

5TH DECEMBER, 1890.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council met on the 5th December to consider item 29 of the estimates, Public Works Extraordinary. There were present:—Hon. W. M. Deane, Acting Colonial Secretary, who presided; Hon. E. J. Ackroyd, Acting Attorney-General; Hon. H. E. Wodehouse, Acting Colonial Treasurer, Hon. S. Brown, Surveyor-General; Hon. N. G. Mitchell-Innes, Acting Registrar-General; Hon. P. Rylie, Hon. C. P. Chater, Hon. J. J. Keswick, Hon. Ho Kai, Hon. T. H. Whitehead, Mr. F. A. Hazeland, Acting Clerk of Councils.

## THE CENTRAL MARKET.

The CHAIRMAN—Gentlemen, our business this afternoon is to consider item 29, Public Works Extraordinary. The first item is for the Central Market, on which it is proposed to expend next year \$130,000.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Before going on with the consideration of Public Works Extraordinary, I would mention that I think the Government committed themselves on the 3rd November to laying on the table a general statement of the proposed works, showing what is to be done in each case and the necessity for the works together with the estimates and plans, including a definite statement of their intentions with reference to drainage and waterworks, so that the Council and the public may know precisely what it is the Council are asked to sanction and for what purposes the money to be voted is to be used; also a fresh report from the Surveyor-General as to what works he can now reasonably undertake to do during the ensuing year, and a report detailing the public works to which the colony is already actually committed.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I was under the impression my report gave all the information asked for, and it was printed with the express purpose of meeting the hon. member's views.

The CHAIRMAN—The information the hon. member asks for has been already laid on the table, and he will be furnished with a copy. The Government have redeemed their pledge. Has any hon. member any observation to make on the vote proposed?

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I should like to know if contracts have been entered into for the building of the Central Market, or whether it is to be done by what the Chinese call measurement work.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Contracts have been entered into for the foundations of the Central Market but not for the superstructure. Most of the iron work required for the superstructure is brought obtained from England.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Then after the foundations are laid new contracts for building the market will be entered into?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes, as soon as the foundations are complete tenders will be advertised for the completion of the building.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—What was the tender accepted for the foundation?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Approximately about \$37,000. It is almost impossible to make a fixed contract for the cost of laying the foundations because so much depends upon the nature of the foundation.

Hon. HO KAI—What does the foundation include?—drainage?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes, drainage and the retaining walls round the enclosure and the levels of the walls up to the basement so as to have everything complete for building upon.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—And the contract is not let?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Not only is the contract let, but the work, as hon. members are aware, has been going on for a long time.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Yes, I know that the work has been going on for some time, but what I mean is, was the contract let for so much to finish the foundations for a lump sum?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It was not let for a lump sum, but it is nevertheless a contract. It would be impossible to say exactly what the amount would be. The work is paid for according to how much is done.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Is that a better way than letting the contract for a lump sum?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I think so. I do not know how you could let it for a lump sum until you know what you have to do.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—It is what is done everywhere else.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I think that system must partake very much of the nature of a lottery.

The CHAIRMAN—Was not the same thing done in the case of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank? If I remember rightly, after going some little distance they got into water and hence additional expense was incurred.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I was not aware of that. If my memory serves me rightly, I believe the contract for the foundations was let for a lump sum. At all events I have made a good many contracts in the colony at one time and another, and every one has been for a lump sum, and I believe that to be the best way. Then you know exactly where you are, whereas by your way the Government do not know and you can never tell what is going to be the cost. In buildings on the water side the only thing done in this way with regard to foundations is in respect to piles. If you find it necessary to put down piles, you are charged so much per pile.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I may say that I have had a very large experience in letting contracts for foundations, and I must say I do not think the way you mention a businesslike one. It seems to me rather in the nature of a lottery. You make a contract with a Chinese contractor with regard to a foundation of which you know nothing, and you agree it is to be done for so much; if it turns out favourably the chances are that the colony would lose a large sum; if on the other hand it turns out extremely difficult, perhaps you run into water, the man is ruined and the work is stopped.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—What about his sureties?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I am afraid very often his sureties are rather a weak thing to fall back upon.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—What is being done with regard to the new wing of the Hongkong Hotel?

Hon. C. P. CHATER—There is a case where it is being done for a lump sum, and that is close to the water.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—It seems to me that both parties run a great risk in that way.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—The contractor takes the risk, and he is generally the party who makes by the transaction.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—If the contractor takes a great risk, he would expect a very large profit. Then unless he has a very large reserve at his back, in case of failure to get his foundations in or we have the delay and trouble which we have had lately, where it has been necessary to take works out of his hands. This has resulted in delay and expense.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Who is called upon to do the measurements.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I have endeavoured to explain that when the contract is let under the system of measurement it is the engineer in charge who measures up the work.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—The engineer, not the overseer?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The engineer in charge of the work is responsible for all measurements of which he has charge. That is the system under which I was brought up. I have

worked under it for forty years, and so far as my personal experience goes I have known no other system until I came to this colony.

Hon. HO KAI—When do you think the market will be completed?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—That is rather looking into futurity. At present I really cannot say.

Hon. HO KAI—Approximately?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I cannot say even approximately.

Hon. HO KAI—Will it take five years?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I should be very much disappointed if it did.

Hon. HO KAI—But when do you expect it will be completed?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I have already said I cannot say.

The CHAIRMAN—It depends, I presume, on the money granted you each year.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Of course it depends on that, but if you look at the sum put down on the estimates and take the amount to be spent next year from the whole estimate, it should be completed before the end of the following year.

The CHAIRMAN—You have put down \$130,000 for next year. Do you think you could do fair work for \$100,000?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—We have to provide for for the material that is coming from home. It is very difficult to say whether that will all have to be paid for during 1890 or 1891, but it is absolutely necessary that we should be prepared to do so. The greater part of this sum is required for the material, but it is very probable that if this money is voted the full amount will not be expended. I am quite certain that if you take the aggregate of the various items there will remain a considerable unexpended balance at the end of the year. I think, however, it is very much better to take a sufficiently large sum than to be running short and having to come to the council continually for supplementary votes.

Hon. HO KAI—I should like to know somewhere about the time that it will be completed.

The CHAIRMAN—He has said that it depends greatly on the sum voted to him.

Hon. HO KAI—No.

The CHAIRMAN—I understood him to say so in answer to my question.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It appears from the estimates that if this sum is voted the work will take about two years. We have here rather more than half. We have expended this year \$14,000 and the estimate next year is \$130,000; that is \$144,000 out of a total estimate of \$270,000.

Hon. HO KAI—Exactly, that is according to the estimates, but will the building be completed in two years?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It is my hope that it will be unless some unforeseen circumstance arises.

The CHAIRMAN—I notice in your estimate you include the cost of fitting shops and stalls.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes, that is the way it is done in the case of English markets, where you have fittings such as glazed tiles and so on in the fishmongers' stalls.

The vote was then agreed to.

#### THE GAP ROCK LIGHTHOUSE.

The CHAIRMAN—I beg to propose a vote of \$60,000 for the Gap Rock Lighthouse. You will find particulars with regard to this in the Surveyor-General's report, which I will read—“In the estimates of 1889 the amount provided for this lighthouse is \$70,000. I can, however, find no details on which the estimate is based. It is certain that a revolving light of the first order could not be constructed, under the most favourable conditions, on such a site for that sum. It should be borne in mind that the conditions under which the lighthouse is being built are anything but favourable, as a steam tender capable of performing the service to a rock, exposed to the full power of the waves of the China Sea, had to be purchased, and a staff had to be specially organised for this work. After going carefully into the matter I estimate the cost of the lighthouse at \$180,000, less \$3,000, the estimated value of the s.s. *Fame* on the completion of the work, thus making the net cost \$150,000. Although this is a large sum, it compares favourably with the cost of other lighthouses erected on isolated rocks similarly exposed.”

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Will that sum of \$107,000 estimated for 1890 be all expended?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—There will, I think, be a very considerable balance from that.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I see that \$85,000 were spent to the 30th June, so that between June and the 31st December you have only \$21,000 to spend. Do you think you will have any balance left from that sum?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I was under the impression I should when I spoke just now, but on looking into the matter for a minute I cannot say that I shall.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—It does not look as though there would be.

The CHAIRMAN—The great expense in the half-year to June was the purchase of lanterns and material. They have now been obtained so that all that has to be paid for now is labour.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Surely it will require that \$21,000 for labour.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Is the cost of the *Fame* included in the estimate?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Is she insured?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—For what amount?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—She is fully insured. Her cost was, I think, \$45,000.

Vote agreed to.

#### PRAYA RECLAMATION—GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION.

On the vote for \$50,000 for the Government contribution to the Praya Reclamation,

The CHAIRMAN said—This is a matter which is provided for by Ordinance, and therefore I think we may consider it as passed.

Vote agreed to.

#### SITE FOR PROPOSED WESTERN MARKET.

On the vote of \$35,000 for a site for the proposed Western Market,

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL said—The contract for this work was entered into a long time ago, and the balance is necessary to complete the terms of the contract.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Is the estimate of \$91,000 only for the site?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It is for the reclamation of the site.

Vote agreed to.

#### TRAINING ALBANY NULLAH AND NEW ROADS AND PREPARATORY WORK, KENNEDY ROAD SITES.

A vote of \$30,000 for training Albany Nullah and branches was agreed to without discussion.

On a vote of \$10,000 for new roads and preparatory work, Kennedy Road sites,

Hon. C. P. CHATER, said—Have these roads been started yet?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—There has been a small amount of work done in the drainage for the roads, and it is proposed as soon as some little difficulties with the military authorities have been got over, to go on with the work and to make an intermediate road between Kennedy and Bowen Roads.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Why is this extraordinary work? Why is it not put under the ordinary expenditure for roads?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The work is really a part of the training of the Albany Nullah and preparing the Kennedy Road sites.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—After the road is completed will the sites be put up to auction?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—They would have been put up before except that there have been some difficulties with the military authorities.

The CHAIRMAN—The Government had to undertake to construct a sewer to prevent the sewage running down into the Murray Barracks.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Has any provision been made for this sewer?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The work is already in progress.

Vote agreed to.

#### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PRAYA BRIDGE OVER BOWRINGTON CANAL AND IMPROVEMENTS ON RECREATION GROUND, HAPPY VALLEY.

A vote of \$3,000 in connection with the construction of the Praya Bridge over Bowrington Canal was agreed to.

On a vote of \$32,000 for improvements in Happy Valley,

Hon. J. J. KESWICK said—I should like, Mr. Chairman, in reference to this vote to ask what this sum of \$32,000 is to be spent for exactly. I daresay the Surveyor-General will be kind enough to inform me. There has been already spent in connection with this work \$8,000 and I see that \$32,000 more is asked for for the ensuing year. It appears to me that our public works are going ahead rather extravagantly and without any regard to the depressing times which may visit us by-and-by. I should like to know why we are called upon to spend this \$32,000 and whether it will complete the whole work contemplated in Happy Valley or not.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The estimate includes the whole work contemplated, which is shown on the plan which I have not here but which I will send for. The work includes the extension of the Racecourse nearly as far as Bowrington Refinery, the diversion of the stream, and the great enlargement of the present recreation ground, in fact nearly doubling it. At present the items approximately are as follows:—Contract for filling in the pond, \$7,500; turfing \$2,500—

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Is that for turfing the part where the pond was?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—No, that is for improving the turf on the whole ground.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—For turfing the interior generally?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes, not that part where the pond was. The work we are engaged upon has been nearly completed at a cost of \$10,000. Then there is the diversion of the canal, \$16,000; alteration of the Racecourse and turfing the whole of the new portion of the Recreation Ground, that is the plantation, which will all require turfing, \$9,500; draining the Public Gardens, \$1,500. This is really more for the purpose of sanitation, as nearly all the other part is drained, and we intend putting in subsoil pipes for that portion also.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I understood the Athletic Club was not to get the Public Gardens now as they could all be accommodated on the Racecourse.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The Athletic Clubs as at present arranged get a small piece of ground outside the Racecourse with permission to use a part of the ground within the Racecourse without exclusive rights.

Hon. P. RYRIE—Do they get what was the nursery in former days? Do they get that too?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—No, they do not. It is rather difficult to explain the matter. I think I had better send for the plan.

The CHAIRMAN—I think hon. members will remember the details of the plan.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Personally I remember the details exactly, but what I am afraid of is that we are going to commit ourselves to a work which will be found to cost a great deal

more than the Surveyor-General will expect. Of course I have some diffidence in making such a suggestion, but I cannot help feeling that is so, more especially as after the pond is filled up I think the interior of the Racecourse itself will be rather too low in the first place, and in the next place I fear that unless it is all turfed and a great deal of money spent on it, it will be unfit for the purpose for which it is intended. I have always regarded this work as more or less wanton extravagance and as being altogether unnecessary. That, however, is past and can't be helped now, but I am very anxious in dealing with a vote like this to have due regard to spending as little money as possible.

The CHAIRMAN—I think the estimate is divided into two branches—one is for the sanitation of the valley, and the other for its improvement for purposes of recreation rather than sanitation.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—At least one half of the amount is for the diversion of the canal and the draining of the ground. That may fairly be put down as sanitary work. These two items form one half of the total cost. On the remaining portion we have already incurred an expenditure of \$10,000.

The CHAIRMAN—Do you think the plan you have prepared for the diversion of the stream on the west side and a water channel on the east side sufficient to drain the Racecourse in the absence of the pond?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Quite, from the system of subsoil drainage which is to be carried out.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Is that included in this estimate?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It is included in the estimate.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Have definite plans been decided on?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Plans have been discussed in this room before a large and representative body and have been laid before the Jockey Club and the Athletic Club, so that I think it is pretty well known what the plan proposed is.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Have estimates been made out and tenders received?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It would be rather premature to receive tenders, but the substance of the estimates I have just given you.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Will this sum of \$40,000 include all the work it is intended to undertake?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The whole of the work.

Hon. HO KAI—Will it include the preparing of the ground for the Club.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—No. The Athletic Club intend to put up a pavilion and lay a cinder track, but that will be done at the expense of the Club. The Jockey Club intend to put

up a new grand stand, but that is not put in here. The extension of the Racecourse and also the cost of alteration is put down here.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Will the Government do that?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It is not for me to say whether the Government will do it, but it is included in the estimate.

Hon. HO KAI—I should like to ask if any portion of the ground has been granted to any Club for their exclusive use.

The CHAIRMAN—I am not aware that any part of the Racecourse has been granted exclusively to any one.

Hon. HO KAI—We vote public money for this ground, and as representing a large community I should like to know if any club has exclusive use of any part of it.

The CHAIRMAN—No. Within the Racecourse the Athletic Club is, I believe, to have a cinder track.

Hon. HO KAI—I understood they were to have exclusive use of some three or four acres of ground.

The CHAIRMAN—They were to have a piece outside the Racecourse, but as I understand this vote applies only to improvements inside the Racecourse.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The greater part of the Public Gardens will be included in the Racecourse. The Racecourse is oval, and there will be two corners at the end of the course, and it is proposed that the Athletic Club should have the use of one of these. That will not in any way interfere with the Racecourse ground.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—So far as I can see the object of extending the Racecourse was to get out of a difficulty which had arisen in connection with a promise made to the Athletic Club. While I have every desire to see the Athletic Club succeed and have everything that has been promised them, I think it most unjustifiable to incur a heavy expenditure in order to get out of a difficulty which should never have been got into. I am not at all sure—of course it is a matter of opinion and I make the remark with some diffidence—that it is not a very serious mistake to have undertaken to enlarge the Racecourse in the manner proposed. I regard it at best as unnecessary, and I also regard it to a certain extent as a wanton spending of money which is entirely unjustifiable. I cannot see any necessity for the Government being put in a position which requires us to consider the spending of a sum of money like this at a time when it is most important for us to study carefully any expenditure. I have listened with interest to the explanations given, but I still question whether this scheme will not cost more than has been estimated.

The CHAIRMAN—Do you move the reduction of this vote to any particular sum?

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—No, Mr. Chairman, if I moved anything in connection with it I should

move its omission altogether. But I would hardly like to do that because I would not like to give rise to unnecessary difficulties in connection with the carrying out of this scheme. Therefore it would be desirable to be a little cautious in making such a proposal as to omit the vote altogether. On the other hand I should like to know if it can be shown how it is necessary to spend this money at all. Would it not be practicable at the present time to train the nullah down the side of the road in the direction of the extension proposed and cause it to debouch under the bridge at Bowrington, and to reclaim the canal above Bowrington bridge so as to give more space there to accommodate the Athletic Club with a piece of ground for its own benefit, without taking away the intervening fence between the Bowrington wood and the Racecourse, at a very much smaller expenditure? If at some future time it was thought desirable to extend the Racecourse let it be when the calls on the public exchequer are more moderate than at present. I make these remarks without making a motion. I would much rather hear some hon. members express their views on the subject.

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—May I ask the hon. member if I am right in assuming that what he objects to is the extension of the Racecourse, not the extension of the Recreation Ground. The two terms have got somewhat mixed up.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—I am open to correction but believe I am quite right in the assertion that the Racecourse is to be extended as a means to an end—in order that the difficulty may be overcome in connection with the Athletic Club or some promise made to them, not from any express desire on the part of those interested in racing—the Jockey Club or any one else. I see no reason for changing the present course at all. It would be practicable, I think, to improve the Bowrington ground and make it available for public recreation instead of extending the Racecourse and carrying out the scheme which is put forward by the Public Works Department at the present time.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—If your suggestion were carried out, that is if we were to divert the stream, and in fact carry out all the work with the exception of the extension of the Racecourse, the amount saved would be comparatively small—not more than \$4,000 or \$5,000. The heavy part of the expenditure is the diversion of Bowrington Canal.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Am I right in saying that the diversion of the Bowrington Canal has nothing to do with any of the Clubs?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—It has nothing to do with any Club whatever. It was not gone into with that view, but rather with a view of improving the ground as a space for all classes of people and making it much larger than the one at present. With the Public Gardens thrown in, the

space then available for recreation would be twice as large as formerly.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—The opinion expressed by the hon. member on my left (Hon. J. J. Keswick) has just brought to my mind what took place in this chamber some months ago, before if I mistake not the Athletic Club had been thought of. It was brought forward that this pond in the Racecourse should be filled in, and while on that subject one hon. member spoke and strongly advocated that the course should be pursued which is now proposed. I believe the hon gentleman, who has left the colony, Hon. A. P. MacEwen, was the first to advocate in this chamber to do what is now proposed to be done. I believe I spoke on the subject and one or two more hon. members, and His Excellency Sir William Des Voeux was also strongly of opinion that there should be more recreation ground for, as he called it, "lungs." Why the matter was deferred I do not know, but it certainly was brought forward again when the Athletic Club started. Since then there has been some—I hardly know what to call it—some little misunderstanding with regard to the Athletic Club and the Government and two or three other clubs upon the matter. What has been brought forward now under a fresh light is the original scheme we started from, and which was proposed long before the Athletic Club was started. The original scheme was exactly that now proposed by the Surveyor-General, to make the whole into one huge recreation ground.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—With reference to the remarks just made am I correct in stating that the extension of the Racecourse was not included in the proposal made in the first instance, that, in fact, it was not referred to at all?

The CHAIRMAN—I am speaking from memory, but I do not think the extension of the Racecourse was included in that proposal.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—It was an afterthought arising out of the difficulties. What these difficulties were it is not my business to enquire, but I think it was an afterthought as a means to an end—to get out of a difficulty. With reference to this vote I see the work in connection with the nursery has already been commenced. The trees are already rooted out—I think six months before it was necessary—and the place is filled with holes so that those who might have used it before cannot do so now. The work has been begun now and something must be done to finish it. If as the Surveyor-General says the cost of extension of the Racecourse would be comparatively small, I have no further objection to make but I must say that I think the whole scheme is unnecessary, and I cannot look upon it but as extravagance that is little less than wanton.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I never remember any mention of the Racecourse in the first proposal. I understood both sides of the canal were to be opened up and that the Athletic Club wanted one side.

The CHAIRMAN—This arrangement took place long before the Athletic Club started, and the fact of Mr. MacEwen taking a large part in this Council in proposing the alteration and improvement of the Racecourse and also a prominent part in the promotion of the Athletic Club has led to the two schemes being mixed up.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I don't remember anything being said about the Racecourse.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—No, it was not part of the original scheme.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I should like to know what the difference in cost would be in carrying out the old scheme as at first proposed and the present scheme. The Surveyor-General is the best authority on the subject, and perhaps he will tell us what the difference in cost would be.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—As I have already stated, supposing the canal is to be diverted and the other work carried out the difference in leaving the Racecourse as it is would not amount to a saving of more than \$4,000 or \$5,000.

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—My recollection of what took place is that Hon. A. P. MacEwen used the word "Racecourse" in Council. I happened to be present also when he first mooted the point to His Excellency Sir William Des Voeux, and my opinion is that he had not the posts and rails in his head, but that he used "Racecourse" as a general term for the whole of Happy Valley. Perhaps the Surveyor-General can say whether it is absolutely necessary that the canal should be diverted. The diversion of the canal is to cost \$16,000 and the extension of the Racecourse \$4,000. The main portion of the estimate appears to be for these two items. With these left out \$20,000 would be saved.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I do not think it would be worth while carrying out the scheme at all unless the drainage is improved, and to do that it is necessary to divert the canal.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—If the improvements were carried out without diverting the canal, the Racecourse would be flooded with the first heavy rainfall that took place. As it is, the Jockey Club have to take a great deal of trouble now to prevent debris being washed on the course. If this canal is not diverted it is no use the other improvements being carried out. That is my own opinion, I do not know what the Surveyor-General thinks.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I remember very well the history of this question, as I had a great deal to do with it. It is correct as stated that Mr. MacEwen did propose to throw a portion of the Public Gardens into the recreation ground. I went down to the valley, and on looking into the matter it occurred to me that simply throwing one part of the public gardens into the recreation ground and leaving Bowrington Canal in its present condition, and leaving the portion of the public gardens which lies on the west side of the Bowrington Canal outside altogether, would be a very

poor scheme. and that it would be much better if it was worth while doing anything to make a good job of it and to make the recreation ground as large as possible. In any case a considerable amount of money must be spent, and I thought it would be much better left alone altogether, or else to spend a few thousand dollars more and make a complete job of it. That is the principle by which It have been guided, and it is for the Council to decide whether it is worth while to spend the money or not.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Having started the discussion on this vote, I may say that I have listened with interest to what the Surveyor-General has stated with regard to the various items of expenditure, and as it seems the extension of the Racecourse will cost only \$4,000 or \$5,000 more to carry out I certainly am in favour of the Racecourse being extended if the scheme is to be gone on with.

Vote agreed to.

#### GAOL EXTENSION.

The CHAIRMAN—The next item is No. 9 Gaol Extension, \$140,000, of which \$100,000 is asked for next year. This is a matter on which there is a great difference of opinion. So long ago as 1883 the Secretary of State, in a despatch of the 15th October, says he consents to a temporary postponement of the building, "although with some reluctance, as the desirability of erecting a new prison at Hongkong has long been recognised, and it must be understood the work cannot be indefinitely postponed." And His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, who has taken a great deal of personal interest in this matter, expresses himself in this way, that he does not hesitate to say the manner in which prisoners are clustered together in the same cell is a scandal, and if an epidemic were to break out the consequences would be most serious. Now, two projects have been submitted to the Secretary of State. One is to extend the present Gaol at the expense of a portion of the compound of the police barracks, and the other is to erect block buildings towards the west, but so far as I know no determination has been arrived at as to which of these two schemes, if either, should be adopted. The matter has been sent home to the Secretary of State and this item has been placed on the estimates in order to provide for the result of the Secretary of State's decision.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Well, sir, I regret that I cannot agree with the recommendation that this money should be voted. I cannot but regard with very considerable concern the freedom with which these enormous sums are put down in the estimates, forgetting, as I once before remarked in this Council, that the revenues of this colony are not by any means elastic, and there are no grounds whatever for supposing our revenue is going to increase at all. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe, I think, that from time to time there

will be a very great contraction in our income. I can easily suppose that in the event of bad crops on the mainland, bad trade here, political difficulties, anything of that sort might react on Hongkong in such a manner that our revenue would be nothing like equal to our expenditure. And in reference to this particular item it appears to me that the proposal to build a new gaol at a cost of \$140,000 is something very excessive. I have not myself gone through the goal, therefore I am unable to say what the accommodation allotted to each prisoner may be, but it seems to me the proposal to expend \$140,000 in building a new prison when the one we have has until quite recently been always regarded as ample is one that ought not to be favourably entertained. Personally I would propose that this sum be omitted from the estimates.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I beg to second the hon. gentleman's proposal. I think the sums put down in this schedule before us are astounding, and, as the Secretary of State says, far in excess of the powers of the department to make use of. I believe two Commissions have sat in connection with gaol extension, but so far I have not seen their reports. I think it would have been very desirable had those reports been placed on the table, so that we could have seen what recommendations were put forward by the two different commissions and have had something to be guided by. I second the hon. member's proposition.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Sir, I have also to note my objection to this item, but on entirely different grounds from those taken by the two hon. members who have spoken. I think it is not a very good policy for the Government to come forward and ask us to vote large sums of money without our knowing whether the extension is to be effected by addition to the present gaol, by building a new gaol at West Point, or whether the thing is to be done at all or not. I am of opinion we should not be called upon for any vote whatever until the Government has made up its mind what is to be done and has plans made out and tenders called for. It is then we ought to be asked for the money. At present you yourself, sir, state that you do not know whether the home people are going to sanction any expenditure or whether they are going to order a new building altogether, and we are asked to vote this large sum of money without our having any knowledge of what is to be done. Under these circumstances I should feel myself called upon to oppose the vote. I think we should not be called upon to vote money until the Government is satisfied certain buildings should be put up, and has ascertained what the cost will be. I think the chances are that not a penny of this \$140,000 will be spent next year, but whether or not, why should we be asked to vote it to-day? I think it is committing the Colony

in a way that might lead to our spending more than is requisite. I therefore object to the vote.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—In 1886 or 1887 I was chairman of a committee appointed to visit the gaol. It was composed of the hon. member who has just spoken, the Hon. Mr. William Keswick, and several others. We visited the gaol in the day time and also at night, and I think we were very much astonished at seeing Chinamen huddled in cells as full as they could pack them. We made several recommendations, because we were very indisposed indeed to recommend any new buildings, and we thought if the law as to whipping were extended and whipping allowed for many other offences than it is now, the number of the inmates of the goal might be diminished. We were all of opinion that what we saw was, I may say, scandalous, and that with the Chinese huddled together as they were, and with very few subjected to solitary confinement, the prison was not a very severe punishment for them. We were agreed something should be done, and we thought that, as I have said, whipping should be allowed in order to diminish the numbers. Most of the recommendations as to whipping were disapproved of by the Secretary of State, but from what we saw we were clearly of opinion something should be done. As far as I know the number of prisoners has not been diminished, and it is very desirable some punishment more deterrent than anything you have now should be applied to the Chinese. It is said solitary confinement would be a very severe punishment, but you cannot carry that out at present because there are not a sufficient number of cells. The Secretary of State from time to time has called attention to this matter. The excuse for nothing having been done has been that there was no money, but I think you may find the Secretary of State may say that eight years' consideration of the matter is really sufficient and that something must now be done. Those who are interested in criminal matters and wish to see some more effective punishment introduced are of opinion solitary confinement would be effective. That being so, I think it was only reasonable and prudent for the Government to come forward to-day and as for this money, which we believe will be wanted for next year. We put the whole matter before you and give our reasons why all these things are necessary, some more necessary than others. The whole is put before you in order that you may judge, and really among all these items there are few if any more requisite and necessary than the extension of the gaol.

Hon. P. RYRIE—What will become of the Magistracy?

The CHAIRMAN—I told you I was not quite sure which of the two plans would be adopted. One scheme is to extend the gaol over the site of the present Magistracy and the other to start

a new block on the Pokfulam Road at West Point.

Hon. P. RYRIE—Have you ground there?

The CHAIRMAN—Yes, it has been reserved for the last ten years.

Hon. P. RYRIE—And is it proposed to build a new gaol?

The CHAIRMAN—A new block, not the whole gaol.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—But when you have begun with one block you will have to go on.

The CHAIRMAN—Yes, in time.

Hon. HO KAI—I support the motion on the ground that the expenditure is unnecessary. With all respect to the Commission that inquired into the question of such extension I think there is scarcely one of the members who knows the Chinese well enough to form an opinion. And talking about solitary cells and other punishments, I am afraid the members were far from accurate in speaking of solitary confinement as a punishment to the Chinese. Every one knows the Chinese are a very patient race, and I know some members of the lower classes, or criminal classes, will sit down for days by themselves and take no notice of other people. They are not active, they do not care for outdoor exercise, and solitary confinement to them, I am afraid, would be rather a comfort. As to overcrowding and the fear of epidemics, that is also without foundation. There has been no epidemic in the gaol, and the Chinese herd together themselves outside the gaol quite as much. Then I say there is an enormous difference between the European constitution and the Chinese constitution. Of that the Legislature never take any notice; they simply say that what Europeans require the Chinese must require, and consequently they make the mistake of treating the Chinese as they would Europeans. And now you ask for a very large sum for gaol extension because you think Chinese prisoners require as much accommodation as European prisoners, and that they should have a separate cell, and so on, and of course if you give them a good deal of nourishing food and everything else you may go on extending the gaol indefinitely, and by and by it will cover the whole colony. I am sure there are other means that could be devised to make the punishment more salutary and prevent the lower class of Chinese desiring to rush into gaol as a comfortable boarding-house where they can have a lot of amusement and pay nothing.

The CHAIRMAN—As the hon. member has thought over the matter so fully, could he suggest any method?

Hon. HO KAI—I think this is perhaps not the place to do so, but I should be very pleased if the Government consulted me in the matter to point out some things that I think would be useful.



Hon. P. RYRIE—I am in favour of some extension, but I think the amount put down is too large. You don't want to apply the separate system to all the prisoners. Several years ago there was some talk about taking in the Magistracy, and the sum then mentioned was about \$80,000.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—I should like to say, sir, that any reform made in the direction of treating the prisoners in gaol should be in the way of separating what I may call municipal offenders from real criminals. It is very painful to have to send numerous Chinese such as hawkers and breakers of the opium laws to gaol to be treated as common criminals instead of having some place where they might be detained for the short time until the fine imposed upon them is paid. And also with regard to the herding of prisoners together in gaol, the real defect of that system is that it promotes vice among the people so crowded and they concoct fresh crimes to commit when they come out. If any scheme could be devised by which municipal offenders could be kept separate and so not become a part on the criminal population, I think that is the direction any reform ought to take.

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—I held the appointment of Superintendent of the Gaol for a year, and I know of no reason why the class of prisoners alluded to by the Acting Colonial Treasurer should not be separated. As a matter of fact they are. There are several yards, each with its own cells, and the different classes of prisoners can thus be separated. As regards making the gaol more deterrent I may say there are three or four methods in use. One is to deprive the prisoners of food, another to put them in solitary confinement, and another to increase their labour. Deprivation of food can only be applied at infrequent intervals, and it does not always have the effect one could wish; and as to increasing the labour, to apply that extensively would necessitate an increase of the staff, for you cannot make the prisoners work after hours without punishing the staff also. With regard to solitary confinement, I must say I do not agree with my hon. friend on my left (Hon. Ho Kai). I think it stands almost to reason that a man after his day's labour would much sooner have a pleasant chat with his comrades than be locked up alone with ghosts and the other inhabitants of the unseen world in whose existence the Chinese believe. In fact in one or two cases where men have been put in solitary confinement they have hanged themselves.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Municipal offenders wear the same clothes as other prisoners, do they not?

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—Every one who goes into gaol wears gaol clothes, but there is no reason why they should be put in the

same cells or in communication with other prisoners.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—But they are under the same administration as it were?

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN—What was the proposed size of the separate cells, 8 ft. by 4 ft., was it not?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—In England it is 600 ft. of air space for convicts. In Cyprus, for motives of economy we adopted 400 ft. Not being a cold climate you can always provide for ventilation from outside. The health in the gaol in Cyprus remained good during the nine years I was there.

The CHAIRMAN—The size was 8 ft. by 4 ft. I think.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—8 ft. by 5 ft.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I think it was said 1,000 ft. of air space should be allowed.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—If you ask the doctors they will tell you a good deal more.

The CHAIRMAN—I fancy they don't get more than 250 ft. now.

A division was then taken on the motion to omit the vote with the following result:—

FOR.	AGAINST.
Hon. T. H. Whitehead	The Acting Registrar General
Hon Ho Kai	The Surveyor General
Hon. J. J. Keswick	The Act. Colonial Treasurer
Hon. C. P. Chater	The Acting Attorney General
Hon. P. Ryrie	

The CHAIRMAN—The motion is lost. I have thought over this matter before, and as I read the standing rules and regulations the Chairman in Council has his own vote and a casting vote, but I do not see that that power is extended to the Chairman of a committee, and I think I must rule I have only a casting vote in case of an equality, and not a double vote.

#### CATTLE DEPOT EXTENSION.

The next item for consideration was No. 10, Cattle Depot Extension, estimated total cost \$10,000; estimated expenditure to 31st December, 1890, \$2,000; estimated expenditure, 1891, \$8,000.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I should like to know what this is, because immediately below are two more items, slaughter- house and sheep and pig depots. I thought we had quite enough cattle depots.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The first is an extension of the cattle depot, that is to say, at present there are three sheds and very frequently one third of the cattle cannot get in, so it is proposed to put up a fourth shed.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Do we get any revenue from them?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes; perhaps the Colonial Treasurer could tell you how much.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—I cannot tell you at this moment.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Would it not be better for the future if these items from which revenue is derived were put down under a different head

from those items from which there is no revenue derived?

The CHAIRMAN—To separate remunerative and unremunerative works?

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Yes.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I should say this is a re-vote. It was included in the estimates of last year.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Do I understand that all cattle which arrive here for the purpose of ultimately being sent to the slaughter-house are taken to these sheds?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Yes, they are all taken there compulsorily.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Before they are sold, or after?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I believe they are taken there directly on landing and kept there till slaughtered.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—Is it not quite possible the Chinese engaged in this trade of supplying the colony with food make use of these sheds without paying any adequate sums for them rather than be put to the expense of housing the cattle elsewhere?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—No, I think not, because although the charge made for each head of cattle is a very moderate one it was fixed at that figure with a view of inducing the people to bring their cattle there instead of keeping them in unsuitable places in different parts of the town where it was almost impossible for the veterinary surgeon to make a proper inspection. The charge is a low one but sufficient to prove remunerative, and if it is not sufficient there is nothing to prevent the Government increasing it. At present it is let out to a contractor, who is not allowed to charge more than two cents per head per day.

The CHAIRMAN—I may mention all these matters are entirely under the Sanitary Board, and we are acting on their recommendation. We are simply supporting the Sanitary Board in putting these items on the estimates.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Clause 7 of Ordinance 17 of 1887 reads:—"All animals brought to the colony for the purpose of being slaughtered shall be kept, except when they may be turned out to graze, in a properly constructed depot licensed by the Sanitary Board." I believe the cattle are only allowed to land at certain wharves and then are taken direct to the depot.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—And there they are inspected to see that they are fit for slaughter.

The vote was agreed to.

#### SLAUGHTER-HOUSE AND SHEEP AND PIG DEPOTS.

The next item was Slaughter-house and Sheep and Pig Depots, estimated total cost \$90,000; estimated expenditure to 31st December, 1890, \$5,000; estimated expenditure 1891, \$60,000.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—This seems an enormous sum.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—They fixed on the amount of accommodation before my arrival. The number of sheep and pigs, especially pigs, is great, and it will be a very large depot.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—It is unnecessary to have a depot for pigs, surely.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—There is a very voluminous correspondence on the subject going over ten years. In the first place, pigs are kept in places where they cannot be properly inspected, but the chief objection to the present system is that they are stowed away one on top of another, and it is very desirable to do something from a humanitarian point of view.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—It is on board ship they are stowed like that.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—And in the depots also.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have seen people walking over them. I thought it had been provided for years ago, the matter was so strongly represented in 1875 and 1876.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Mr. Granville Sharp wrote to the Government several times drawing attention to the subject. In the depot they would not be kept in cages but put in pens. After they arrived at the depot they might be kept a certain number of days, but they would be kept in proper pens.

Hon. HO KAI—Don't you make a charge?

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—Yes.

Hon. HO KAI—Then it is a remunerative work?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—A sufficient fee should be charged to pay interest.

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—When this was before the Sanitary Board it was looked upon as a very profitable investment.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—It is a very advisable move, especially as it comes from the Sanitary Board, but I think the item of \$90,000 is very high indeed.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—That includes the site. We are taking away the hill side and reclaiming land formerly of no value, in fact we are making land for this purpose.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Then do you abandon the present slaughter-house?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—When the new one is built the old one will be abandoned.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—You would get something for that probably.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—Probably.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Is the work commenced yet?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The work is well advanced.

The CHAIRMAN—Do you think you can spend \$60,000 next year?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—I hope so. The matter has been so long talked about it is very desirable to get it finished, so as to bring in a

revenue. I inherited the project from my predecessor.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—I cannot understand how the necessity can arise of spending such an enormous sum as \$90,000 for the accommodation of sheep and pigs and the slaughter-house adjoining. Look at the people who have to make their living by keeping such depots. Having due regard to proper and humane treatment of the dumb animals they put them in sheds that cost very little. For \$90,000 you might build a palace. I have observed the remark made by the Surveyor-General to the effect that the land upon which these depots are to be constructed has been reclaimed or excavated from the hill, and that that was because it was cheap, but if this sum consists chiefly of the money spent in excavating that land it is very dear indeed. Although I have the greatest respect for the recommendation of the Sanitary Board, it is not desirable, as I view it, to carry out these schemes in a very expensive manner, because the colony cannot afford it, and it ought to be possible to find some other way to meet the wishes of the Sanitary Board and the necessities of the case. To spend \$90,000 for depots of the nature referred to appears to me really very great extravagance.

The CHAIRMAN—By how much would you move that the vote be reduced?

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—For any such work as that I should think the colony could be well supplied by spending \$20,000. It would be an open shed with a good floor so that it could be properly cleansed at all times. I can hardly imagine an open shed costing \$20,000.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—This matter has been the subject of a long correspondence. Some complaints were made of the present state of things and the condition of the slaughter-house, and by instruction of the Government the Sanitary Board took it into consideration. It has been thought the arrangements now to be carried out should be in accordance with those customary in civilized communities, that they should not be in the Chinese manner but according to modern principles of sanitation. In the first place a very large number of animals have to be accommodated, especially an enormous number of pigs, for which sheds have to be erected; and as regards the slaughter-house arrangements, the slaughter-house itself has to be very large, and it is proposed to provide a refrigerating chamber where the meat can be kept until it is sent into the town for sale, and to have the whole place fitted in a perfect manner, besides which the drainage of the slaughter-house will have to be provided for so that no nuisance shall be caused to the neighbourhood. The estimates also include the water supply; it is very important to have an ample water supply to keep the place clean.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—What is the

principal part of the expenditure, the slaughter-house or the depots?

The CHAIRMAN read a passage from the Surveyor-General's report to the effect that the estimates last year included the slaughter-house \$35,000, extension of cattle depot \$14,000, and sheep and pig depot \$25,000, making a total of \$74,000, but a change of site has now been decided upon and more extensive accommodation has been provided.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Is there a motion before the meeting?

The CHAIRMAN—A motion has been made to reduce the amount to \$20,000. Will anyone second that?

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I should like to know what the income is.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I think it might be well to adjourn the consideration of this matter until we get the Sanitary Board's reports and information as to the revenue to be derived.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I am given to understand it is a very remunerative undertaking.

The ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL—On the revenue side of the estimates the income is put down from the slaughter-house and markets as \$75,000.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—There is no reason why the Government should not at any time get more from the slaughter-house, because it can charge more.

Hon. P. RYRIE—If you are going to have a refrigerating chamber I should think you will have to charge more.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—There is the site of the present slaughter-house, which will sell for a considerable sum.

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—I think the income from the markets is \$40,000, which would leave \$35,000 as the income from the slaughter-house.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—In that case I don't think \$90,000 is too much; it gives a very fair return.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK—That is not exactly the point. I fancy the committee is convinced of the necessity of having the most excellent arrangements for the slaughter house from a sanitary point of view, but what does strike one is that the amount is very excessive. The refrigerating chamber must cost a very large sum.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—The proposed new slaughter house will be very different from the present one, which is certainly far too small for the work that goes on there. It will be sufficiently large to allow for an increase of trade; and the same way with the sheep and cattle depots, they will be laid out on such a scale as not only to meet the wants of the present but any probable increase in the future.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I move that this item stand over until further information is received. If it comes to a question of amount I

think it will be very difficult for us to vote if the amount is challenged. If we are called upon to say whether the work ought to cost \$90,000 or \$60,000, I think we ought to have some plans before us and the requirements recommended by the Sanitary Board. It is possible the members of the Committee when they see these may come to the conclusion that although a large sum it is a reasonable one.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—That bears out my contention that votes ought not to be asked for until the plans are decided on and tenders received. The item slaughter-house is put down, but we don't know what we are called upon to vote this large sum for. I think if these matters were brought before the Public Works Committee in the first instance and then before the Finance Committee we would get through the work much better.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—That would be the best plan probably, but this particular vote has been discussed from year to year.

Hon. P. RYRIE—How many pigs are slaughtered? There have been various statements as to the number.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Eighteen hundred, I think.

Hon. HO KAI—1,800 a day?

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Yes.

Hon. HO KAI—Oh! no, not so many, I think.

It was then decided to postpone the vote until the information asked for was received.

#### SLAUGHTER-HOUSE AT KOWLOON.

A vote of \$6,500 for a slaughter-house at Kowloon was agreed to.

#### PUBLIC LAUNDRIES.

The next vote was public laundries, estimated total cost \$25,000; estimated expenditure 1891, \$12,500.

The CHAIRMAN read the following extract from the report of the Surveyor-General on this subject:—"The amount inserted in the estimates (\$25,000) is the same as last year. A committee of the Sanitary Board has recently reported on this subject. If the recommendations of the committee, that all the washing of the city shall be done in public laundries, is carried out, it will probably be necessary to expend a larger amount than that now recommended. Until, however, the establishment of public laundries has advanced beyond the experimental stage, I would

suggest that the expenditure be limited to the amount proposed."

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Would you allow the washermen to carry out their washing just as they do now.

The CHAIRMAN—I cannot say what by-laws the Sanitary Board may pass when the laundries are completed.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I think this item might well be postponed till next year.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL—During the past year this matter occupied a great deal of the time of the Sanitary Board, and it is looked upon by the members as a very pressing matter indeed.

The CHAIRMAN—The Sanitary Board is not responsible for the spending of the money. It is easy to make recommendations.

The ACTING REGISTRAR-GENERAL—I believe we estimated it would return about 7 per cent.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK moved that the item stand over until further information was received.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD seconded.

Carried.

#### PUBLIC LATRINES.

The next item was Public Latrines \$17,000; estimated expenditure to 31st December, 1890, \$7,000; estimated expenditure, 1891, \$10,000.

Hon. HO KAI—I think this also is a recommendation from the Sanitary Board. A special committee was appointed to enquire into the matter, and I happened to be one of the members. I was in favour of the Government letting the thing alone, but granting licences to private individuals to open latrines. If the Government take it up it would excite a lot of antagonism, and in the next place if the latrines were kept in bad order there would be no one to summon for it, but if private individuals are allowed to open latrines they can be made to keep them in a proper and sanitary condition and can be prosecuted if they allow a nuisance. For the Government to build latrines is, I think, a waste of money. There are plenty of private individuals who would be glad to undertake the work if you issue licences, and all the Government has to do, or rather the Sanitary Board, is to send an Inspector round to see that the places are kept in a sanitary condition.

After some discussion it was decided to postpone the vote until papers were laid on the table.

The Committee then adjourned.