

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL No. 21.

WEDNESDAY, 24TH 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.
,, WONG SHING.

ABSENT:

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

The Council met pursuant to adjournment.

The Minutes of the last Meeting, held on the 17th instant, were read and confirmed.

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

W. H. MARSH.

C.S.O.
649 of 1886.

(1.) The Officer Administering the Government recommends the Council to vote the sum of \$950, to enable the Sanitary Board to pay the expenses incurred in suppressing the recent Cattle Epidemic.

The sum asked for is thus made up:—

Disinfection and burial of carcasses,	\$ 80.00
Disinfection of Cow-houses,	150.00
Destruction of suspected fodder,	130.00
Removal and destruction of suspected manure and litter	84.00
Matsheds for segregation of Cattle,	470.00
Miscellaneous,	36.00
	<u>\$ 950.00</u>

C.S.O.
546 of 1886.

(2.) The Officer Administering the Government lays before the Council for their consideration a letter (Paper No. 18) from Dr. DOBERCK, Director of the Observatory, representing that unless he has a second Chinese Clerk allowed to him it will be impossible for him to continue furnishing the weather forecasts and storm-warnings.

C.S.O.
666 of 1886.

(3.) The Officer Administering the Government recommends the Council to vote the sum of \$90 to provide a Chinese Teacher to give instruction in Chinese colloquial to Officers of the Gaol. (From 1st April to 31st December, 9 months, at \$10 per month.)

Government House, Hongkong, 24th March, 1886.

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

The Colonial Treasurer seconded.

Question—put and passed.

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

- (a.) Report of the Director of the Observatory, for 1885. (No. 17.)
- (b.) Application for an additional Chinese Clerk for the Observatory. (No. 18.)

DIRECT TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HONGKONG AND SINGAPORE.—The Acting Colonial Secretary read the following report of the Finance Committee on this subject:—

The Committee, having read and duly considered the recent despatch of the Secretary of State regarding direct telegraphic communication between Hongkong and Singapore, are unanimously of opinion that, having regard to the demands now made on the resources of the Colony for defences and extraordinary public works, the Colony is not in a position, at present, to contribute to the subsidy required for the cable between the two Colonies.

STEAM LAUNCH WHISTLES.—The Honourable P. RYRIE laid on the table the following Petition, addressed to the Council, and moved that the same be read:—

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—We, the undersigned, residents of Hongkong, beg most respectfully to bring to your notice, the great and increasing nuisance, caused by unnecessary steam launch whistling in this harbour, as embodied in the following facts:—

The Ferry Launches which ply to and fro between Victoria, Aberdeen, Yaumáti, &c., and rendezvous along the Praya, habitually keep their whistles going when moored alongside the Praya wall.

This noise constitutes a nuisance of the gravest possible description to all persons who live near, whether on the Praya or upper levels, on board vessels in the vicinity, or who have to transact business in their neighbourhood.

The nuisance is indirectly the cause of the continuous screaming which goes on in other parts of the harbour, when launches are in motion, for the simple reason, that the boating population are so accustomed to the abuse of steam-whistles generally, that no heed is paid to their warning, when put to their only legitimate use as danger signals.

Complaints have been laid before the Police and the Magistracy but we are informed that according to the present law bearing upon the subject, the matter is one that must be proved to be a public nuisance by several householders who must combine to prosecute, and this cumbrous form practically tends to encourage the evil, by permitting it to develop and flourish unchecked.

We therefore humbly beg, that a short Ordinance may be passed, giving the Police the necessary powers to deal summarily with offences of this nature, as public nuisance, by the imposition of fines, and/or the cancelling of licence.

We venture to think that an amendment of Ordinance 10 of 1872, or 8 of 1879, Section 7, Sub-Section 4 would suffice.

[Here follow the signatures.]

Hongkong, 24th March, 1886.

The Honourable W. KESWICK seconded the motion, and addressed the Council.

Petition read.

DEFENCES.—ADDITIONAL VOTE OF £60,375.—The Acting Colonial Secretary moved the adoption of the following recommendations of the Finance Committee in connection with this vote:—

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 depôt, 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 Honourable W. KESWICK seconded, and addressed the Council.

The Honourable P. RYRIE addressed the Council.

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government also addressed the Council.

Question—put and passed.

PROPOSED LOAN.—MEANS FOR REPAYING.—In connection with the above resolution, the Acting Colonial Secretary moved further that the following recommendation of the Finance Committee be adopted as a resolution of this Council:—

The Committee next proceeded 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 Honourable W. KESWICK seconded.

Question—put and passed.

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government said that an Ordinance would be laid before the Council in due course.

ECCLESIASTICAL GRANTS.—The Honourable T. JACKSON, pursuant to notice moved the following resolutions, and addressed the Council:—

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.

The Honourable W. KESWICK seconded the motion, and addressed the Council.

Question—put and passed.

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government addressed the Council and said that he would have much pleasure in transmitting these Resolutions to the Secretary of State.

BILL ENTITLED THE CATHEDRAL ORDINANCE, 1886.—FIRST READING.—On the motion of the Honourable T. JACKSON, seconded by the Treasurer, this Bill was read a first time.

BILL ENTITLED THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS ORDINANCE, 1886.—COMMITTED.—On the motion of the Acting Attorney General, the Council went into Committee on this Bill.

Bill reported with amendment.

The Attorney General gave notice that at the next meeting of Council he would move that the Bill be read a third time.

BILL ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE LAW RELATING TO VAGRANTS.—COMMITTED.—On the motion of the Attorney General the Council went into Committee on this Bill.

Progress reported.

BILL ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE PROCURATOR OF THE DOMINICAN MISSIONS IN THE FAR EAST, IN HONGKONG.—The Surveyor General gave notice that at the next meeting of Council he would move the first reading of this Bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT.—The Council then adjourned to Wednesday, the 31st instant, at 4 P.M.

W. H. MARSH,
Administering the Government.

Read and confirmed, this 31st day of March, 1886.

ARATHOON SETH,
Clerk of Councils.