

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL No. 17.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1886.

PRESENT:

HIS EXCELLENCY WILLIAM HENRY MARSH, C.M.G.,

Administering the Government in the absence of His Excellency SIR GEORGE FERGUSON BOWEN, G.C.M.G.

His Honour the Chief Justice, (SIR GEORGE PHILLIPPO, Knt.)

The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary, (FREDERICK STEWART, LL.D.)

„ the Attorney General, (EDWARD LOUGHLIN O'MALLEY.)

„ the Colonial Treasurer, (ALFRED LISTER.)

„ the Surveyor General, (JOHN MACNEILE PRICE.)

„ PHINEAS RYRIE.

„ WILLIAM KESWICK.

„ THOMAS JACKSON.

„ FREDERICK DAVID SASSOON.

„ WONG SHING.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment.

The Minutes of the last Meeting, held on the 10th instant, were read and confirmed.

VOTES REFERRED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.—Read the following Minutes by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government:—

W. H. MARSH.

- (1) The Officer Administering the Government lays before the Council a despatch which he has just received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of the defences of Hongkong.

It will be remembered that the original proposals sanctioned by the War Office embraced works the estimated cost of which was £55,625, whilst the corresponding armament was to cost only £37,500.

It was stated in the despatch of Lord DERBY of the 17th September, 1884, which was laid before the Council, that Her Majesty's Government had arrived at the decision that the Colony of Hongkong should defray only the cost of the necessary works, the Imperial Government contributing the armament. The Council was accordingly asked by Sir GEORGE BOWEN, on the 10th December, 1884, to vote the sum of £55,625 required for the construction of these works.

Before agreeing to vote the sum required for the construction of the works there was considerable discussion in the Finance Committee, owing to an impression that the armament which was to be sent out was altogether inadequate, and the vote was passed with the understanding "that the armament to be provided by the Imperial Government would be of the best and latest pattern of breech-loading ordnance and capable of resisting attacks by the heaviest modern ironclads."

Sir GEORGE BOWEN did not fail to represent strongly on several occasions the wish of the community that Hongkong should be properly defended, and Generals SARGENT and CAMERON have supported his recommendations with all the weight of their long professional experience.

The result of these recommendations has been that the scheme of defence has been very carefully re-considered. Instead of three new works and remounting guns in existing works, the new scheme of defence includes four new works and three new sites for single heavy guns, and, whilst omitting the works originally proposed at Quarry Bay, it substitutes a complete defence of the Ly-ee Mun Channel. The weight and power of the guns have been so greatly increased that much more massive and costly foundations and emplacements have to be provided for them. An idea of the difference in the guns now proposed from those originally contemplated may be gathered from the revised estimate of cost of the armaments, which, instead of being £37,500, will now amount to £118,500.

In June, 1885, the Major-General Commanding represented to the Governor the necessity of a large increase in the amount contributed by the Colony, in order to meet the cost of the improved and extended works of defence, and, in accordance with the Colonial Regulations, the Governor referred the question to the Secretary of State before asking the Council to vote the necessary sum. The Despatch now laid before the Council conveys the sanction of Her Majesty's Government to the application for such vote. It will be seen from this Despatch and its enclosure that the revised estimate of the cost of constructing the Defence Works is £116,000 instead of £55,625.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies has no doubt that the Council will loyally consent to vote the necessary amount for completing the Defences of Hongkong in an efficient manner. The Officer Administering the Government therefore asks the Council to vote the additional sum of £60,375. It appears doubtful whether any part will be spent before 1887, but it is necessary that a vote should be passed to enable the Royal Engineers' Department to enter into contracts for the execution of the works.

Government House, Hongkong, 16th February, 1886.

W. H. MARSH.

- (2.) The Officer Administering the Government recommends the Council to re-vote the following sums:—

C.S.O. 353 of 1886.	Amount due to the late Contractor for the Scavenging of the City during the first 6 days of November, 1885,	\$ 296.00
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Government House, Hongkong, 16th February, 1886.

W. H. MARSH.

- (3.) The Officer Administering the Government recommends the Council to re-vote the following sums:—

C.S.O. 2582 of 1885.	For re-building the retaining wall below the Civil Hospital, damaged by the recent fire,	\$ 8,000.00
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C.S.O. 2369 of 1885.	For building a retaining wall to prevent landslips at the rear of Inland Lot 696, East of the Government Civil Hospital,	\$ 945.00
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Owing to the late period of the year at which these votes were passed (November, 1885), it was not possible to complete the works.

Government House, Hongkong, 16th February, 1886.

The Acting Colonial Secretary moved that these Votes be referred to the Finance Committee.

The Colonial Treasurer seconded.

Question—put and passed.

THE LATE HONOURABLE F. B. JOHNSON.—The Honourable P. RYRIE, referring to the news just received of the death of the Honourable F. B. JOHNSON, formerly a Member of this Council, moved a vote of condolence with the widow and family of the deceased.

The Honourable T. JACKSON seconded.

Question—put and passed.

BILLS PASSED.—On the motion of the Attorney General, seconded by the Acting Colonial Secretary, the following Bills were read a third time and passed:—

- (a.) *Bill to regulate the printing of Newspapers and Books and the keeping of Printing Presses within the Colony.*
- (b.) *Bill to repeal the Usury Laws and to fix a legal Rate of Interest.*

BILL ENTITLED THE TRADE MARKS ORDINANCE, AMENDMENT ORDINANCE, 1886.—FIRST READING.—On the motion of the Attorney General, seconded by the Acting Colonial Secretary, this Ordinance was read a first time.

The Attorney General gave notice that at the next meeting of Council he would move the second reading of this Bill.

BILL ENTITLED THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS ORDINANCE, 1886.—The Attorney General moved, and the Acting Colonial Secretary seconded that the Council go into Committee on this Bill.

The Honourable W. KESWICK moved, as an amendment, that the Bill be referred to a Special Committee consisting of the following Members.

The Honourable	THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.
„	THE TREASURER.
„	THE SURVEYOR GENERAL.
„	P. RYRIE.
„	T. JACKSON.
„	WONG SHING, and
	THE MOVER.

The Honourable F. D. SASSOON seconded.

Question—put and passed.

The Council then adjourned until Tuesday, the 23rd instant, at 4 P.M., to consider the Jury List for the year.

W. H. MARSH,
Administering the Government.

Read and confirmed, this 3rd day of March, 1886.

ARATHOON SETH,
Clerk of Councils.