
OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**Meeting of 14th April, 1954.**

PRESENT:

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR ALEXANDER WILLIAM GEORGE HERDER GRANTHAM, G.C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR TERENCE AIREY, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY
MR. ROBERT BROWN BLACK, C.M.G., O.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR. ARTHUR RIDEHALGH, Q.C.

THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR CHINESE AFFAIRS
MR. RONALD RUSKIN TODD.

THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY
MR. ARTHUR GRENFELL CLARKE, C.M.G.

THE HONOURABLE THEODORE LOUIS BOWRING, O.B.E.
(*Director of Public Works*).

DR. THE HONOURABLE YEO KOK CHEANG
(*Director of Medical and Health Services*).

THE HONOURABLE LEONARD GEOFFREY MORGAN
(*Acting Director of Education*).

THE HONOURABLE HAROLD GILES RICHARDS, O.B.E.
(*Director of Urban Services*).

DR. THE HONOURABLE CHAU SIK NIN, C.B.E.
THE HONOURABLE CEDRIC BLAKER, M.C., E.D.
THE HONOURABLE LO MAN WAI, O.B.E.
THE HONOURABLE NGAN SHING-KWAN.
THE HONOURABLE DHUN JEHANGIR RUTTONJEE.
THE HONOURABLE KWOK CHAN, O.B.E.
DR. THE HONOURABLE ALBERTO MARIA RODRIGUES, M.B.E., E.D.
MR. ROBERT WILLIAM PRIMROSE (*Deputy Clerk of Councils*).

ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE LAWRENCE KADOORIE.

MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7th April, 1954, were confirmed.

PAPERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by Command of His Excellency the Governor, laid upon the table the following papers: —

Subject.

G.N. No.

The Training Centres Ordinance, 1953.

The Training Centres (Amendment) Regulations,
1954A. 40

The Pleasure Grounds and Bathing Places Ordinance,
Chapter 173.

The Children's Playgrounds (Amendment) Regulations,
1954A. 41

The Merchant Shipping Ordinance, 1953.

The Merchant Shipping Exemption (Ships) (No. 2)
Order, 1954A. 42

The Defence (Finance) Regulations, 1940.

The Possession of Gold (Goldsmiths) (Amendment)
(No. 2) Order, 1954.....A. 43

SWIMMING POOLS (AMENDMENT) BY-LAWS, 1954.

MR. H. G. RICHARDS moved the following resolution: —

Resolved that the Swimming Pools (Amendment) Bylaws, 1954, made by the Urban Council on the 30th day of March, 1954, under section 4 of the Public Health (Sanitation) Ordinance, 1935, be approved.

He said: —Sir, these amending By-laws have their origin in the tragic accident which occurred on the 1st August, 1953, when a seven year old boy was electrocuted in a swimming pool in the Colony. The Urban Council then decided that the use of electrical

equipment both in and near swimming pools open to the public ought to be regulated. At the same time it seemed to the Urban Council that it would be wise to make clear whose was the responsibility to see that the new By-laws, and the old, were effectively carried out. Under the proposed amendment of By-law 3 therefore the individual licensee is required to exercise personal control, or to obtain authority to delegate control. Under the proposed new By-law 10A he must ensure that the main provisions of the By-laws are effectively carried out, that no electric lighting or other electrical equipment is used in a way which might endanger any person using the swimming pool, and, to prevent accidents which might occur from other than electrical reasons, that a qualified attendant is on duty at all times when the swimming pool is open.

The only penalty in the existing By-laws is that the Urban Council may revoke or suspend a licence for any breach of the By-laws. That penalty could be a severe one, and so in these amending By-laws the Courts are given power to impose a fine for the breach of some of the By-laws.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

THE URBAN COUNCIL (COMMISSIONER FOR RESETTLEMENT) BILL, 1954.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the First reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the Commissioner for Resettlement to be temporarily a member of the Urban Council".

He said: —Sir: The need for this legislation arises from our re-examination during the last few months of the squatter problem, perhaps the most stubborn problem which we have faced in Hong Kong since the war. The policy formulated in 1951-52 was for the gradual elimination of the vast shanty towns, which had grown up on the urban fringes, by re-settlement into two types of areas, one having a comparatively high standard and the other a minimum but acceptable standard for the purposes of public health. In January, 1952, the Emergency (Resettlement Areas)

Regulations were passed, giving the Urban Council powers to control these areas, but, of course, it was not the intention to undertake or finance the construction of resettlement accommodation. The number of squatters was believed to have risen, at that time, to about 300,000.

By May, 1952, the number of persons settled was 26,000. It is now 46,000 settled in 15 established areas; and it is acknowledged that the progress has been much slower than was hoped. Government has been only too well aware of this slowness of progress, and for this reason has been carefully considering, in the light of experience gained, how to expedite planned resettlement within the limits of our available resources. If we had built houses and taken over the landlord's duties, we might well have secured more rapid results, but we have been concerned to limit expenditure to the cost of certain staff required for administration, the cost of the ancillary commitments of such administration, to expenditure on a certain amount of site preparation, and to loans to the Hong Kong Settlers' Housing Corporation Limited, which has rendered valuable service in the construction of houses for squatters. A major difficulty has proved to be that of decanting, because the areas in which we have hoped to resettle squatters have of necessity been in the more outlying districts, and therefore, regarded by squatters as less accessible; these will be more easily opened up when industries can be attracted to their neighbourhood, and we have expectations of some development in this respect in the not too distant future. Even where resettlement areas have not been suburban, we have encountered strong objections to clearances on the part of squatters who have found that they would be some distance away from their existing places of employment. One cannot satisfy individual tastes when dealing with thousands, however. We also found that the Public Health (Sanitary Provisions) Regulations of 1948, passed before the great influx of refugees from China after the events of 1940 and 1950, were not, in many respects, satisfactory. We have already disposed of this difficulty by the passage on the 29th December of last year of the Emergency (Squatter Clearance) Regulations, 1953, which give Government emergency powers, subject to review after a year. Lastly, we consider that the three processes of clearance, screening and resettlement, at present the responsibilities of three separate departments would have been more effectively co-ordinated

and have ensured more rapid progress if they had been the concern of only one department. When I have said all this, I do not wish you to regard it as a decrying of what has been carried out by the Chief Resettlement Officer's staff. A reference to their achievements was made by the Chairman of the Urban Council in a meeting of that body yesterday.

The figure of 46,000 squatters, now resettled, does not include the victims of the Shek Kip Mei fire, which has been regarded as a Colony disaster calling for emergency measures at Government expense. Of these unfortunate people, 11,000 have already been re-housed on the site of the fire, and we hope that about 47,000 will eventually be housed on the same site. It can be said, I think, that this disaster, because of the emergency measures which had to be undertaken very quickly, provided valuable lessons to us all, and has endorsed our conclusion that substantially greater resources must now be devoted to solving the squatter problem. It is opportune to state, at this stage, that we have been fortified in this conclusion, and greatly assisted in devising new measures, by the able and painstaking report tabled in the Urban Council on the 30th March. I refer to the report of the Emergency Resettlement Sub-Committee of that Council, appointed shortly after the fire. On Government's behalf, Sir, I wish to pay tribute to the work which was put into the preparation of this valuable report by the Unofficial Members of the Urban Council, as well as by the Officials.

Certain of this Committee's recommendations, so far as they affect Shek Kip Mei, are already being dealt with, but I am concerned here to draw the attention of honourable Members to certain important recommendations for the future. These are three in number, and deal with a short-term clearance programme, a long-term policy and clearance programme, and a more coordinated organization. The short-term aim is to drive fire-lanes through every large squatter area during the coming summer. This will mean moving between 18,000 to 20,000 persons, and as the elimination of fire risk is almost as much in the emergency category as the fighting of fires, Government has accepted as over-riding the task of re-housing about 20,000 persons by October of this year. The long-term proposal is that Government should accept the need to construct, at public expense, multi-storey accommodation and to let it to squatters at rentals which would be related to construction costs, land values and capacity to pay.

The Committee's primary concern was for the squatters in Kowloon, of whom it was estimated that about 210,000 would remain to be cleared after the fire-lanes had been made. The third proposal to which I wish to refer is that of organization, the temporary establishment of a department, under a senior official, which would be independent of all permanent departments and would control all the functions affecting resettlement, namely, screening, clearance, the movement into and the administration thereafter of resettlement areas. This proposal is completely in accord with Government's ideas and it has been accepted as the best temporary expedient available. It is this proposal which calls for the legislation before us now. Government wishes to place in complete authority and responsibility for the clearance and resettlement of squatters an official to be known as the Commissioner for Resettlement. He will set up a temporary department, independent of other permanent departments and he will concern himself solely with problems directly related to squatter resettlement. Government wishes to take advantage of the opportunity of having him work in close association with the Urban Council, whose Members have devoted a great deal of attention to this thorny problem for some time now. Their continued interest and support will be a great asset to the Commissioner. It is, therefore, proposed that the Commissioner should be made a temporary *ex-officio* member of the Urban Council, and, in saying this, I hasten to assure honourable Members that this appointment is strictly a temporary one designed to deal only with the particular problem of squatting. It does not represent the permanent addition to the Urban Council of a Government official.

The Commissioner of Resettlement will have to deal with the immediate short-term problem of clearing fire-lanes and to put up plans for the consideration of Government for the execution of a long term policy for the balance of squatters thereafter. He will have to prepare a specimen detailed plan for the resettlement of squatters (if possible those dispossessed on account of the clearance of the fire-lanes) in multi-storey structure, in order that we can have the fullest possible information before us about the extent of the financial commitment and the form in which funds might be provided by Government. In studying this plan and its accompanying estimates, we shall have to bear in mind our commitment to and responsibility for the Housing Authority and its plans for

low-cost housing in the Colony. There are definite limits placed upon us by our available resources. It is true to say that squatters can no longer be regarded as just refugees temporarily seeking shelter in Hong Kong. Many of them are certainly displaced persons from across the border, but many of them also are displaced persons from our own overcrowded urban areas. The problem has become a domestic one and our immediate responsibility, therefore, is all the greater. I would not, however, wish at this stage to commit Government to any statement on how the resettlement of squatters under the new policies is to be financed. This must await the recommendations of the Commissioner for Resettlement.

MR. H. G. RICHARDS SECONDED.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a First time.

Objects and Reasons.

The "Objects and Reasons" for the Bill were stated as follows: —

It is proposed to appoint, very shortly, a Cadet Officer to be Commissioner for Resettlement who will, under the general direction of the Urban Council, have charge of the resettlement of squatters. The intention is that the post should be a temporary one, but during such time as it is in being, it is desirable that the occupant should be a member of the Urban Council. The object of this Bill is to make the necessary legislative provision to that end.

**VOLUNTEER AND NAVAL VOLUNTEER (VALIDATION
OF PAY AND ALLOWANCES) BILL, 1954.**

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the Second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to validate payments of pay and allowances to members of the Hong Kong Naval Volunteer Force and to officers and volunteers of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps who were called out on actual service and on actual military service during the Second World War 1939-45".

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1 to 3 and the Preamble were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY reported that the Volunteer and Naval Volunteer (Validation of Pay and Allowances) Bill, 1954 had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the Third reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Third time and passed into law.

PRISONS BILL, 1954.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the Second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend and consolidate the law relating to prisons and persons employed therein".

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1 to 28 and the Schedule were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL reported that the Prisons Bill, 1954 had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the Third reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Third time and passed into law.

STAMP (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1954.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the Second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Stamp Ordinance, Chapter 117".

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL reported that the Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 1954 had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the Third reading.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Third time and passed into law.

**DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS
INCORPORATION BILL, 1954.**

DR. A. M. RODRIGUES moved the Second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance for the incorporation of the Mother Provincial in the Colony of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians".

MR. DHUN J. RUTTONJEE seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1 to 7 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

DR. A. M. RODRIGUES reported that the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Incorporation Bill, 1954 had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the Third reading.

MR. DHUN J. RUTTONJEE seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Third time and passed into law.

**PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INCORPORATION
BILL, 1954.**

DR. A. M. RODRIGUES moved the Second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the incorporation of the Board of Governors of the Portuguese Community Schools".

MR. DHUN J. RUTTONJEE seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1 to 14 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

DR. A. M. RODRIGUES reported that the Portuguess Community Schools Incorporation Bill, 1954 had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the Third reading.

MR. DHUN J. RUTTONJEE seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Third time and passed into law.

THE EMMANUEL CHURCH INCORPORATION BILL, 1954.

MR. KWOK CHAN moved the Second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance for the incorporation of the Minister and Board of Trustees of The Emmanuel Church".

MR. DHUN J. RUTTONJEE seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clauses 1 to 6 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

MR. KWOK CHAN reported that The Emmanuel Church Incorporation Bill, 1954 had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the Third reading.

MR. DHUN J. RUTTONJEE seconded.

The question was put and agreed to.

The Bill was read a Third time and passed into law.

ADJOURNMENT.

H. E. THE GOVERNOR: —That concludes the business, gentlemen. When is it your pleasure that we shall meet again?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: —May I suggest this day fortnight.

H. E. THE GOVERNOR: —Council will adjourn to this day fortnight.
