

16th November, 1932.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. E. R. Hallifax, C.M.G., C.B.E.) presiding.

Votes totalling \$134,174, contained in Message No. 12 from H.E. The Officer Administering the Government were considered.

No. 88.

THE CHAIRMAN.—There is an error in this item. No savings can be made from the Secret Service and at the next meeting we will have to ask for an increased vote.

THE HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—How will this expenditure be met now?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—From general savings.

No. 93.

THE HON. MR. BRAGA.—Sir, may we have some information in explanation of the statement—"A heavy item of expenditure this year has been on account of fuel—the price of coal for 1932 is \$3 per ton more than in 1931"? Was the purchase of coal made in the first half of the year, because there has been a substantial fall in the price of coal in the second half of the year.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—Tenders for coal were fixed in 1931 for the whole of 1932.

THE HON. MR. BRAGA.—So we do not benefit by the substantial drop in price?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—No.

THE HON. MR. BRAGA.—It is very unfortunate, because there has been a fall of more than 20 per cent.

THE HON. MR. PATERSON.—Of course it has been the practice to fix your contracts for the next year. That point is as broad as it is long.

THE HON. MR. BRAGA.—If tenders are called for now, we should have the full benefits of the drop during the second half of 1932 to cover our position for supplies in 1933.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Presumably.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—The coal contracts will be awarded next month for 1933 and what the price will be I have no idea.

THE HON. MR. PATERSON.—Does the Government contract for all supplies at once or do the individual departments call for their own tenders?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—We have two contracts—one for the Kowloon-Canton Railway and the second for all other departments.

THE HON. MR. BRAGA.—If we are not sure what the price of coal will be when the contract for 1933 is closed, might it not be wise to consider now whether the time is not opportune to consider the 1933 contract?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—Tenders have already been called for in the last three issues of the Government Gazette and are due next Friday. Everything has been done.

No. 102.

THE HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—Do we use a humane killer?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Inquiries will be made.

All the votes were approved.
