 1.— Mui tsai are not slaves, and have never been so regarded in China either by law or by custom. When a mui tsai is married, she is allowed to look upon the home of her former employer as her own home and is treated as a member of the family.
- 2.— The lot of the majority of the mui tsai in Hongkong is far better than that of the children of poor families in the interior of China, the former being much better fed and clothed. Their parents, if they so wish, are allowed to see them at regular intervals.

- 3.— Mui tsai are not always sold; some poor people, having too many children and being unable to support them all, may present some to well-to-do families in order to enable them to be properly brought up and married off.
- 4.— It can truthfully be said that about ninety or even ninety-five per cent. of the mui tsai in Hongkong are well-treated. Those employers who overwork or otherwise ill-treat their mui-tsai would not be deterred by registration, and the only remedy would seem to be imprisonment without the option of a fine in case of gross cruelty. If there are cases of ill-treatment of mui tsai there are also cases of ill-treatment of one's own children; a cruel hearted person in a rage loses the sense of discrimination. Ill-treatment of children is not the fault of a system, but of individuals. The illustration that to take measure merely for preventing cruelty to mui tsai, without abolishing the system, resembles leaving the poison in the system, is not as convincing as the one that to get rid of a boil on the head one does not cut off the head.
- 5.— Before the Bill, with its present irksome provisions, becomes law, some people may send their mui tsai to the interior to be sold, or given away, or kept with friends. With the already over-populated state of the country, the condition of the mui tsai would become worse, as a direct outcome of the legislation.
- 6.— If mui tsai of or over the age of eighteen are suddenly released from control, when control is more than ever desirable, they may misuse their freedom in all sorts of ways; and so to free them would in reality mean the removal of necessary and salutary control.
- 7.— The abolition of mui tsai would not do away with kidnapping of children, but, on the contrary, would increase the sale of girls to evil-disposed persons as "daughters." These girls are brought up as "daughters" without being required to

do domestic work; some with such tender care that their hands are not exposed to hard labour in order not to coarsen them! The object is obvious.

- 8.— If the Bill is passed, the Government will be faced with the stupendous task of finding accommodation or employment for the large number of mui tsai who may seek emancipation, or whose employers may voluntarily surrender them to the Government. If the Government does not take charge of all these girls, they must perforce make their employers continue to keep them. Thus, whatever may be the change in the name of the mui tsai, they can have no change in their position, and it may further be said that they are kept in such a position with the approval or even the authority of the Government.
- 9.— To enforce the provisions of the Bill, particularly that part relating to inspection and registration, means the employment of a large army of inspectors and detectives for domiciliary visits, and for inspection work upon the arrival and departure of all the trains and steamers which bring in and take out thousands of people every day. This would be costly to the Government, and vexatious to the people.

These, Sir, are the views of those who ask for the withdrawal of the Bill. There is, besides, another section of the Chinese Community who, while advocating the ultimate abolition of the mui tsai system, consider that the time is not yet, and in any case strongly deprecate registration. Now, I have given, to the best of my ability, the arguments put forward by the various parties, for and against the measure. The English Secretary of the Anti-Mui Tsai Society has also sent me a letter giving a gist of the views of his Executive Committee on the Bill, which I have handed to the Honourable the learned Attorney-General for his consideration.

I am, however, asked to say here that what they recommend constitutes the irreducible minimum. In effect, they support the Bill, with certain proposed amendments which, they consider, should strengthen it. My Chinese colleague and I have also received from the Chinese Labour Unions, the Chinese Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., the Chinese Christian Union, and the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce written representations which we have likewise turned over to the Government.

Having divested myself of the task imposed upon me by the two sides, of restating their opinions here, I will endeavour to express the views of my Chinese colleague and myself. We feel that where there is a divergence of opinion it is not enough for a member of this Honourable Council merely to express the views, however impartially, of the people whom he represents. He should also weigh the value of the conflicting arguments, endeavour to unravel the web of confusion woven by the disputation, and from his own judgment. In expressing our own conclusion—our honest convictions—it would be necessary for me to go over some of the grounds already traversed, but I know I can count upon a patient hearing. The crux of the matter seems to us to be whether a mui tsai is a slave or not. If she is, we should not tolerate the system for even one day longer in this Colony; but this point is disposed of by clause 2 of the Bill. Still, in spite of such a definite pronouncement from the Government, we cannot get away from the fact that cases of cruelty have from time to time come to light. We therefore consider that the mui tsai need special protection by the Government. While I abhor cruelty to children and consider a fine, however heavy, totally inadequate for offenders, I agree with those who hold that the present Bill would not deter the small number of people, who are by nature cruel, from ill-treating their mui tsai. For such people I advocate a long term of imprisonment with hard labour. I strongly deprecate, as do all my Honourable Unofficial colleagues, the introduction of registration. Endless inconvenience and trouble would be caused to the people by requiring them to register their mui tsai, to report any change of address, and wherever they leave the Colony with a mui tsai, even temporarily. I do not agree with the supporters of the Bill that registration in this case would not cause undue inconvenience, judging by the smooth working of the laws

governing the registration of births, schools, companies, and medical practitioners. This is arguing on totally wrong premises. A little thought will convince any impartial person that it is one thing to have, for instance, a birth or a school registered, and quite another to have to report every intended removal of a mui tsai from the Colony, even temporarily, and every change of address of the mui tsai or of the employer. Further, according to the Bill, the employer, whatever his station in life, has to take out an identification ticket, as if (to use the words of a Chinese gentleman) he were a discharged convict who has periodically to report himself to the police. Moreover, registration in this case, if it is to be effective, would necessitate domiciliary visits, which would open a door to all sorts of abuses, such as bribery, thieves masquerading as detectives to gain admission into houses and interference with the privacy of the home; a thing repugnant to all free men. Registration of mui tsai will not prevent their maltreatment any more than registration of shop-fokis will prevent thefts and embezzlements. Rather than have this registration law imposed on them, the employers of mui tsai would sooner give them up at once, either to the Government or to such institutions as the Government would name. This would mean that the Government has to provide accommodation and find employment for the mui tsai, of whom there are about ten thousand in the Colony. As a correspondent to the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce has said, there are unfortunately very few foundling houses in Hongkong or in China, and so the present homes of the mui tsai constitute a sort of foundling houses for them, otherwise a large number of them would have been drowned by their parents or starved to death.

Hongkong is so bound up with Canton, geographically and economically, that to stop the employment of mui tsai after the Bill becomes law as prescribed by clause 4 would be impracticable unless China acts likewise. I am of the humble opinion that no real improvement of any time-honoured social custom can be effected by sudden and violent change. The mui tsai system has been in existence for thousands of years, having grown up under the economic conditions of life. The wide publicity that has recently been given to the question should help materially to bring about the attainment of this object. The best method to this end would seem to be a gradual and careful education of public opinion.

The Anti-Mui Tsai Society and the "Protection" Society can assist in the carrying out of the present Bill by having all mui tsai informed of their status as declared in clause 2, and of their right to report at once to the Government in case they are ill-treated; and also by advising employers to treat their mui tsai well, otherwise they would be punished severely. It should be remembered, as analogous to this matter, that the foot-binding practice which had been in existence in China for nearly two thousand years, and which was, as recently as twenty-five years ago, tenaciously clung to by the people, was eventually abolished, not by legal enactments but by gradual pressure of enlightened public opinion, until we see to-day middle-aged dames and young girls, instead of being carried on the backs of amahs, merrily tripping about in the streets in short skirts and high-heeled shoes, just like their Western sisters. What has happened to foot-binding should happen to the custom of keeping mui tsai.

Let me now recapitulate the views of my Chinese colleague and myself, which, I think I can say, are also the views of my other Unofficial colleagues, namely, that to make illegal the engagement of mui tsai in Hongkong at this juncture would be impracticable, that, as a preventive of ill-treatment of mui tsai, persons guilty of gross cruelty should be sent to prison for a long term with hard labour. It has been a source of regret to me that, while the case for stopping the employment of mui tsai has been so ably and widely presented, those who are in favour of retaining the system for the present, with certain radical improvements in their position, have, until only quite recently,

remained almost inarticulate. I say this because I wish that both sides had had an equal chance of presenting their respective cases to the Secretary of State. Those in favour of the Bill have undoubtedly been actuated by generous motives and lofty ideals, but I am afraid that their burning zeal has not permitted them to study the problem with that calmness and impartiality which the importance of the subject demands. I do not keep, and have never kept, any mui tsai, but this does not blind me to the unwisdom of trying to sweep away in a day the custom with its good points. My Chinese colleague and I have given this grave problem much careful and anxious thought; and, while we recognise that there is much to be said for the arguments adduced by both sides, we have felt it our bounden duty to state, as I have done, the conclusions we have arrived at, without fear or favour. It remains for us to signify our support to the amendments which will be moved in committee by the Honourable Senior Unofficial Member.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—Gentlemen, Before we pass on to the next stage of the Bill I desire to make a few general remarks on the subject. I should like, in the first place, to make it perfectly clear that I dissociate myself entirely from the venomous attacks which have been made on the whole Chinese population of this Colony by ignorant persons at Home who seem to assume that because a system is liable to abuse it is therefore essentially bad. At the same time, I think it must be admitted that there is, from the Western point of view, a strong case against the maintenance of a system which, to the unsubtle Western mind, is very difficult to distinguish from slavery owing to the passing

of money and the acquisition of services which are subsequently unpaid. The arguments which have been brought forward with regard to the general contentment of the mui tsai and the general excellence of the system, may very likely be perfectly correct. I have very little doubt that many of the statements, that ninety per cent. of the statements are correct. But if any hon. member will take the trouble to read up the literature of the early part of the nineteenth century he will find in numerous pamphlets of West Indies' societies precisely the same arguments, reproduced in almost exactly the same words, as to the rare occurrence of cases of ill-treatment amongst negro slaves. These arguments were not allowed to stand in the way of the abolition of the system of slavery in the British Colonies, and I fear that it is impossible to allow arguments of the same kind to stand in the way of the abolition of a system of keeping mui tsai in Hongkong. The hon. member who spoke on behalf of all the unofficial members commented on the reference to "certain persons" who had "erroneously supposed" certain things, in Clause 2 of the Bill and he suggested that those "certain persons" who had made erroneous suppositions were all the 300 or 400 million inhabitants of China. It seems to me that it may conceivably be the case, that these three or four hundred millions had an erroneous impression. As we have heard here to-day, the system was declared to be unlawful under the Manchu Dynasty and subsequently, in the time of the first Republic, and I am not quite clear, therefore, that they had good grounds for their belief, but I should like to make a strong point that we are not legislating for the 400 millions of China, but for the 600,000 odd inhabitants of a British Colony. This is a matter which must be decided—with all due regard to Chinese sentiment and prejudice—on the principles of British law and the sentiments of a British community. The main point of the Bill is that the system of keeping mui tsai must be abolished. On that point, I have definite instructions from the Secretary of State who represents the British Government and the British people. There can be no compromise on that point: the system must be abolished, and if the system is to be abolished I can see no reason why you should not say so. For that reason I think it is necessary—in fact essential—to keep Clause 4 in the Bill, but I am quite prepared to accept any alternative form of words which will convey the same

impression. But there can be no compromise on this point: that hereafter no person can be allowed to take a mui tsai into his employment in British territory.

The matter of registration is, to my mind, not of the first importance. The Secretary of State has expressed his readiness to listen to any arguments against the imposition of registration in these matters and will, no doubt, weigh very carefully what has been said by the hon. senior Chinese member in deciding what instructions he shall give with regard to bringing into force what may be called the reserved portion of the Bill, that is the part of the Bill that is to be brought into force by proclamation. With regard to the other minor amendments of the hon. member, Mr. Pollock, I think many of them may with advantage be adopted, and I should like to say now that I am much obliged to the hon. member—although I cannot agree with his views in some instances—for the trouble which he has taken in endeavouring to get this Bill into the best possible shape so that it may serve its object of protecting the interests of mui tsai, while causing the least possible friction and difficulty. The remaining points raised may be dealt with more suitably on the individual clauses of the Bill as they arise. It is proposed and seconded that the Bill be read a second time.

The second reading of the Bill was then carried.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the Council go into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and this was agreed to.

The Council accordingly went into committee.

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK—I beg to move an amendment in Clause 2 to make it direct and to run as follows:—

"It is hereby declared and enacted that no payment of money to the

parents, or the guardians, or the employer of a female child, such payment purporting to be in return for the transfer of the child, confers upon any person any right of property in the child, or the right to retain possession or custody or control of the child, either as against the child's parent, guardian, or employer, or as against the child herself."

In support of this amendment sir, I would say that it seems to me a far more direct and definite statement of what you mean to effect than the present declarations Clause 2, which begins in a round-about sort of way, "Whereas certain persons have erroneously supposed" etc. Your Excellency has stated that the certain persons cannot possibly refer to the 300,000,000 to 400,000,000 people living in China, but they must be restricted to the 600,000 Chinese in this Colony. But, Sir, I would beg leave to point out, with deference, that this is not so, because the number of mui tsai who are acquired in Hongkong are a very trifling percentage indeed. The mui tsai who have found their way to Hongkong come from outside, within the vast Empire of China itself which is subject, as we know, to such very severe and distressing economic conditions, with famine prevalent in very large areas. With regard, Sir, to your observation about the desirability of the present system, I must confess I have found it very difficult to apply that observation to the remarks which have been made by myself or by my Chinese colleagues. And, furthermore, Sir, I must have expressed myself very indifferently if you have not apprehended the fact that my whole contention is that Clause 2 of this Bill absolutely shatters the mui tsai system as it hitherto existed; that it brings it to an end completely; that it does away with any possibility of its being represented either as a servile condition or as a proprietary condition. And the amendments which I shall ask your Excellency to make by and by in Clause 12 of this Bill will make the point even stronger, perhaps, than it is at present. I do not say that the system as it has existed hitherto is satisfactory. If I thought it were satisfactory I should oppose this Bill *in toto*. I do not do that nor do my honourable colleagues. We realise that a considerable part of this measure is desirable in the interests of, and the protection of, mui tsai. We certainly do not contend that this measure, treating it as a whole, is either unnecessary or undersirable. Your Excellency

has referred, incidentally, to certain laws which are stated to have been passed in China. But I can say, Sir, that from all I learn, these laws are no more carried into force and are of no more use than are the laws for the suppression of opium in China, and therefore I think we may treat them as a negative quantity. I think it necessary to say that, because I want to make the position of the unofficial members of this Council perfectly clear. That is all I have to say on Clause 2 of the Bill. I again urge that it is far more emphatic and far more direct to say that "it is hereby declared and enacted," instead of trying to refer to erroneous suppositions of certain persons with reference to the mui tsai system. I do not think, Sir, it is an erroneous supposition. I believe the custom of China is that the payment of money does confer certain rights for a period of years,—at all events till the girl attains the age of eighteen years, the marriageable age. I do not think it is at all incorrect. It is not an erroneous supposition; it is a true supposition. The Chinese custom, as I understand it, undoubtedly is that the payment of money does confer certain rights on the person who pays that money. I cannot see any good or any advantage to be got by saying that people erroneously suppose a thing, when, as I understand the position, they do not erroneously suppose the thing at all. That is all I have to say, Sir, with regard to my amendment as to Clause 2.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—One appreciates the desire to make this clause more direct and arresting, but I think the omission of the preamble obscures one very important point, namely, that the clause does not make any change in the law whatever; for the payment of money in return for obtaining the possession of a child has never, in Hongkong, conferred any rights whatever on the purchaser. I must confess I am rather surprised to hear the hon. member

question the correctness of the preamble and suggest that it is not an erroneous supposition at all and that payment does confer rights. We are speaking, Sir, in this clause of English law, Hongkong law, and whatever the rights may be in China they do not concern us. It is undoubtedly an erroneous supposition that payment of money for a child confers, or has ever conferred, any rights on the purchaser, and I think it is important to keep the preamble in this clause to make that point quite clear.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—I think the hon. member's objection will be met if we cut out the word "erroneously" which means nothing very important from my point of view, but seems to mean a great deal from the hon. member's point of view. There is no question, I think, that certain persons have made this erroneous supposition.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK — Is it not very important that we should at this juncture protest in the most vigorous and comprehensive terms against the erroneous charges levelled against us in the Press of England?—greatly exaggerated and largely untrue charges. I found, as no doubt you did, Sir, when at Home in the past few months, constant references to "Hongkong slavery" and even to an open slave market—statements which were as preposterous in conception as they were untrue in fact. It is due to the Colony and the good Government of the Colony that these base insinuations and positive misrepresentations of the truth should be contested in the most vigorous form. Therefore I wholly agree with your Excellency that the term "erroneous" whether it is employed in the Bill or not does convey the conviction of this Council with regard to public opinion at Home which has been fostered upon gross misrepresentations of the truth.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — The "erroneous supposers" are the Chinese who said money for mui tsai.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — And the Europeans who imagined that the sale of human beings was recognised here by English law: they made the same erroneous supposition and they have called upon us to change the law, when, as a matter of fact, there is no need to change the law, because the law has never recognised any

rights whatever.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — I am afraid members of Parliament do not recognise themselves—as my friend does—as "certain persons."

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—I confess I did not either. What the Hon. Mr. Holyoak has said makes me think it wise to retain the words "erroneously" and I think it must remove the objections of the Hon. Mr. Pollock. There is no question that the opinions of members of Parliament and others at Home to whom he referred were "erroneous."

HON. MR. POLLOCK did not press his amendment, and it was agreed that clause 2 should stand part of the Bill.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — With regard to Clauses 4 and 5 I have to move an amendment. That Clauses 4 and 5 be removed into part 3 of the present Bill. As I have already explained, Sir, in my opening speech, the unofficial members of Council have spent a considerable amount of time on this Bill. As regards myself it would be more correct to say that I have spent days than hours on this measure and the construction thereof. And the conclusion the unofficial members have come to on this Bill is that these clauses 4 and 5 are undesirable, unnecessary, and unworkable, but Sir, whether we are right or wrong in our views, we think we have the right to demand that our views on Clauses 4 and 5 should be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies before these clauses are rammed through this Council against the unanimous wishes of the unofficial members by use of the official vote. Your Excellency has stated that Clauses 4 and 5 must be passed as they stand, because of the instructions received from the Secretary of State. It seems to me to be imputing an extraordinarily autocratic temperament to that high official to suppose that he desires these instructions to be carried out immediately, instead of with the delay of two

or three months only, and I think, Sir, that such a supposition is extraordinarily uncomplimentary to our own Secretary for State. I cannot imagine, Sir, that he has any desire excepting to find out what the views of this Council are on this measure, because to suppose anything else would be to suppose that he intends to turn this Council and its deliberations into a positive farce. I have before me now, Sir, a telegram from London on December 13th in which the Duke of Devonshire, speaking at the Nigeria Club dinner, said he wished the Colonies to regard him not merely as head of the office, but also as a friend. Well, Sir, in view of that statement of the Duke of Devonshire, I can hardly suppose that he intended by anticipation to absolutely preclude and bar himself from considering any reasoned opinions made by the unofficial members of the Council with regard to any measure brought before it. He also makes a statement to the effect that he will not interfere with the man on the spot. Well, Sir, I think the unofficial members of the Council can claim to be more than one man, and it is an interference with them. It is also, Sir,—if the Head of the Colony is intended—an interference with the Governor of the Colony to say not merely that he wishes a certain measure to be passed but that he will not receive from the Governor any expression of opinion in Council, but insists upon a certain course of action being taken entirely without any reference to that opinion. I now, Sir, have to formally move as an amendment, that Clause 4 and 5 be put into Part 3 of this Bill, and upon this point I feel so strongly the disrespect that is being shown to the considered opinions of the unofficial members of this Council on the subject, I shall have to press for a division.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—I trust that in his last sentence the hon. member is not referring to me as showing disrespect to the views of the Council. It is the last thing I desire to do, but in this matter, I have, as I have already stated, very definite instructions. The hon. member has read certain extracts from a telegram relating to what the Duke of Devonshire said after a lunch on a certain occasion. I have a telegram here, dated shortly before that time, in which he says he considers this law should be passed without further delay, on the following lines: Declaration that payment in respect of a child confers no rights over the child Prohibition of the engagement of a mui tsai from

the date of the passing of this Ordinance; prohibition of the engagement of a mui tsai. "In passing a Bill on the above lines there can be no compromise on the first and second provisions, but we will carefully and sympathetically consider any representations the Chinese may wish to make before the proclamation, bringing Part III into force, is issued." The telegram was sent after the Secretary of State received from here a full statement as to the objections to the Bill raised by the Chinese community—which cover all the ground which has been taken—and it was pointed out to me—I was at home when the telegram conveying these objections was received—that the objections put forward were those that the Secretary of State was aware of when his decision was taken. I am positive the Secretary of State has no desire to show any disrespect to the Council and I deprecate the suggestion that because the Secretary of State has prejudged the matter therefore the Council's views will not be considered. It is very rarely that the Secretary of States takes a decisive line of this kind, and in this instance I fear his desire to take the views of the man on the spot has possibly been overruled by his desire to do what he believes to be right and in accordance with British principles. I am clear that the clauses in some shape or form must form part of the Bill and I myself can see no reason why they should not, because it is perfectly clear that the system must end. The hon. member says the system is actually put an end to by Clause 2. In that case why object to say so and prevent recruitment of future mui tsai? The Secretary of State has expressed his readiness to listen to advice on any of the minor matters of the Bill and, of course, he will pay due attention to what has been said on this subject. Well, now, what is the use of postponing this clause and putting it into Part III.?

It only means that the abolition of the system will be delayed, possibly for two or three months. It is not to be supposed that the Secretary of State will alter his opinion on the matter and the only practical difference would be that a certain number of persons would be under the impression that they would be at liberty to engage mui tsai for the next two or three months. Supposing the Secretary of State does alter his opinion, which is most unlikely; it would always be possible to repeal the clause and no harm would be done, except that for a few months no one would be able to obtain a mui tsai, and that the hon. member agrees would be desirable. We do not wish people to engage further mui tsai and I think the more difficult we make it for them the greater the advantage to the community. I am extremely sorry to differ from the hon. member but I feel the clause in some form or other must be included in some part of the Bill which comes into immediate operation. I am quite willing to consider any suggestions for change in the wording.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — Here is a clause which must be passed. I don't see where we shall benefit ourselves by trying to adopt another. If you are bound by instructions you are fully bound.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—I am bound by instructions to introduce some clause which will have this effect.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — I don't think you have quite comprehended the point of the Unofficials, which is that it is absolutely impossible after this Bill has been passed to employ mui tsai—in the old sense of mui tsai—at all. It almost wants a new term to describe them.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—In that case the clause is entirely harmless. If there will be no such person there can be no harm in saying she cannot be employed.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — But there will be persons claiming to be identified as mui tsai and the effect of passing this clause is that after this you will have two forms—the legal and the illegal form—of mui tsai. You will have endless disputes and enquiries as to whether the person is of the legal or illegal standing. Further it will

mean that every single, young Chinese girl coming to the Colony will be under suspicion as a potential suspected mui tsai. I do not know how many inspectors you will want, but you will require hundreds. I would ask for a division to be taken on this amendment.

HON. MR. CHOW SHOU-SON seconded the amendment and on a division all the Unofficial members voted for the amendment and all the Official members against. The amendment was thus rejected.

HON. MR. POLLOCK moved that clause 6 be transposed so that sub-section 2 became sub-section 1 and *vice versa*. He thought this a better order.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL — I see no, objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — moved that a new clause be inserted after clause 6 to run as follows:—

"In every prosecution for overwork or ill-treatment of a mui tsai medical evidence shall be given before the Magistrate trying the case as to the injuries received by such mui tsai, and the magistrate shall find whether such ill-treatment amounted in his opinion, to gross cruelty or not.

"In the event of such Magistrate finding that such ill-treatment amounts to gross cruelty, the offender shall not be given the option of paying a fine but shall be sentenced by the Magistrate to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL intimated that he had no objection and the new clause was agreed to.

HON. MR. POLLOCK moved a further clause—clause 8—as follows: "The provisions of the Protection of Women and Girls Ordinance, 1897, and of the Offences against the Person Ordinance, 1865 shall, as hitherto, apply to and include mui tsai."

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — Is there any object in that?

HON. MR. POLLOCK — The point is as I explained in my speech, especially with regard to the first named Ordinance, that it should be fully realised what the provisions of that Ordinance are and the heavy punishments, including in some cases the penalty of flogging. I think it is very desirable that that should be widely known and that it certainly does apply to mui tsai. The Offences against the Person Ordinance covers everything from common assault to murder or attempted murder. It is very desirable, when dealing with mui tsai, to call attention to these measures in an Ordinance which will be translated into Chinese and let people know that there are such laws, and that their provisions are very stringent. It is just a sort of reminder.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I do not see any great objection except that I do not think it is necessary. The same object might be attained by some form of advertisement. It seems rather unnecessary to state that a law—already passed—is in force.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—And it may convey a suggestion that laws not specifically mentioned do not apply.

The amendment was carried.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL suggested that the earlier Ordinance should be mentioned first.

This was agreed to

It was agreed to transfer the whole of clause 7 into Part III of the Bill.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — There might seem to be some conflict between clause 12 and clause 2 if we do not substitute the words "any age."

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — Leave out "any age" and say "any mui tsai" may with the sanction of the Secretary of Chinese Affairs.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—My reason is this that it would not do for a mui tsai as it were to walk out of doors without any protection at all. There must be some sanctioning authority and the proper one would be the Secretary for Chinese Affairs.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—The point is not without difficulty. We have declared that the payment of a sum of money confers no right of property. Now if one of these mui tsai, being of ripe age, says "I intend to leave my employer and the views of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs do not interest me," what is to be done?

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—Has any estimate been formed of the increase of Secretarial staff made necessary by the Bill?

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — You may take it there has been no estimate made by any one in authority.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—I think we shall have to very materially increase the staff.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — Well, I have my opinion.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — I rather differ from my hon. friend. I think, as a matter of fact, the vast majority of mui tsai will be content to remain where they are. I appreciate the difficulties pointed out; the only trouble is that there must be some authority.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—To do what?

HON. MR. POLLOCK—To control in some way.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — When does a Chinese girl arrive at years of discretion?—(Laughter).

HON. MR. CHOW SHOU-SON — That is putting a big question. Eighteen years is not the age of discretion; that is the worst age.— (Laughter).

H.E. THE GOVERNOR — Do you think the clause would be improved if we substituted, say, 21? (To. Hon. Mr. Hallifax): Has the matter come before you?

THE SECRETARY FOR CHINESE AFFAIRS—No, Sir.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — I am quite prepared to leave the words out. It occurs to me that it is a very short general statement of the rights of mui tsai. Any mui tsai may leave her employment at any time whatever without payment.

The Committee then discussed transferring various clauses to other parts of the Bill from those in which they appeared. It was agreed that these changes would necessitate reprinting the Bill and at this stage it was decided to adjourn and to resume the Committee stage at the next meeting.

The Council then resumed in order to adjourn its proceedings until 2.30 p.m. on Thursday, February 15th.

—  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
—

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held, the COLONIAL SECRETARY presiding.

**Motor-Car Shelter at Kowloon**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$3,000 on account of Miscellaneous Services, Erection of a motor-car shelter at Kowloon Point.

THE CHAIRMAN — This expenditure has already been approved by hon. members.

Approved.

**Rent of Fire Brigade Station**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$16,500 on account of Fire Brigade, Other Charges, Rent of Temporary Fire Station.

THE CHAIRMAN — The rent of this temporary fire station is \$1,375 a month. This vote is for the whole year of 1923. The matter was settled just too late for the estimates.

Approved.

**A Supreme Court Vote**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$211 on account of Supreme Court, Other Charges, Purchase of a typewriter.

THE CHAIRMAN — The need of this typewriter was not foreseen when the estimates were prepared. The present machine was purchased in 1906; it is of an obsolete type and has been sent for repair. It is proposed to insert a general vote for typewriters in next year's demand.

Approved.

**Sanitary Department Vote**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$10,200 in aid of the vote Sanitary Department, Personal Emoluments.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum is required to pay the salaries of the Chief Inspector, £500, and a first clerk and assistant Secretary, \$350, of the Sanitary Department. These are new appointments approved by the Secretary of State after the passing of the estimates for this year.

Approved.

**Entertainment of a Japanese Training Squadron**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$5,240 in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services, Other Miscellaneous Services.

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum is required to cover the cost of entertaining the cadets and men of the Training Squadron of the Imperial Japanese Navy recently here. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the Committee who made such excellent arrangements

for entertaining the cadets and men. Mr. A. O. Lang, Commander Beck-with, R.N., Commander Tait, R.N., Mr. D. K. Blair (Secretary) and Mr. M. F. Key (Assistant Secretary).

Approved.

#### **A Failway Bridge**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$12,000 in aid of the vote Kowloon-Canton Railway, Special Expenditure, Bridge No. 7.

THE CHAIRMAN—The sum provided for building bridge No. 7 last year was \$61,000. In September an additional vote of \$24,000 was taken, making a total of \$85,000. The expenditure on the 31st December was \$73,487.88, leaving \$11,520.03 which lapsed. The Committee is now asked to vote \$12,000. It is probable that owing to the large amount of rock encountered in getting out the foundations of the South abutments and the bad foundations of the North abutments, the estimate is likely to be exceeded by \$7,000 and a revised estimate will be drawn up as soon as possible.

Approved.

#### **Proposed Temporary Market at Yaumati**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$6,000 on account of Public Works Extraordinary, Proposed temporary market at Yaumati.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is a revote for a sum approved by this Committee last year. It has not been expended.

Approved.

#### **Repairing Aga Light Burners**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$400 on account of Harbour Master's Department, Special Expenditure, Spare burner for lighthouses burning Aga lights.

THE CHAIRMAN—It will become necessary for the burners of Aga lights to be brought in for overhaul and repair. These burners have been working continuously for six or seven years. A spare burner costing £40, will be used whilst each burner is under repair.

Approved.

#### **The Observatory Seismograph**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$979 on account of Royal Observatory, Special Expenditure, Seismograph.

THE CHAIRMAN—The account for the pendulum of the Seismograph has been received from the Crown Agents. The vote lapsed in 1921 and as no provision was made this year a special vote is required.

Approved.