

23RD 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).

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (HON. MR. H. T. CREASY).

HON. SIR SHOU-SON CHOW.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD.

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

ABSENT:—

HON. MR. R. H. KOTEWALL, LL.D.

Supplementary Votes for 1925

The Committee considered message No. 7 from H.E. The Governor containing items Nos. 225-228 to supplement the estimates of 1925 and items Nos. 122-138 to supplement the estimates of 1926.

The total required to supplement the 1925 estimates was \$5,282.

THE CHAIRMAN—I hope these votes will be the last required on the 1925 estimates.

They were agreed to.

Supplementary Votes for 1926

The total amount passed to supplement the estimates of 1926 was \$164,886.

Item No. 128—Port Works Extraordinary, Hongkong. Reclamation of Quarry Bay Marine

Lot No. 4.—\$75,000.

HON. MR. BIRD—Was there not a contract for this work?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—There was a contract but it was made in 1923 and the whole work has been considerably changed. This expenditure is involved in the exchange of land with Messrs. Butterfield & Swire. The plan shows what exchange was made. The Government took over a row of buildings to allow for the widening of the road and in return agreed to reclaim certain land and to put up a retaining wall to protect the reclamation. The work is still in progress. The original contract was a small one and the contractor failed in 1923. When the Netherlands Company came they took over the quarry from the original contractor and at the same time took over the contract for this work.

THE CHAIRMAN—The total amount required for 1926 is \$135,000. You will be able to complete the work allotted to this year for that sum?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—There is no doubt about that. I shall not come to the Finance Committee again on this subject. A difficulty now, however, is that the recent rainstorm caused the Netherlands Company a good deal of damage. The wall is in process of construction and a very large discharge from the nullah got behind the wall and damaged it to some extent which they will have to make good.

COST OF DOG CATCHING

Item No. 130—Police, increase in Coolie hire on account of dog catching \$4,500. A sum of \$3,000 was provided in the 1926 estimates of which \$2,461.08 has been expended to date. Owing to the outbreak of rabies additional coolie hire raised the monthly expenditure to \$720 and \$745 in April and May respectively, and at this average the sum of \$4,500 was required to supplement the vote.

HON. MR. BIRD—That seems a lot of money for dog catching.

The CHAIRMAN—It does seem a good deal of money, but the work required to be done.

HON. MR. BERNARD—Have you any idea how many dogs you catch for this amount.

THE CHAIRMAN—I have not, but there must be a record and I can find out.

HON. MR. LANG—It would be interesting to know how much it works out per head. (Laughter.)

It was promised that the figures should be made known to the Committee.

GIVING ACCESS TO NEW BUILDINGS

Item 131 — Public Works Extraordinary, Communications, General works \$37,140. The money was required to give access to new buildings which are nearing completion and in some cases already completed.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is in Kowloon, is it not?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS— In Hongkong. A great deal of the money is a re-vote from last year and covers 42 small items, curbing and channeling, making footpaths and so on.

DAMAGE TO POLICE LAUNCH NO. 4

Item 137 — Harbour Office, Repairs to Launch \$17,000. The money was required to repair the damage done to the Police launch which went aground on June 2nd.

HON. MR. BIRD—Has there been no enquiry into this stranding?

THE CHAIRMAN — A full report was received from the C.S.P. and there does not appear to be any reason to attach any blame. Subsequently the Harbour Master held an enquiry and he is satisfied that no blame should be attached to the people navigating the launch.

GOOD WORK RECOGNISED

Item No. 138 — Miscellaneous services \$1,010. In rendering assistance to the stranded police launch the tug *Henry Keswick* was hired from the Hongkong & Whampoa Dock Company at a cost of \$500. Special services in

connection with the salving of the launch were also rendered and in this connection the following honoraria were recommended: —Mr. S. B. Witchell (engineer, Messrs. W. S. Bailey & Co.) \$400; Mr. Wong Chiu Pak (wireless operator) \$50; Mr. Mok Kam (launch engineer) \$30; Mr. Ip Lam (launch stoker) \$30.

THE CHAIRMAN—Honoraria for good work is a very good way of encouraging people to do good work in future.

All the items in the message were approved.

RAINSTORM DAMAGE

After the various items appearing on the Agenda had been disposed of, the CHAIRMAN said—There is one other item I wish to bring up and that is the vote, or rather I would put it, the authority from the Committee to proceed with the work of restoring damage resulting from the rain on Sunday night. The formal vote will be put before you at the next Finance Committee meeting when we shall have had time to get more accurate details, but in anticipation of your approval H.E. the Governor has authorised the Public Works Department to carry on and I wish to obtain the authority of the Committee for the work to be carried on to the extent to which the Public Works Department thinks it will require money this year. The figures tentatively put forward are:

Hongkong	\$510,000
Kowloon and New Kowloon.....	\$60,000
New Territories	\$30,000

That makes a total of six lakhs, but I am afraid we shall not get off with that amount. That total only represents what the P.W.D. think they will want to carry on until December 31st. I have not accurate estimates so I cannot give you exact details, but I think I am right in saying that roughly the estimate of the damage is a million dollars.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS— That is so.

THE CHAIRMAN—We cannot tie the Public Works Department down to a figure until they draw up their estimates and I want your authority for them to carry on with necessary work in the meantime.

This authority was given.