

2ND JULY, 1926.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. W. T. SOUTHORN), presiding.

**PRESENT:—**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN).

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (HON. MR. C. McI. MESSER, O.B.E.).

HON. MR. H. T. CREASY (Director of Public Works).

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK, K.C.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD.

HON. MR. D. G. M. BERNARD.

MR. S. B. B. McELDERRY (Clerk of Councils).

**Supplementary Expenditure**

The Committee considered the items of Supplementary Expenditure Nos. 199 to 224 of 1925 and Nos. 102 to 121 of 1926 in message No. 6 of 25th June.

ITEM NO. 199 OF 1925

Salary of Inspector of Juvenile Labour ..... \$100

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK—There used formerly to be a female inspector of factories—Miss Irving. Is there a female inspector now? If not, why is it that one no longer necessary?

Notice of the question was taken.

ITEM NO. 103 OF 1926

New Territories — Typhoon and  
Rainstorm Damage ..... \$16,000

HON. MR. LANG—There is an amount of \$10,044 to meet unforeseen contingencies. May I ask what these contingencies are?

THE CHAIRMAN—Typhoons.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—  
The amount asked for now is much below the average.

ITEM NO. 105 OF 1926

New Kowloon Water Works; mains to  
Kowloon Tong estate \$40,000

HON. MR. BERNARD—Is nothing obtained from the Kowloon Tong estate towards this expenditure?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS— No. The laying of these water mains was part of the agreement.

HON. MR. BERNARD—In Fanling we have to pay for laying the mains.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—  
The assessment is on a different basis.

HON. MR. LANG—The Government lay these mains free on the understanding that so many houses are built?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS— Yes, when the houses are built there is an obligation to supply them with water.

HON. MR. LANG—Mr. Bernard says you do not provide the mains free at Fanling.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—  
There is a regular assessment for water.

## ITEM NO. 108 OF 1926

Kowloon — Typhoon and Rainstorm

Damages..... \$22,000

THE CHAIRMAN—I gather that in the past it has been usual to take a small vote under this heading and it has been exceeded each year. I therefore made the suggestion to the Director of Public Works that he should try to take a vote for something approximate to what he might expect to spend, leaving out the possibility of a serious typhoon.

HON. MR. BIRD—It is not much use taking a vote. You never know how much you are going to spend.

THE CHAIRMAN—But surely in the course of a number of years you can get a very fair average.

## ITEM NO. 115 OF 1926

Re-arrangement of Dairy Farm Lots at

Pokfulam — compensation towards re-erection of certain buildings (*vide* clause *h* of agreement dated August 21st, 1924)..... \$20,000

HON. MR. BIRD—What agreement is referred to?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — Under the agreement the Government took over land which was valuable for building purposes, and gave in exchange Crown land suitable for pastures. In that agreement it was arranged that the Government should recondition their buildings up to \$60,000. A vote of \$40,000 was taken last year of which half was used. This is really a re-vote of \$20,000. Another \$20,000 would be required when the remainder of the buildings had been re-conditioned.

## ITEM NO. 120 OF 1926

Public Works, Extraordinary,  
Kowloon, miscellaneous, drainage  
works (*d*) general works..... \$101,750

THE CHAIRMAN—I have discussed this vote very fully with the Director of Public Works and I understand the Government is definitely committed to carry out this drainage

work. Moreover the work is necessary for the protection of their roads. It would be false economy not to spend the money. The whole of this was made clear to the Government when the Estimates were put in last year. It is only fair to say that or otherwise the Director of Public Works might possibly be wrongly blamed.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — The money is needed chiefly for storm water drains and when these drains were completed they would obviate a great deal of rain storm damage that was now done. The storm water drains would be large enough to carry off the water to the nullahs. As people developed their land the Government had to supply these drains.

HON. MR. LANG — Why was this not included in the estimates? If the reason was that we had not the money to spend is not that attempting to camouflage the position?

THE CHAIRMAN—I was not in Hongkong at the time but I understand the Director of Public Works asked for the money and it was known it would be needed.

HON. MR. BIRD—When you estimate for a new road do you not include storm water drains?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — No.

HON. MR. LANG—The estimates for this year are not much good.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — No complete estimates for these roads was ever made.

HON. MR. BIRD—You say that such and such a road will cost so much but that does not include storm water drainage.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — Surface water from the roads is included but not drains for large quantities of storm water.

HON. MR. LANG—I do not criticise the Director of Public Works, but the system of drawing up the estimates for this year. I think the system is at fault.

All the items in H.E. The Governor's message were recommended for adoption by the Council.

### Taipo Bridge

The revised proposals for rebuilding the bridge on Taipo Road near the level crossing between Taipo and Taipo Market Railway Station were considered.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said there were originally two schemes. The first proposal was to reconstruct another bridge on the existing site. That scheme involved the building of a temporary bridge. The second proposal was to change the site of the bridge altogether. It was suggested that the new bridge should be built in the causeway. H.E. the Governor had gone into the matter very thoroughly with the Public Works Department and a third scheme was now proposed. It had been decided to alter the alignment of the bridge. This would do away with the necessity for a temporary structure. The present old bridge would be used during the time the new one was being built. The new bridge would be five feet higher than the old one and instead of five small spans it would have two spans of 80 feet each. It was hoped to get foundations which would not be scoured out by the tide. The total cost of the scheme was \$51,000. It was suggested that the iron work for the bridge should be obtained through the Crown Agents.

THE CHAIRMAN—You have \$49,000 for the bridge. The new scheme is expected to cost \$51,000. As far as this year is concerned no further money will be required, but it will be necessary to include the extra \$2,000 in next year's estimates.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—That is so.

The scheme was thereupon approved.

### Salvage and Rescue Tug

THE CHAIRMAN then asked the Committee to sanction the expenditure for certain alterations required to be made to the harbour launch *Kau Sing*. The items were not included in His Excellency's message to the Committee but the matter was urgent and if the Committee, he said, agreed to the expenditure at once the work could be undertaken immediately and the vote passed formally at the next meeting. This procedure was approved and expenditure of \$2,715 for alterations and an annual recurrent expenditure of \$4,360 for salaries, upkeep, etc., were agreed to.