

30TH JANUARY, 1891.

PRESENT :—

Hon. F. FLEMING, C.M.G., Colonial Secretary.
Hon. W. M. GOODMAN, Attorney-General.
Hon. W. M. DEANE, Captain Superintendent of Police.
Hon. S. BROWN, Surveyor-General.
Hon. J. H. STEWART-LOCKHART, Registrar-General.
Hon. C. P. CHATER.
Hon. J. J. KESWICK.
Hon. HO KAI.
Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.
Mr. A. M. THOMSON, Clerk of Councils.

THE GOVERNOR'S ABSENCE.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Gentlemen, I have to express the regret of His Excellency the Governor that on account of indisposition he is unable to be present at the meeting of Council to-day. Under clause 17 of the Royal Instructions of 1888 I have therefore to replace him.

THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S SEAT.

The PRESIDENT—Gentlemen, some time ago the Queen appointed Mr. Stewart-Lockhart as a member of this Council during the time he holds the office of Registrar-General. He has not been able yet, by reason of his absence in Europe, to be admitted as a member of this Council or to take the necessary oath. Therefore he will take the necessary oath to-day.

Hon. J. H. STEWART-LOCKHART then took the oath accordingly.

FINANCE.

Two financial minutes were laid on the table and were referred to the Finance Committee.

NATURALIZATION.

A Bill entitled an Ordinance for the naturalization of Edward Jean Max Paquin was read a first time, and Bills for the naturalization of

Lai Sui Tong and Choi Wai otherwise Choi Tsun were passed through their remaining stages.

THE BANKRUPTCY BILL.

With reference to this Bill, which stood on the orders for Committee, the ATTORNEY-GENERAL said it was naturally a Bill which would require a good deal of consideration. It involved a great many details, and he was very loth to inflict it upon the whole of the members of Council. If it was agreeable to the Council he would move that it be referred to the Law Committee, consisting of the Attorney-General and four other members. He read clause 41 of the Standing Rules and Orders, which provides that Bills referred to a Standing Committee may be dealt with as if they had been considered in Committee of the whole Council. He had in his recollection the length of time they spent over the Magistrates Bill, when the rule in question, which was a very salutary one, was not in existence.

The PRESIDENT—This Bankruptcy Bill is no doubt a very important measure, and one that requires to be dealt with with every care. It is a Bill that all members of Council, as well as those on the Law Committee, would probably like to know as much about as they possibly can. The Attorney-General has proposed that it be referred to the Law Committee to be examined by that committee and reported on. To that course there can be no objection at all; on the contrary I think a Bill of this description can be more satisfactorily examined by the Law Committee than in the first instance by a committee of the by a committee of the whole Council. But notwithstanding the clause of the standing orders the Attorney-General has referred to, hon. members will bear in mind that after the Bill has been considered by the committee and

after the report has been brought up it will still be open to any member of the Council, if he thinks the Bill is one that ought to be gone through clause by clause by committee of the whole Council as well as by the Law Committee, to move that it be committed for that purpose, The Bill has been some time before the public, and it is very possible every member has already perused it and given some attention to it, and under these circumstances it may be unnecessary that the Council should go through it clause by clause hereafter in addition to the attention it will receive from the Law Committee. I only mention these facts because the Bill is one of considerable importance and ought not to be passed unless every member is satisfied it has had the care and attention devoted to it that it ought to have.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I don't know whether I am in order, but I understand a little time ago a new bankruptcy law was passed in the Straits Settlements. Would the Government furnish the members with a copy of that Bill for their guidance and information?

The PRESIDENT—How long is it since the Bill was passed?

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I don't know exactly, but I believe it is not a very long time ago.

The PRESIDENT—I am not aware that a copy has been sent to this Government, but if such is not the case no doubt it would be very desirable to have one. However, that need not prevent this Ordinance being referred now to the Law Committee. It will probably take some little time before they can send up their report, and in the meantime enquiries can be made, and the Straits Government, I am sure, will be glad to send us a copy of their Ordinance. I will mention the matter to the Governor, and I have no doubt he will be willing to ask for the Ordinance and to wait until such Ordinance is sent before finally disposing of this Bill.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I think also it might be desirable if the Bill were submitted to the Judges of the Supreme Court and also to the Chamber of Commerce for any observations they may wish to make.

The PRESIDENT—I do not suppose the Governor would have any objection to forward a copy of the Ordinance to the Chamber of Commerce. I don't altogether know whether it is a matter the Chamber of Commerce would wish to offer an opinion upon. However, I will mention to the Governor the opinion that has been thrown out by the hon. member. As regards the Judges of the Supreme Court, if they can give any information I am sure the Governor will have no objection to ask them to consider the Bill; but perhaps they may have done so already. The question now is that the Bill be referred to the Law Committee.

Agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Under rule 41 it is necessary that all the members of the standing committee should be present, otherwise the Ordinance has to be read clause by clause in Council, so I would ask that all the members of the committee should attend.

The PRESIDENT—I don't remember who the members of the committee are, but no doubt the importance of the information just given will be apprehended by them.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PRESIDENT—I believe, gentlemen, that is all the business before the Council to-day. I cannot quite say when the Governor would like the next meeting of Council to be held, but by the rules it is necessary we should adjourn to a certain day. Therefore I propose the Council adjourn until next Monday week. Monday being the regular day of meeting, and if the Governor desires to fix any other day it is always open to him to do so.

The CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE—Monday week is a public holiday, being China New Year.

The PRESIDENT—Better say Monday fortnight, then If the Governor desires to have a meeting between now and then he can do so.

The Council then adjourned until the 16th February.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held after the Council meeting, the Colonial Secretary in the chair.

COLLECTION OF CIVIL HOSPITAL BILLS.

The CHAIRMAN said the first minute to be considered was a recommendation to vote a sum of \$240 as an allowance to the Steward of the Civil Hospital for collecting Hospital bills, at the rate of \$20 per month during the current year. It would be recollected a similar vote to this was asked for until the end of last year. Formerly these bills were collected by the Treasury, and an officer of that department received \$10 a month for collecting them; but during the course of last year it came to his knowledge that the fees were collected in a very unsatisfactory manner. The matter was brought before the Council, and the Council voted \$20 a month, that was an extra \$10, to the Hospital steward, who undertook to collect the fees. He might mention that since that arrangement came into force the fees had been collected in a very satisfactory manner. During the two months and fourteen days of last year during which the arrangement was in force the steward collected no less than \$3,767, and the Colonial Surgeon had mentioned that in all probability the sum of \$1,300 would be collected every month. Under these circumstances the Governor considered it was certainly worth while to ask the Council to continue the arrangement. These were the facts of the case

and the circumstances under which the Finance Committee was asked to recommend this vote.

The vote was agreed to.

QUARTERS FOR TEACHERS.

The CHAIRMAN said the next vote asked for was one of \$300, being allowance in lieu of quarters to six teachers of Government schools. The matter was a little more complicated than the last one they had to deal with, and he would shortly explain how it stood. It appeared that last year \$84 were allowed to certain teachers in lieu of quarters. In submitting the estimates for this year Dr. Eitel proposed this amount should

be increased to \$100. This was not inserted in the estimates, inasmuch as the \$84 paid last year was taken from the amount voted for rent. The amount voted for rent this year was \$2,124. Dr. Eitel reported that this amount would not be sufficient out of which to pay the amount it was now proposed to give to the teachers in lieu of quarters, and he had proposed that \$300 should be asked for. It did not necessarily follow that that sum would be expended, the only amount required at the present moment being \$81, the sum actually paid last year out of rent.

The vote was agreed to.