

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HONGKONG.

No. 8 OF 1875.

WEDNESDAY, 25TH AUGUST, 1875.

PRESENT:

His Excellency the Administrator (JOHN GARDINER AUSTIN).
The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary (CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH).
The Honourable the Attorney General (JOHN BRAMSTON).
The Honourable the Acting Colonial Treasurer (CHARLES MAY).
The Honourable PHINEAS RYRIE.
The Honourable WILLIAM HASTINGS ALEXANDER.

ABSENT:

The Honourable the Chief Justice (SIR JOHN SMALE).
The Honourable HENRY LOWCOCK.

Before commencing proceedings, His Excellency administers the oath of allegiance to the Honourable WILLIAM KESWICK, who, having been sworn, takes his seat at the Council Table.

The Council meets this day at 2.30 P.M., by Special Summons.

The Minutes of the last Meeting of Council held on the 13th July, are read and confirmed.

His Excellency lays on the Table the *Appropriation Bill for 1876*, and makes the following Statement:—

"GENTLEMEN,

"No decision having as yet been arrived at in respect to the plans which have been submitted for the reconstruction of the Praya, and the improvement of the Water supply of the City from the Eastward, I am not in a position to place the Estimates of 1876 before you in that complete form which would enable you to take a comprehensive survey of the financial position of the Colony.

"It would not, however, have been in accord, either with the Colonial Regulations, or the convenience of the service, to have delayed their preparation indefinitely, whilst the plans and estimates for particular services were under consideration.

"Moreover, if those specially referred to are to be carried out, the funds must be derived from sources mainly unconnected either with the anticipated Cash Balance of the 31st December, 1875, or with the Revenue of 1876.

"It is with reliance on these sources of income that the Estimates have been based, and with this knowledge, I look for your approval of the Expenditure which is consequently contemplated. You will see from the Financial Estimate for 1876, that the available funds for that year are set down at \$960,773.58, and from the Estimates of Expenditure that our outlay is calculated as follows:—

"Establishments including Civil List,	\$556,489.60
"Pensions,	20,000.00
"Charitable Allowances,	3,300.00
"Transport,	4,500.00
"Works and Buildings,	135,760.00
"Roads, Streets, and Bridges,	45,720.00
"Lighthouses,	500.00
"Miscellaneous,	36,800.00
"Military Contribution,	100,000.00

"Assuming that the whole of the \$903,069.60 thus particularized will be expended, there will still be an available balance of \$57,703.98, and as this will be further supplemented by a loan of \$40,000 from the Special Fund to cover the expenditure incurred for Lighthouses, as soon as the total cost is ascertained, there will be a sufficiently wide margin for any exigencies which may arise.

"You will observe with much satisfaction, I doubt not, that the cost of the permanent Establishments is to be reduced to \$556,489.60 in 1876 as against \$568,059.60 in the present year, being a saving of \$11,570.

"This is chiefly owing to a diminished expenditure of \$7,680 in the Police Estimate, and the saving of \$4,800 consequent on the transfer of the two Student Interpreters to permanent offices.

"For Works and Buildings, Roads, Streets and Bridges, the proposed outlay amounts to \$181,480, and although this is unquestionably heavy, still I have no doubt whatever, that you will agree with me, that the present defective Hospital arrangements should be remedied as soon as possible, and that the site already prepared for the new building should be utilized; that the Central School, the building of which is characterized by Mr. STEWART 'as being inadequate in 'size, insecure as regards its foundations, and unhealthy as regards ventilation,' should be rebuilt and enlarged; that the sewerage of the Colony, which is dangerous to the health of the community, should be improved; and that it would be extremely unwise to continue to give egress to the mountain torrents, through the bye wash at Pok-foo-lum during the hot and rainy months of the year, whilst through a conduit of ample dimensions, they could be diverted for the greatly increased comfort and health of the inhabitants of the City.

"In respect to the last mentioned outlay, I beg to draw your especial attention to the plans and reports prepared by the Surveyor General, which give proof, if any such is wanted, as well of the ability and zeal which he has displayed, as of the labour, both mental and physical, which he has not grudged.

"With these remarks, I lay the Estimates and Appropriation Ordinance of the year 1876 before you."

The Bill is then read a first time viz.:—A Bill *to apply a sum not exceeding Seven Hundred and Sixty Four Thousand Dollars to the Public Service of the Year 1876.*

His Excellency nominates the following Members to form the Sub-Committee to consider and report upon the Estimates:—

The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary.

The Honourable the Acting Colonial Treasurer.
The Honourable PHINEAS RYRIE, and
The Honourable WILLIAM KESWICK.

The following Bills are read a first time:—

A Bill to compile a new Edition of the Ordinances of the Colony.

A Bill to provide for the more convenient Administration of "The Extradition Acts 1870 and 1873."

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Ordinances relating to the Assessment and Collection of Rates in the Colony.

A Bill for consolidating the Enactments relating to the speedy Recovery of Crown Debts for Rents and for Assessments, Fees, and Forfeitures.

A Bill to amend "The Companies Ordinance, 1865."

The Honourable the Attorney General by direction of His Excellency explains the provisions of the above mentioned Bills.

The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary moves, for reasons which he states, that a Resolution be passed by the Council under the provisions of Ordinance No. 1 of 1873 to amend the Scale of Stamp Duties contained in the second Schedule to "The Sheriff's Ordinance, 1873."

The Honourable WILLIAM HASTINGS ALEXANDER seconds the Motion, which is carried unanimously, and it is resolved under the provisions of Section 14 of Ordinance No. 1 of 1873,—"That the Scale of Stamp Duties contained in the Second Schedule to 'The Sheriff's Ordinance, 1873, be varied as hereinafter mentioned, that is to say:—

"By striking out the last item, namely, the percentage charged upon arrests or seizures in execution, and by inserting:—'For every receipt or acquittance to the Sheriff for monies recovered by any arrest or seizure in execution, 2 per cent on the first \$500 recovered, including the costs of recovery; and 1 per cent on every \$100 or fractional part thereof above \$500.'"

His Excellency adjourns the Council at 3.30 P.M. until Thursday, the 2nd September, at 2.30 P.M.

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Administrator.

Read and confirmed, this 2nd Day of September, 1875.

H. ERNEST WODEHOUSE,
Clerk of Councils.