

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL No. 20.

WEDNESDAY, 17TH MARCH, 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 Acting Attorney General, (EDWARD JAMES ACKROYD.)

„ the Colonial Treasurer, (ALFRED LISTER.)

„ the Surveyor General, (JOHN MACNEILE PRICE.)

„ PHINEAS RYRIE.

„ WILLIAM KESWICK.

„ THOMAS JACKSON.

„ FREDERICK DAVID SASSOON.

„ WONG SHING.

ABSENT:

The Honourable the Attorney General, (EDWARD LOUGHLIN O'MALLEY,) on leave.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment.

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

VOTE OF MONEY REFERRED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.—Read the following Minute by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government:—

W. H. MARSH.

The Officer Administering the Government recommends the Council to vote the following sum, viz.:—\$450 to enable the Sanitary Board to carry out the special cleansing of tenements within the city.

The Board, with the approval of the Government, has decided that the Chinese community should be invited to give their dwellings a thorough special cleansing three times a year, such cleansings to take place as near to the 1st February, 1st June, and 1st October, as their festivals will permit; the Government rendering assistance in the way of supplying additional water, and providing additional facilities for the removal of refuse.

The Board estimate that each of these cleansings will cost \$150, and the sum now recommended is to enable the Board to defray the expenses incurred under this heading during 1886.

During the last special cleansing, 180 tons above the average daily quantity of refuse were removed in this way.

Government House, Hongkong, 16th March, 1886.

The Acting Colonial Secretary moved that this vote be referred to the Finance Committee.

The Colonial Treasurer seconded.

Question—put and passed.

MINUTE.—INVASION OF TERRITORIAL RIGHTS OF THE COLONY.—Read the following Minute by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government:—

W. H. MARSH.

The Officer Administering the Government informs the Council that he has received a communication from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Peking stating that he had made strong representations to the Ministers of the Tsungli Yamên on the unwarrantable action of the Chinese Officials in seizing a Chinese subject accused of piracy who had taken refuge in this Colony.

The Ministers have expressed their regret for what had occurred, and assured Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires that the Governor-General of Fuhkien would be directed to make suitable excuses to the Hongkong Government, and that instructions would be sent to the High Local Officials that Hongkong was British Territory, and that any invasion of its rights or territory must be very carefully guarded against in future.

Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires expresses the belief that the representations which he has made will effectually put a stop to such occurrences in future.

The British Consul at Foochow was some time ago informed by the Governor-General of Fuhkien that the Naval Officer in charge of the *Ngai San* had for his irregular conduct at Hongkong been deprived of his command and had had his button taken from him.

The status of Chinese Cruisers and their interference with the Junk trade of Hongkong will, it is hoped, be finally settled by the Commission to be appointed before long for the consideration of this question under the 7th Article of the 3rd Section of the Chefoo Convention.

Government House, Hongkong, 15th March, 1886.

PAPERS.—The Acting Colonial Secretary, by direction of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table the following papers:—

- (a.) Despatch respecting the postponement of the proposed Loan. (No. 14.)
- (b.) Despatch respecting the new Heavy Guns for Defensive purposes. (No. 15.)
- (c.) Correspondence respecting Quarantine Regulations. (No. 16.)

VOTE OF MONEY PASSED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.—The Acting Colonial Secretary read the following report of the Finance Committee:—

(Finance Committee, 12th March, 1886.)

Additional vote of £60,375 for Defences.

The Committee unanimously recommend the payment of the additional sum of £60,375 now asked for, but they do so on the distinct understanding that this vote shall be final for the military and defensive purposes of the Colony.

To pay this sum and complete the essential public works in progress, the Colony must borrow; and the result will be, that interest and the provision of a sinking fund will so cripple the resources of the Colony, that urgently needed sanitary works must, for the present, be left in abeyance. The Colony, being merely a *dépôt*, without natural products, is unable to increase its revenue to any appreciable extent, and it will be impossible for any further contribution to be made for military purposes.

The Committee next proceed to the consideration of the means to be devised for meeting the interest and the sinking fund in connection with the Loan which must be raised.

The Committee unanimously consider that the best means of doing so would chiefly be by an increase of Stamp Duty.

The Acting Colonial Secretary added that the Committee afterwards proceeded to consider the Loan Bill, the result of which will be brought up later, as His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government was in communication with the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject.

The Honourable W. KESWICK moved that, as the subject treated in the above report was of vast importance to the Colony, the consideration of the report should be postponed to this day week.

The Honourable P. RYRIE seconded.

Question—put and passed.

THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS BILL.—REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE.—The Honourable W. KESWICK, Chairman of the Special Committee appointed to consider this Bill, presented the report of the Committee in the form of a revised Bill, and gave notice that when the Council went into Committee on the Bill he would move the addition of a clause.

QUESTION.—The Honourable W. KESWICK, pursuant to notice, asked the following question:—

When will the Lazaretto on Stone Cutters' Island be completed, and pending its construction, what provision will there be ready to meet any outbreak of infectious or contagious diseases?

The Surveyor General replied that the permanent buildings for the Lazaretto were contracted to be ready on the 1st of July next; and that, pending the completion of the permanent buildings, suitable accommodation was being provided for the reception of the sick, should occasion require it, in temporary and provisional matsheds.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL GRANT.—The Honourable T. JACKSON gave notice that at the next meeting he would move the following resolutions, and introduce a Cathedral Bill:—

1.—That the Secretary of State for the Colonies be invited to reconsider the decision which has been arrived at as to the withdrawal of ecclesiastical grants in this Colony, with a view to the continuance of such grants, as in Singapore and in Mauritius.

2.—That the only expenditure which could be retrenched under the instructions received is a small salary, nominally of £800, but really of £640, paid to the Colonial Chaplain, and representing little more than remuneration for the necessary services of burying the dead, attendance at the gaol, at hospitals, &c.

3.—That if this salary be withdrawn, the Colony will have to pay nearly if not quite as much in allowances for these services, thus substituting a precarious and unsatisfactory arrangement for one which works to the satisfaction of all concerned.

4.—That the instructions to disestablish the Church on the first opportunity were not called for by any public demand, and that no public feeling exists in the Colony on the subject except such as is adverse to the course proposed.

5.—That the policy of disestablishment, still far from being generally accepted at home, has been, as far as the information of this Council goes, distasteful to every Colony on which it has been imposed; that it has been reversed in two Colonies, and in at least one more continues to be an offence and a public grievance to the Community.

6.—That a doubtful policy of this kind should not be, in ignorance of many of the essential circumstances of the case, needlessly forced upon an unwilling community which, administering its own revenue, is more interested in guarding against the misappropriation of that revenue than any external authority can be.

BILLS READ A SECOND TIME.—On the motion of the Acting Attorney General, seconded by the Acting Colonial Secretary, the following Bills were read a second time:—

- (a.) A Bill entitled *An Ordinance to amend the Law relating to Vagrants.*
- (b.) A Bill entitled *An Ordinance to amend the Law as to Sales of Land by Public Auction.*
- (c.) A Bill entitled *An Ordinance for the Relief of Widows and Children of Intestates where the personal estate is of small value.*

The Acting Attorney General gave notice that at the next meeting of Council he would move that the Council go into Committee on these Bills.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE OTHER ORDERS OF THE DAY.—The Acting Attorney General moved that the other Orders of the Day be postponed.

ADIJOURNMENT.—The Council then adjourned to Wednesday, the 24th instant, at 4 P.M.

W. H. MARSH,
Administering the Government.

Read and confirmed, this 24th day of March, 1886.

ARATHOON SETH,
Clerk of Councils.