

14TH MARCH, 1892.

PRESENT:—

His Excellency the Governor, Sir WILLIAM ROBINSON, K.C.M.G.

Hon. G. T. M. O'BRIEN, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary.

Hon. W. M. GOODMAN, Attorney-General.

Hon. J. H. STEWART-LOCKHART, Registrar-General.

Hon. N. G. MITCHELL-INNES, Colonial Treasurer.

Hon. F. A. COOPER, Surveyor-General.

Hon. W. C. H. HASTINGS, Acting Harbour Master.

Hon. C. P. CHATER.

Hon. Ho KAI.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.

Hon. E. R. BELLIOS.

Mr. A. M. THOMSON, Acting Clerk of Councils.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

THE NEW COLONIAL SECRETARY

HIS EXCELLENCY—The Hon. G. T. M. O'Brien, who has been appointed Colonial Secretary, will now take the oath.

The oath having been taken.

HIS EXCELLENCY said—Gentlemen, before proceeding to the consideration of the "business" and the "orders" of the day I wish to make a few remarks of a purely personal nature. I do not know whether it is customary in this Colony, but I think it is fitting not only in this but in all other colonies that some notice should be taken of the appointment of the second officer in command in the Council and that some welcome should be accorded to him. Mr. O'Brien arrived last week and assumes the duties of his office this day in Council. I have known Mr. O'Brien by reputation since 1867 and in recent years I have watched his progress with considerable interest in view of the possibility of our meeting in some one of Her Majesty's distant colonies in the connection that will hereafter exist between us. Mr. O'Brien comes to us with an unblemished reputation as a most capable, hard working, conscientious officer, and feeling assured he will sustain that reputation in this colony I feel certain I only express the feelings of all the members of this body when I say we accord him accordial welcome. (Applause.)

Hon. C. P. CHATER—It is a pleasant duty for me to supplement the remarks of Your Excellency regarding the appointment and arrival of our new Colonial Secretary. Mr. O'Brien has come to a place which I should say is quite new to him, but he comes with a reputation, and speaking for

the unofficial members we heartily welcome him and we sincerely trust we shall get along well together and harmoniously. Mr. O'Brien will find Hongkong in rather a troubled condition just at present, but let us hope the place may become during his tenure of office what we all wish it to be, a contented and prosperous colony. (Applause.)

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I am exceedingly obliged to your Excellency for the extremely kind manner in which you have introduced me to the Council and to my hon friend on my right, if I may so call him, for the manner in which he has received that introduction. I can only say I will at all times try to do my duty to the best of my ability and I am sure the Council will be as generous as your Excellency and will make allowances for my necessary inexperience until I have had some little time to acquaint myself more thoroughly with the conditions and circumstances of the Colony.

FINANCE.

Three financial minutes were laid on the table recommending small votes and were referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the minutes of the proceedings of the Finance Committee at the last two meetings, and moved that the votes therein recommended be passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I rise, sir, to move that the vote of £3,928 7s. 11d, described as due to the War Department out of the sum of £116,000 contributed by the Colony for defence works, be reduced by one half. I think it is very clear that the manner in which the War Office indented upon the colony, namely, in sterling as well as in dollars, misled the Colonial Government and the result is that a considerable loss has now to be faced, whereas if the rate of exchange had been fixed at the time, or the War Office had given the Colonial Government any intimation that the rate of exchange would be fixed at the rate of the day at a date to be decided hereafter, the Colonial Government could have protected itself against this loss. I therefore think as the War Office has blundered equally with the Colonial Government the War Office should bear half of this vote which is now asked for. I therefore move the reduction of the vote by one half.

The amendment was not seconded.

The original motion was then put and carried, the Hon. T. H. Whitehead being the only dissentient.

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—Returns of Inferior and Subordinate Courts

for 1891; Report on a petition from the Po Leung Kuk or Society for the Protection of Women and Children; Report of the Head Master of Victoria College for 1891.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD gave notice that at the next meeting of Council he would ask the following questions:

"Does the Government intend to give effect to the opinion expressed in the Report (dated Hongkong, 20th February, 1892) of the Commission appointed to consider quarantine and quarantine regulations, by amending that part of the Merchant Shipping Ordinance of 1891 which deals with quarantine, and if so when does it propose to do so?"

"With reference to the Honourable the Acting Harbour Master's Report on the Junk Trade of Hongkong for 1891, dated 11th January last, and more particularising to paragraph 17 thereof, which reads as follows:—'the only controllable causes of the depression of the Junk trade are the suppression of the system of espionage established by the Chinese Customs in Hongkong, and the preservation of the neutrality of British waters,'—will the Government lay on the table copies of the former correspondence referred to in the said report, and any further information or reports in its possession on the subject of the system of espionage established by the Imperial Chinese Customs in Hongkong, &c.?"

THE ACTING HARBOUR MASTER AND THE POSTMASTER-GENERALSHIP.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Having obtained your Excellency's permission I beg to put the following question:—"Whether it is a fact that the Acting Harbour Master, Hon. W. C. H. Hastings, has received the appointment of Acting Postmaster-General during the absence of Mr. Travers?"

HIS EXCELLENCY—I have no hesitation in answering that question. The reports that have been spread on the subject are quite untrue. I have no intention whatever of appointing the Acting Harbour Master to the Post Office. He has the reputation of being a good all round man, but I think if I put him in the Post Office I would be putting a round man in a square hole.

THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL'S TITLE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to give effect to the change in name and style of the Surveyor-General and Surveyor-General's Department." It is not usual in this Council to make a speech on the first reading of a Bill and I only make a few remarks on this occasion to explain that the Secretary of State has approved of the change of the Surveyor-General's title to that of Director of

Public Works, and it is thought advisable a Bill should be passed in order to effect the change in those Ordinances where the officer is called the Surveyor-General and powers are given to him under that title, as some squabble might possibly arise as to whether the Director of Public Works was the same man as the Surveyor-General.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a first time.

LETTERS PATENT BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the second reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the grant in this Colony of Letters Patent for Inventions." The law granting patents in this colony has been regulated for nearly thirty years by Ordinance 24 of 1862. This Ordinance has been from time to time slightly amended by Ordinance 32 of 1889, 2 of 1890, and a short Ordinance passed last year, 8 of 1890, giving the Governor in Council power to make a table of fees. Now although under the Act which has been in force all this time those who had obtained letters patent in England could come here and ask to have protection granted them also in this Colony, and also by another section the assignee of such patent holder could come here and ask that he as assignee should have his rights protected in this colony, there was no provision in the 1862 Ordinance for the grant of an assignment of the rights and protection granted here to another person in this colony. When you had obtained your patent in this colony there was no provision in that Ordinance for your transferring that right to another, and no provision was made for the registration of that assignment if made by some legal document not provided for in the Ordinance. That was rather pressed on the attention of the late Acting Attorney-General from time to time, and in the new Ordinance it is provided for in section 8. It may be well that I should briefly explain this new Ordinance to hon. members to avoid misapprehension. The first six paragraphs are substantially a repetition of the law as it at present stands under Ordinance 14 of 1862. The first new matter that comes in is in section 7. There have been from time to time letters patent granted in this Colony, and they have been kept on file and registered, but there has been no statutory recognition of the register. Section 7 simply acknowledges what exists and provides that there shall be kept at the Colonial Secretary's Office a book called "The Register of Patents" in which shall be entered the names and addresses of all grantees of patents under this Ordinance, notifications of assignments and of transmissions of such patents and of extensions and revocations thereof. Then sub-section 2 of section 7 provides that the "Register of Patents" shall be *primâ facie* evidence of all matters directed or authorised by the Ordinance to be inserted therein; and sub-section 3 provides that all records hitherto

used shall be deemed part of the Register of Patents and kept therewith. Then comes section 8, which I think is the *raison d'etre* of the new Ordinance. Where any person becomes entitled by assignment or otherwise to a patent for which letters have been granted in this colony the Governor in Council shall cause the name of such person to be entered as the proprietor of the patent in the Register of Patents; and the person for the time being entered on the Register of Patents as the proprietor of a patent shall, subject to any rights appearing from such register, or to any prior title duty recorded prior to the passing of this Ordinance, and subject to all equities affecting the same, shall have power absolutely to assign, grant licences as to or otherwise deal with the same. Section 9 provides that the Register shall be open at all convenient times. Then Section 10 is intended to gave effect to a suggestion made originally. I think, by Sir George Phillippo, a former Chief Justice, to the effect that the Register should be transferred to the Supreme Court. There seem to be difficulties in the way just at present, as at the Supreme Court they have not the staff or the room for it so we keep on the old system, but there is provision made for the transfer at some future time if thought convenient, that is to say, it shall be lawful for the Governor to direct that the Register be transferred from the Colonial Secretary's office to such place and be placed under the custody of such officer as he thinks fit. Then Section 11 gives the Governor in Council power to make rules for the better carrying out of the Ordinance. That power was given in the Ordinance of last year, but it is incorporated here for the sake of having one Ordinance. Section 12 simply repeals the acts incorporated with this Ordinance. Schedules *A* and *B* are the same as before and schedule *C* contains the table of fees, which are the same as those contained in notification 369 of the 29th August, 1891, with the addition of a small fee where the assignment is registered in this colony. This is really the old Ordinance with the amending Ordinances incorporated and an addition in the shape of power of assignment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a second time.

The Bill was then committed and reported with only verbal amendments.

FEES FOR DUPLICATE NIGHT PASSES.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I have the honour to move the second reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to make further provision as to the issue of Night Passes for Chinese," By section 32 of Ordinance 13 of 1888 it is laid down that the Colonial Secretary may in his discretion issue annual passes to residents and certain special passes to non-resident Chinese, and section 42 provides that the form shall be as in schedule *B*. If you turn to schedule *B*. you will find that the Colonial Secretary's signature had to be given. That was passed on the 21st March, 1888. On the

14th February of the same year there had been passed No. 5 of 1888, called the Official Signatures Fees Ordinance, and by that Ordinance where the Colonial Secretary's signature is required to give effect to certificates and so on \$2 are to be paid as a fee to go into the public treasury. Whether it was the intention that fees should be charged for night passes or not I do not know. The practice had been not to charge a fee for the issue of an annual or special pass, but the attention of the Colonial Secretary was drawn to the Official Signatures Fees Ordinance, as these passes were not exempted and his signature was required, and the Regulation of Chinese Ordinance, which provides for the issue of the passes, was passed deliberately two months after the Ordinance requiring a fee of \$2 for the Colonial Secretary's signature. Unless something was done therefore it would be the duty of the Government to charge \$2 for these passes. This matter was brought up specially at a time when a great number of passes were to be issued, at the beginning of the year, and it was thought better that a short Ordinance should be passed stating that from the 1st January no fees should be charged. For the quarterly passes issued by the Police no fees are charged and the question does not arise, because there is no question of the Colonial Secretary's signature. But although no fees were charged either for the original annual, special, or quarterly passes, yet if the holders lost them or happened to give them away to some one to whom they might be convenient it was thought right they should pay for duplicates. It had been the practice to charge a fee of \$1 for a duplicate of a quarterly pass issued by the Police, but for duplicates of annual or special passes issued by the Colonial Secretary no fees were charged. If you lost a pass which was good for three months you had to pay a dollar to get another one, but if you lost a pass good for a whole year you got another for nothing. Clearly that was not in accordance with sense and some provision was required to meet it, so it is now provided that though the passes are in the first instance issued free of cost if through negligence or otherwise they are lost there shall be paid for a duplicate of a quarterly pass \$2 and for a duplicate of an annual or special pass \$4. Unless the holders lose their passes it will not be necessary for them to pay anything at all.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—I have much pleasure in seconding this Bill because I feel sure it embodies a principle which must commend itself to all right thinking people. The system of night passes has been in force since 18??7 and until last year worked smoothly. Last year a legal discovery was made which has just been explained by the Attorney-General to the effect that for any pass required to be signed by the Colonial Secretary a fee must
b e c h a r g e d .

When that discovery was made and it was decided that the fee should be paid I made a representation to the effect that it would be unfair to charge the Chinese for the privilege of going about at night when they themselves for the public good submitted to the restriction of having to take out night passes when they do move about. The representations made at that time were not, I suppose, considered of sufficient weight and some fees were actually charged. Your Excellency arrived just at the end of the year, at the time when annual passes are renewable in large numbers. The Chinese then seemed to become more fully aware that fees were being charged and they made representations to me on the subject, which I forwarded to your Excellency. I understand that it is due to those representations that the present Bill is being brought forward, which embodies the principle that the Chinese, who submit to this restriction in order to prevent bad characters being abroad at night, should not be required to pay for that restriction when partially removed by the grant of a night pass. With regard to the question of charging for duplicate passes I referred to the Acting Captain Superintendent of Police for statistics and I found that during 1891 the number of quarterly passes issued was 18,836 and only 54 duplicates. I think that is a good sign of the very great care taken by the Chinese of night passes, and seeing this care is exercised I think it is a question for the consideration of the Council whether they should be rendered liable to a penalty of four dollars if they lose their pass. Four dollars to many of these persons, who are thoroughly respectable in every way but not always very rich, would be rather a severe tax. I would suggest to the Council whether that clause might not be reconsidered.

Hon. HO KAI—After having heard the explanations of the Attorney-General and also the Registrar-General, I do not intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill, simply on account of the first clause which provides that no fee shall be charged on the issue of the original passes. It is, however, my intention to oppose to the uttermost clauses 2 and 3, in which a charge of \$?? is made for duplicate yearly night passes and \$2 for a duplicate quarterly pass. I will reserve my arguments and remarks until we have passed the second reading.

The Bill was read a second time and the Council went into Committee.

Upon clause 2.

Hon. HO KAI said—I beg to move as an amendment that instead of the fee for a duplicate annual night pass being \$?? as stated in the section the amount be 50 cents.

HIS EXCELLENCY—What was the fee before?

THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL—There was no fee in the case of annual or special passes, but a fee of \$1 in the case of quarterly passes.

Hon. HO KAI—The reason I shall give for opposing it, I think, will be quite satisfactory to the members of the Council. First of all we must consider that the fee is charged, not for any privilege granted to the Chinese, but is a charge for something which the law makes compulsory upon them, not because they are bad men themselves but in order to prevent any crime being committed in the colony. Now you want them not only to observe this restriction but at the same time to pay a heavy fee if they should happen through circumstances or accidents over which they have no control to lose their pass; that is, you ask them to pay a fee of \$4 for a piece of paper to place them in a position to keep the law. It must appear to everyone that that is not a right thing to do. If you impose a restriction in the nature of class legislation, which this undoubtedly is, you must take care that you afford those who are affected by it every opportunity of keeping the law, and not put any obstacle in their way. The Attorney-General seemed to think that the Chinese have been in the habit of giving away their passes to others and then getting duplicates. I can contradict that most emphatically. It is a thing which may exist in the hon. gentleman's imagination but certainly does not exist in fact. The passes are not transferable and there is some difficulty in obtaining them. Not everyone who applies gets a pass. He has to apply for it through some respectable shop and whoever gets the pass is responsible for it. Then as to the argument as to the \$4 being a small sum, \$4 to an ordinary Chinaman is four times, not to say ten times, what it would be to any European, and if that sum is charged there will be a large number of people who will not have the means to keep the law. Now I would ask hon. members of Council, is it right that a law should be passed subjecting a section of the people—and that the largest section—to restrictions of their rights, telling them they cannot go out after nine o'clock without a pass, and subjecting them to the trouble and inconvenience of getting a pass, and always remembering to carry it with them, and subjecting them to fines if they forget it and to the inconvenience of being taken up to the Police Station in the middle of the night—I ask is it right that a law of that kind should be accompanied by a penalty for the hundred and one accidents which may occur to cause the loss of the pass. In principle I say it is exceedingly wrong, and I hope the Government will not press this clause as it stands. The night pass, I believe, was established in 1857. The relations at that time between England and China were strained and the Viceroy at Canton was issuing proclamations offering \$100 for the head of every foreigner. That is now of course quite a thing of the past. The colony has developed, the relations between the Government and the governed are of the most cordial kind, and the

time may perhaps have come to do away with these regulations altogether, as has been done in Macao; although at the same time Chinese are not feeling the burden of this law and are not pressing to have it done away with, because they leave it in the hands of the Government as a protective measure in time of need. Therefore they submit to it, but I think it will be a great mistake to make it press hardly upon them and make them feel that they are being treated differently from the residents of other nationalities. The Japanese, the Portuguese, and the Indians have not to take out night passes. It is only the Chinese who have to do so. The only reason is that we want to prevent crime, and the criminal class comes from the mainland. It is, I think, a mistake to stir up that feeling now by imposing a heavy fee. Therefore I propose that the amount be reduced from \$4 to twenty-five cents or half a dollar.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I rise to support what has just fallen from the hon. member who represents the Chinese. I think it would be very wicked of this Council to impose the penalty which is proposed. I cannot but regard it as most unjust. Rather than harass the Chinese with penalties like this I think it is the duty of the Government to do everything that the Government can to encourage the Chinese to come to Hongkong. It is due almost entirely to the Chinese that the Colony has been so prosperous in the past, and there is no doubt that this regulation in regard to night passes for the Chinese is class legislation, undoubtedly so, and I think the less troublesome it is made for the Chinese the better it will be for all concerned. I have very much pleasure in supporting what has fallen from the hon. gentleman.

His EXCELLENCY—Out of 18,000 passes how many do you say were lost?

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—Fifty-four.

His EXCELLENCY—I understand the object of these clauses is to prevent the improper transfer of passes from one person to another. Perhaps the object would be attained by altering the words "lost or destroyed" to "transferred."

Hon. HO KAI—The law already prohibits the passes being transferred.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—I feel certain that in the case of annual passes transferring is very unusual, if it ever occurs at all. I know from my own experience that the holders are most careful of them in every way. Most of the men are known to me personally. They come to me themselves every year in order to have the passes renewed.

His EXCELLENCY—How many of these annual passes are there?

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—354 and 27 special passes.

His EXCELLENCY—Who are the quarterly passes taken out by?

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—By the Chinese shopkeepers

and residents.

His EXCELLENCY—Why don't they take out annual passes?

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—The number of annual passes is restricted. They are only issued to a limited number of residents in the colony.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—It seems to me that we have somewhat digressed from the special point we are discussing. We have drifted into arguments as to whether the Chinese should have night passes at all. That was settled long ago. In 1857 it was settled and in 1888 it was again definitely decided. We are not at present discussing whether that clause of Ordinance 13 of 1888 should be amended. I am not responsible for the law passed in 1888. The object of the present Ordinance is to prevent what is the result of the Official Signatures Fees Ordinance, and which escaped notice at the time. That law requires the payment of \$2. To prevent the hardship of that this first clause is put in, which provides that no fee shall be charged on the issue of an original pass, but at the same time the Bill makes it rather more severe in the case of duplicates. Is there any occasion for a man to come for duplicates? Far be it for me to say that all those who lose their passes are fraudulent, but it is always a good thing to put a premium on not losing official documents. It does not seem to me to be very hard. It is a mere question of whether you wish to charge anything, and if so how much. This sum was inserted because I understood that was the intention of the Government—to make people careful not to lose their passes. The hon. member (the Registrar-General) now gets up in his place, and says he thinks no fee should be charged. I should have been much more pleased to have received a private communication of that kind. It is somewhat embarrassing to have one member of the Government getting up to oppose a Government measure. I have no personal feeling in the matter at all, but it seems to me that if a pass is lost some fee ought to be charged.

His EXCELLENCY—I am quite willing to consent to \$2 being inserted at the end of clause 2 and \$1 at the end of clause 3.

Hon. HO KAI—I think \$2 is too much, because \$2 to the Chinese is really a great deal. Perhaps your Excellency has not been here long enough to know the value of money among the Chinese. I think \$1 would be quite sufficient.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I rise to support the amendment of the hon. member and to endorse the remarks made by him, and also those made by the Registrar-General. After their remarks I have very little to say, but it seems to me that \$4 is a very large amount for the Chinese to have to pay, more especially as heretofore there has been no charge whatever for duplicate passes. If the charge is necessary for the

r e a s o n s

given by the Attorney-General the amount proposed by the hon. member who represents the Chinese is a quite large enough sum. I have therefore very much pleasure in seconding his amendment that the sum be reduced to \$1.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—Perhaps the Council may not be aware that these quarterly night passes are taken out by a very much poorer class than that referred to in section 2, and by the police regulations \$1 has been payable for duplicate quarterly night passes. The special or annual passes are taken out by Chinese gentlemen who, as the Registrar-General says, are personally known to him, and from the two years I spent in the Registrar-General's office I may say the gentlemen who get them are perfectly well able to pay \$2, in fact you might describe it as a mere fleabite to them. The Council ought not to run away with the idea that it is the coolie who is earning twenty cents a day who is to be asked for \$2.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—It is as a question of principle I put it, not as a question of finance—

His EXCELLENCY—Oh, we don't want to make anything out of it.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—As to the remarks of the Attorney-General, the hon. gentleman has been in possession of my views for eight months.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL then formally moved the amendment of the clause by the insertion of \$1 instead of \$4

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Carried.

Clause 3, which provided that in the case of a duplicate quarterly pass the fee should be \$2, was then considered.

Hon. HO KAI—I move that the fee be reduced to fifty cents. As I understand \$1 has been charged hitherto, but on what authority I do not know, and it seems to me that of the 18,000 who have taken out their passes a large number may have lost them, and not applied for duplicates in consequence of this high fee, and that they might be arrested by the police for want of a night pass. Section 3 includes all the poorer class in the Colony who have to go out at night. Now is it right to charge them anything because they have been so unfortunate as to lose their pass? I think a charge of fifty cents in this case would be more than sufficient to make the majority of them very careful.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I rise to second what has been proposed by the hon member who represents the Chinese.

His EXCELLENCY—Am I to understand that this will amount to a reduction?

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—Yes, a reduction in the charge made by order of the Governor in Council.

Hon. HO KAI—I was not aware of the fact at all.

His EXCELLENCY—No objection seems to have been raised.

Hon. HO KAI—No, because it is not very generally known.

His EXCELLENCY—Then it cannot hurt them very much if they don't know anything about it.

Hon. HO KAI—No, but there may have been cases in

which the passes were lost and not renewed on account of this fee.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—The fact is \$1 has been charged for duplicate quarterly passes and no one has raised any objection. It is another question whether \$1 should be paid for a duplicate annual pass. The Registrar-General took the point that because the notification in the *Government Gazette* said the dollar was to be paid to the Captain Superintendent of Police it did not apply to annual passes which are issued by the Colonial Secretary. The result of that would be that a poor man would have to pay a dollar and a much richer man would get his duplicate pass for nothing. To prevent that obvious absurdity I was instructed to put these words in the Bill. Now it is proposed to strike out that dollar to which no objection was taken. I don't care personally what it is, but I don't seek popularity by asking that nothing should be paid by anybody when you have a Treasury to support.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—It seems there were only 54 duplicate night passes last year, so that by reducing the fee there would be a loss to the Treasury of \$27 annually.

His EXCELLENCY—As a logical conclusion we will insert 50 cents.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL then moved that the clause be passed with the reduction of the fee from \$1 to fifty cents.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Carried.

The remaining clause was passed without discussion and the Bill was reported with the above amendments.

AN AMENDING BILL.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I have the honour to move the second reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend Ordinances No 3 of 1860, No. 15 of 1885, and No. 17 of 1891 in relation to the power of the Governor in Council to grant certain licences." No opposition, I take it, will be offered if I move that the Council resolve itself into committee upon the Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the Bill was read a second time and the Council went into Committee.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I may say that there may have been very good reasons in the past for making it necessary that licences should be obtained from the Governor in Council, but it is not now necessary, for instance, that the Governor should summon an Executive Council to grant a pawnbroker's licence or a licence to shoot wild birds or to enable a man to carry a gun. These amendments are to prevent the

inconvenience of calling the Council together for such purposes. I propose that the three clauses as read be adopted.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

The clauses were passed, and the Bill was reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

His EXCELLENCY—I do not think it will be necessary to call the Council together until this day fortnight. The Council will now sit as a Finance Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held immediately afterwards, the Colonial Secretary presiding.

The CHAIRMAN—The first vote is as follows:—The Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$180 for the salary of a watchman to act also as interpreter to the Colonial Veterinary Surgeon at \$20 per month, from 1st April next.

The ACTING ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I may point out that this vote was strongly recommended by the Sanitary Board and is now submitted in accordance with their wishes. It was found necessary that the Colonial Veterinary Surgeon should have a man who could act as interpreter as well as watchman. I propose that the vote be passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Will this man also inspect the market and slaughter house?

The CHAIRMAN—Yes.

The REGISTRAR -GENERAL—This man was strongly recommended by the Sanitary Board. In addition to being an interpreter, he may have to act for the other watchmen

sometimes who may be away temporarily through sickness.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—The matter has been looked into and the request was thought to be a reasonable one.

Vote agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN — The Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$250 for expenses in connection with the Quarantine Commission, viz:—Honorarium to the Secretary, \$200; shorthand writer, for taking a verbatim note of evidence, \$50—total, \$250. I don't suppose there is any objection to this

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—No, it's very cheap work.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL—I move that it be agreed to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Vote passed.

The CHAIRMAN — The Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$192 to cover an increase of \$96 per annum from the 1st January, 1891, to the second Chinese assistant in the Victoria College, whose office was accidentally omitted from the scheme for a general increase of salaries sanctioned by the Secretary of State's Despatch No. 110 of June, 1890. This vote arises from a little inadvertence by which it was omitted from the scheme. It has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved that it be passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Vote passed.

This concluded the meeting.
