

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, NO. 42.

FRIDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1887.

PRESENT:

- HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM GORDON CAMERON, C.B.,
Administering the Government.
- His Honour the Acting Chief Justice (JAMES RUSSELL), *vice* His Honour SIR GEORGE PHILIPPO, Knt., on leave.
- The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary, (FREDERICK STEWART).
- „ the Acting Attorney General (EDWARD JAMES ACKROYD), *vice* the Honourable EDWARD LOUGHLIN O'MALLEY, on leave.
- „ the Colonial Treasurer, (ALFRED LISTER).
- „ the Surveyor General, (JOHN MACNELLE PRICE).
- „ HENRY GEORGE THOMSETT, R.N.
- „ PHINEAS RYRIE.
- „ WONG SHING.
- „ JOHN BELL-IRVING, (*vice* the Honourable WILLIAM KESWICK, on leave).
- „ CATCHICK PAUL CHATER, (*vice* the Honourable FREDERICK DAVID SASSOON, on leave).
- „ ALEXANDER PALMER MACEWEN.

The Council met pursuant to adjournment.

The Minutes of the last Meeting, held on the 19th instant, were read and confirmed.

THE JUBILEE CELEBRATION VOTE.—The Acting Colonial Secretary moved, pursuant to notice, that the Council vote the sum of \$25,000 towards the celebration and commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee.

Mr. RYRIE seconded.

Question—put and carried unanimously.

VOTE OF MONEY PASSED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.—The Acting Colonial Secretary, by direction of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table the Report of the proceedings of the Finance Committee, dated the 19th instant, (No. $\frac{17}{87}$), and moved that the following sum referred to therein be voted, viz.:—

C.S.O. For the purchase of a small corner of Inland Lot 24, in Queen's Road West, immediately
2090 of 1887. below the hill whereon stands the Civil Hospital, \$1,500.00

The Treasurer seconded.

Question—put and passed.

BILL ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE FOR AMENDING THE LAWS RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE COLONY OF HONGKONG.—On the motion of the Acting Attorney General, seconded by the Acting Colonial Secretary, this Bill was recommitted, in order that certain verbal alterations might be made.

Bill reported with some verbal amendments, and with the addition of a suspending clause.

The Acting Attorney General then moved the third reading of the Bill.

The Surveyor General seconded.

Mr. MACEWEN opposed the third reading of the Bill, and addressed the Council.

Mr. RYRIE seconded, and addressed the Council.

Discussion ensued.

The amendment that the Bill be not read a third time was then put, and a division taken, which resulted as follows:—

<i>Ayes.</i>		<i>Noes.</i>
Honourable A. P. MACEWEN.		THE HARBOUR MASTER.
" C. P. CHATER.		THE SURVEYOR GENERAL.
" J. BELL-IRVING.		THE COLONIAL TREASURER.
" WONG SHING.		THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL.
" P. RYRIE.		THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY.
		THE ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE.

The amendment was therefore lost by a majority of one.

The Bill was read a third time.

Question put—that this Bill do pass.

The Un-official Members wishing to record their votes against the passing of the Bill, a division was taken, which resulted as follows:—

<i>Ayes.</i>	<i>Noes.</i>
THE HARBOUR MASTER.	Honourable A. P. MAC EWEN.
THE SURVEYOR GENERAL.	" C. P. CHATER.
THE COLONIAL TREASURER.	" J. BELL-IRVING.
THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL.	" WONG SHING.
THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY.	" P. RYRIE.
THE ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE.	

The Bill was passed by a majority of one, and numbered as Ordinance No. 24 of 1887.

CLOSING OF THE SESSION.—His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government then closed the Session with the following speech:—

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

The time has now arrived for closing this session, and it will be for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor, Sir G. WILLIAM DES VOEUX when the Council is to re-assemble.

The Session of 1886-1887 has been unusually prolonged for the purpose of disposing of that vexed and long pending question "the Public Health Ordinance," and it is hoped you will be well repaid for your labours, when, in the course of time, the benefits conferred by this Bill will have practically manifested themselves, and been duly recognized by the Public.

The Opium Ordinance, as far as can be seen, is fully realizing the anticipations of Government in improving our friendly relations with China, whilst in no way injuring the interests of the honest trader. The Ordinance has been worked locally without, I believe, any friction or inconveniences to our own people, and the Chinese Commissioner of Customs informs me that smuggling has been effectually stopped.

Complaints on the part of the merchants regarding increased duties imposed on certain articles of commerce have been met in a friendly and accommodating spirit by the Chinese Foreign Collectorate, and my despatches on the subject, which are, *confidentially*, open to the perusal of Honourable Members, will, I trust, have properly represented the commercial interests of the Community.

The invaluable services of His Honour, Acting Chief Justice RUSSELL, who has been chiefly instrumental in bringing about so happy a settlement of this difficult and embarrassing Opium question, have been fully recognized by Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Hongkong, and he well deserves the thanks of the whole community whose interests he has so well represented.

Mr. SETH has been most indefatigable and able in his management of the Opium Office, and to him is largely due the successful working of the Ordinance.

Among other Ordinances which have been passed this Session and which call for remarks are:—

1. Legislative Council witnesses, and the Commissioners Powers Ordinances. These are important additions to our Statute Book, as they enable the Legislative Council to compel the attendance of witnesses and to examine them on oath, whilst the "commissioners Powers Ordinance" authorizes the Governor, for the purpose of instituting and conducting any inquiry which may be necessary, to appoint Commissioners who will have all the powers of the Supreme Court for the purpose of enforcing the attendance of witnesses, compelling the production of documents, and punishing for contempt.

2. The Law concerning Joint Stock Companies has by Ordinance No. 30 of 1886 been amended and improved, by the introduction into this Colony of the provisions of certain Imperial Statutes.

3. The Law of Defamation and Libel has by Ordinance No. 5 of 1887 been modified and amended by introducing the provisions of the Imperial Act respecting Newspapers and Libels.

4. The cause of order and peace in the Colony has been further promoted by the passing—

- i. Of an Ordinance regulating the carriage and possession of arms.
- ii. Of an Ordinance enabling Government to take steps for the suppression of the Triad and other unlawful Societies, and
- iii. Of an Ordinance for the more effectual prevention of crime by placing under police supervision all criminals who are liberated from gaol before expiry of their sentence.

The necessity of the second mentioned Ordinance was strongly urged on the Government by a Commission which was appointed to enquire into Secret Societies, and which proved to what an extent these unlawful Societies existed here, and the power which they were enabled to exercise,—a power which they used not only for their personal benefit, but often to the prejudice of justice by the help which they extended to criminals.

5. Closely allied to these three Ordinances is that of No. 16 of 1887 empowering the Courts to award whipping for certain crimes—an Ordinance which it is hoped will act as a strong and effectual deterrent, and will therefore not be often put into force.

6. The Cattle Diseases, Slaughter House, and Markets Ordinance (No. 17 of 1887) is a useful and practical piece of legislation, the object of which is to secure the Colony from the introduction of cattle plague or other infectious diseases, the better regulation of our slaughter houses, and the cleanliness and good order of our markets.

7. The Ordinances relating to the
1. Post Office,
 2. Police Force,
 3. Juries and Licences,

have been amended and consolidated by several Ordinances passed this session.

8. The work of the Law Revision Committee and the preparation of the revised edition of the Ordinances has been furthered by the passing of these Ordinances and by the Statute Law Revision Ordinance No. 4 of 1887, which finally repeals and removes from our Statute Book no less than 102 Ordinances and parts of 5 others.

9. The protection of adopted daughters and young girls has been furthered by the passing of Ordinance No. 9 of 1887.

The necessity of such an Ordinance is clearly shown by the fact that there are at present no less than 205 young girls under the protection of the Registrar General, the most of whom, if not all, would have been brought up to a life of shame and immorality, had it not been for the intervention of the authorities. It is hoped that the manner in which this Ordinance, which at first was viewed with a certain amount of apprehension on the part of the Chinese, has been worked, has removed all those fears and proved to the Chinese residents that the only object which the Government had in passing it was to put a stop to a shameful traffic and to protect those who could not protect themselves.

The Annual Reports from the several Government Departments for the year 1886 have already placed the public in possession of the necessary information regarding them, and leave me but little to say excepting to testify to the zeal, energy, capacity for work, and devotion to the public service evinced by the heads of departments and their subordinates, and which I have seldom seen equalled, certainly not surpassed, in any Colony.

The recommendations of the Police Commission have mostly been adopted or are being adopted as opportunity offers, and considering the great difficulties the Police labour under, the facilities offenders have of escape and the little assistance rendered by the Chinese public in the detection of crime or apprehension of criminals, I think we may be well satisfied that good order is on the whole so well preserved.

A better acquaintance with the Chinese language, which it is desired to encourage on the part of the English Contingent, would much conduce to efficiency.

The improvement in the discipline and management of the Gaol has been well maintained, and acts as a wholesome deterrent to crime.

The large increase in the total tonnage of shipping entering this port, as shewn in the Harbour Master's report, speaks well for the growing prosperity of the Colony, which is still further evidenced by the steadily increasing population and extensive building and reclamation operations either in progress or being planned.

There is apparently every sign that this prosperity, in which we are happy to see our Chinese fellow-citizens so largely participating, is of a substantial and lasting character, and that the Colony has a great future before it.

In respect of Public Works and Improvements, as satisfactory progress has been made as could be expected under the difficulties of the rainy season.

Among the more important undertakings of the year may be mentioned the extension on improved sanitary principles of the main sewers of the town. Another instalment of nearly two miles of these new main drains has been added to those previously existing since my predecessor last addressed you.

The new Victoria College works are now well advanced, and it is anticipated that the new building will be ready for occupation during the earlier portion of next year. Unforeseen legal difficulties in clearing the Central Market of its tenants have led to some delay in the commencement of the new Public Market, but these difficulties having now been surmounted, arrangements have been made to begin the new market buildings early next month when the rainy season will have practically come to a close.

The tunnel under the Tytam mountain range being now open throughout, the extension of the public water supply is rapidly approaching completion.

I have this day received the Secretary of State's permission, which I asked him to telegraph, to lay on the table the important report on land tenure submitted to Government by the Crown Lands Commission, which, as will be seen, has spared no pains in furnishing all the necessary information, and whose valuable suggestions will receive the most attentive consideration.

Further representations have been made to the home Government on the necessity of some decision being arrived at on the Praya Extension question.

With regard to the defences of the Colony, a detailed statement was made by me as recently as the 29th April, 1887, since which progress has been as satisfactory as the rains have permitted.

When the guns arrive, the forts under construction can be finished in a very short time.

The construction of a Breakwater on Kellett's bank, which is recognized on all sides as essential for the defence of the Western entrance of the harbour, is now under consideration, and is only a question of money.

It is gratifying to find that the important work of education continues to make steady progress. The examinations now conducted by the Cambridge Syndicate have had a powerful effect in infusing a spirit of healthy emulation into our Schools; and the most recent institution, the Medical College for Chinese, is, I trust, destined to mark an era in the educational advancement of Hongkong, and prove of incalculable benefit to the Chinese.

The financial position of the Colony is sound. At the end of August, we had a balance of nearly \$600,000; upwards of half a million of dollars (\$521,447) here and upwards of \$90,000, (\$92,307) the equivalent of £15,000, at interest in London; these £15,000, being the unexpended balance of the Loan.

The Revenue for the year was estimated at \$1,291,270, and during the eight months ending August last the receipts amounted to \$977,402.

The Premiums on Land Sales were estimated at \$45,000, and during the first eight months of the year we received no less than \$81,717.

Of the Loan of £200,000, £15,000 remain unexpended.

The estimated Ordinary Expenditure was \$1,245,434, and during the first eight months of the year we expended \$988,337.

The Extraordinary Expenditure was estimated at \$760,000, and up till the 31st August we had expended \$496,385.

The only exceptional increases on expenditure were the new launch *Victoria*, \$12,000, and the Hungghom Market \$6,000.

The amount provided for Defence Works was \$696,000, of which \$496,083 have been expended. It must be remembered that when the loan of £200,000 was voted, the home Government had only asked for £56,000 for the Fortifications, afterwards increased to £116,000, leaving us short by £60,000 of the sum required for other public works—yet additional loans and rates have been dispensed with, and the opponents of the Spirit Farm, relying on the elasticity of the revenue from existing sources, have so far been justified, and it is hoped may be so in the future.

In conclusion, Honourable Gentlemen, I wish to thank you before we separate for your valuable assistance in the legislative business brought before you, and your unvarying courtesy and friendly feeling on all occasions and under all circumstances, whatever differences of opinion may have sometimes arisen, on public questions.

I have also to thank you for the supplies so liberally voted for the Public service, and for the sum you have this day allowed to be appropriated to supplement the very handsome public subscription to the Jubilee Fund and enable the loyal people of this Colony to worthily celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their beloved Sovereign's accession to the throne.

I now declare the Session to be closed.

G. WILLIAM DES VOEUX,
Governor.

Read and confirmed, this 2nd day of November, 1887.

ARATHOON SETH,
Clerk of Councils.