

19TH MARCH, 1891.

PRESENT :—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR G. WILLIAM  
DES VOEUX, K.C.M.G.

Hon. W. M. DEANE, C.M.G., Acting Colonial  
Secretary.

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

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

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

Hon. S. BROWN, Surveyor-General.

Hon. P. RYRIE.

Hon. C. P. CHATER.

Hon. HO KAI.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table a despatch from the Secretary of State respecting the military contribution, dated 13th February 1891, also a report on the progress of works in the Water and Drainage Department for 1890.

FINANCE.

Several minutes by His Excellency recommending various votes of money were laid on the table and referred to the Finance Committee.

THE MILITARY CONTRIBUTION.

The Council resumed consideration of the vote in Finance Committee of \$123,870 as the second moiety of the military contribution for 1890.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Before hon. members express their opinions with regard to this vote I think it well to say a few more words to express more clearly what on the last occasion in my remarks may have been somewhat obscure. It appears to me, disregarding altogether the mistake made by the Imperial Government in giving the reasons for this additional vote, the question of whether the additional contribution asked for is just and right depends on the answer to two questions which are quite distinct and ought not to be confused. The first is, having regard to the relative interests of the mother country and the colony in the object of expenditure, is the proportion which we are now asked to pay, even with the additional contribution, greater than it should be with reference to the Imperial contribution? That is the first question. The next is, (even if that question is answered in the negative, namely that it is not unduly great.) Is the amount we are asked to pay greater than we are able to pay without serious injury to our prosperity? and that, even from the very narrowest point of view of the War Department, means injury to our capacity to pay any contribution at all in the future. Now I do not think it will require much consideration on the part of the Council to give a negative answer to the first question. It is true there is, so far as I know, no part of this expenditure which the Imperial Government would not have to incur for the defence of trade in the East and this coaling station, if we were not here at all, nevertheless inasmuch as the incidental effect of the expenditure is our defence and the defence of our, if relatively small, at the same time, actually large interests in that trade, I cannot think the amount we are called upon to bear as compared with the whole cost, is to be an unduly large one, when you bear in mind that as compared with the whole cost at present we contribute only one-fourth. Even making a large allowance, as I have always done, for the land occupied by the military, for which no rent or rates are paid, it is a very small proportion of the total cost even of the soldiers alone, apart altogether from the fleet, for which we pay nothing. I question very much whether anyone after giving impartial consideration to the matter would say, with this in view, that the amount asked is an unfair one. Then, however, comes the question as to our capacity to pay. Now, the answer to this question to my mind seems more doubtful. After full consideration of the matter, I have no doubt whatever that one can conscientiously return the answer that we are able to pay without serious injury. At the same time I say so only for the present moment. The case may in the course of a few years be very different. and as this question may become of great importance in the future, especially if fresh demands, such as have been hinted at, are made upon us, I feel it necessary to dwell more on this

subject than I otherwise should have done if the vote were going to be a finality and if we could guarantee the position of the colony to remain always as it is at present. Unfortunately we are not told that this vote is by any means a final demand nor are we able to guarantee with any certainty that the prosperity of the Colony will remain as it is. Therefore consideration of this question is a matter of great importance to the future—possibly to the very early future, though I hope a distant one. At all events we have it not indirectly hinted that future demands will be made on us and therefore this question ought not to be left out of consideration. Now this Colony unquestionably is regarded by the outside world as very wealthy relatively to its area and population; the figures of its trade impress the outside world largely, and very justly. At the same time we have to bear in mind this, that our wealth is almost entirely dependent, exclusive of the article of sugar and a comparatively small allowance for local consumption, on a trade which is more liable to be affected by changes in condition than one like that of the United Kingdom which is concerned in products grown or manufactured on the spot. Ours is the trade rather of a distributing centre and the greater part of the articles in which our trade is concerned are exported from the colony in the same condition in which they are imported. Now it requires but very little consideration to see that this trade is of a far more delicate constitution so to speak than one like that of the United Kingdom, which is concerned in products grown and manufactured on the spot, a trade which must always continue in the absence of conditions which we can hardly contemplate. If that fact is not self-evident, as I think on consideration it is, we have in another part of the world, and within the last twenty-five years, a startling instance of it truth. The island of St. Thomas in the West Indies twenty-five years ago was a distributing centre for the trade of the West Indian islands and the Spanish main; to-day it is little less than a depôt for the supply of coal and other articles to passing steamers; its functions as a distributing centre are gone, and its trade in that capacity past. I shall not enter into particulars of the causes of this—it would take too long—but the immediate cause is that merchants on the mainland and on the islands, who used to deal with St. Thomas as a distributing centre, now find it cheaper to obtain their supplies direct and consequently the function of St. Thomas are gone. Now though our position with regard to the neighbouring empire of China, which compels all vessels going to China from other countries, with the exception of America and Japan, and all vessels coming from those countries with the exceptions of America and Japan, to pass close to our doors puts us in a much better position than St. Thomas, and exactly the same circumstances which

injured St. Thomas would not affect us—of course I mention St. Thomas as an analagous instance, I am not comparing the trade of Hongkong with the trade of St. Thomas; the trade of Hongkong is of enormously greater importance, but nevertheless it is of the same kind, and St. Thomas was an exceedingly flourishing place—I say though our position geographically is so favourable with regard to trade that the same circumstance would not affect us, nevertheless this is an instance which shows you how easily us a trade of this nature can be affected very seriously. At the present moment we are suffering largely not merely from over speculation, but to a considerable extent from three causes which hit us extremely hard. One is the restrictive legislation against Chinese in Australia and America; the second is the increased cultivation of the poppy in China, which diminishes our opium imports; and the third is the decline in the export of Chinese tea owing to the competition of India and Ceylon. There can be no question but that these three circumstances have hit us very hard. At the same time I am glad to see from the returns of tonnage last year that apparently an increase of trade in other directions has afforded very considerable compensation. So far, the tonnage has not fallen off, it has even increased. Nevertheless we do not yet know the full effects of these three circumstances. We still have, for instance, considerable trade with America and Australia. There are a number of Chinese in those countries who cannot be driven out at once, and a certain trade is still maintained on their behalf; so that at present we do not know quite the full effect of this restrictive legislation. Nor do we know the full effect that may be caused by the decline in the trade in tea and opium. So that it is quite possible—though for the reasons indicated elsewhere I do not think it probable—that our present capacity to pay this amount may be very much affected in the course of a few years, and what we are able to pay now easily may in the course of a few years become an intolerable hardship. Unless circumstances alter, such as increase in manufactures, which I have always hoped and believe will take place, I think it highly possible that there might be a very great difficulty in paying this heavy amount and I think this possibility would become provability if increased taxation was to enhance alhously the cost of the distribution to which I have referred. I have mentioned this rather as a question for the future. I do not believe, nor do I think members of Council believe, that at the present moment we have anything but the fullest capacity to pay this amount, supposing it to be just and fair, nor do I believe that hon. members if they consider it calmly will look upon the amount as otherwise than just and fair. Had there been none of these complications, had the demand been made upon us on this ground, that it was only a fair

amount to pay for benefits received, I doubt very much whether there would have been any opposition on the part of this Council, or, at all events, any opposition on the part of the majority even of the unofficial members. I gather, however, that the objections to this vote depend almost entirely on the unfortunate representations made when this vote was first urged upon our attention. There can be no doubt whatever, looking at the despatch, that an increase in the number of troops was put in the foreground of the reasons for asking for this increased contribution. There can be no doubt whatever of that, and therefore it is all the more unfortunate that that promise has not been fulfilled, but I feel that the demand made is a just one apart altogether from this promise, and I trust I have given reasons such as on consideration you will think valid for believing it to be a just one. It appears to me that the failure in the fulfilment of this apparent promise has nothing to do with the question as to whether this sum should be voted or not. There appears a very good reason for complaint; if you desire it, for strong complaint, in respect of the failure to fulfil a promise, but not for refusing a vote which is, in itself, just, and which you would have unquestionably voted but for this unfortunate mistake. To put the matter in an abstract form apart altogether from the parties concerned: if A is receiving a benefit from B, for which a certain sum is fairly due to B, is he less morally bound to pay that debt to B because of a supererogatory promise of increased benefit made by C which has not been fulfilled? I say he is equally bound in spite of that promise. He would be so bound even if that promise were made by B, but still more is he bound when that promise was not made by B, but by his agent for whom B was in no way responsible. In this case the beneficiary is not the British Government but the British taxpayer, and because a promise was held cut to us, or rather not exactly a promise, but an inducement was held out to us by the British Government and that inducement proves to be fallacious, we are none the less morally bound to pay the British taxpayers what is justly their due. That is the view I take very strongly, and these being my reasons I can conscientiously say that I recommend this vote without reluctance. I have sketched as fairly as I possibly can my reasons for believing that additional demands in the future may be very dangerous, and my reasons also for believing that the demand for this amount which can be borne now may possibly become injurious in the future, but considering the matter at the present time I cannot help thinking we not only have to pay but we ought to pay this amount now, I have nothing further to say, but I shall be glad to hear what course hon. members have decided upon.

Hon. P. RYRIE—Your Excellency, the un-

official members have fully considered what fell from your Excellency at the last meeting and also the other questions connected with this demand and they cannot satisfy their minds that the demand unaccompanied by the fulfilment of the promise made is a just one. It is very well to say that this colony can pay the amount, but we know that all public works have been stopped, and if we are to be hampered by this demand I do not see how it can be said that we are able to pay it. We would have to pay it by cutting off something else. If the home Government had kept faith with the colony we should probably have screwed it out, but we should have had a certain *quid pro quo*. We should have had an increased Garrison and an increased feeling of security. Now we have not got that. We have got a comparatively weak garrison for the forts they have to man, and unless the Navy assist us in the event of this colony being attacked we should be in a very bad way. My own idea is that we should have their assistance, that they would feel bound to come here, whatever they may say outside, if there was any fear of an attack on the colony; of course we should probably not have the whole squadron in the Harbour, but they would give us as many ships as would assist the forts. I may mention that since the last meeting the unofficial members have had in their hand correspondence, despatches, and minutes from the members of Council at Singapore, and it is with great pleasure that we see that the official members there have taken the part of the ratepayers against the Colonial office. Who pays them their salary? The ratepayers of the colony, and they should be their primary consideration. The view of the unofficial members here is that they should not pass this vote, and in that I am happy to say they are backed up by Singapore and Ceylon. Unfortunately we are not in the position of Mauritius, where the unofficial members have a majority in the Council. They used their power and reduced the vote forthwith. Unfortunately we are not in that position and the only thing we can do is to use what arguments we have against the vote. If this vote is passed to-day by means of the official vote it is proposed to call a public meeting and petition Her Majesty the Queen. I think from that public meeting it will appear what the feeling of the public is in connection with this matter. I think there will be no uncertain sound from that meeting; it will clearly and distinctly state that there has been a breach of faith committed with this colony and we have had no explanation of it. I do not know what the despatch laid on the table this afternoon contains; I have not read it. I do not know whether it contains any explanation.

HIS EXCELLENCY—It does not.

Hon. P. RYRIE—I think, with your Excellency, that this question should be dealt with with great care. The unofficial members have

devoted great care to it and they can arrive at but one opinion, that if they vote this £40,000 the Imperial Government should do its share.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Sir, I have endeavoured to give due consideration to the remarks and the appeal made at the last meeting of Council to hon. members not to place your Excellency in the painful position of being obliged to do your duty in face of their views, and I have also listened with great attention to what your Excellency has said to-day, but I feel compelled to emphatically oppose this heavy money vote on its merits. Whether £40,000 would be a fair, reasonable, and just military contribution from the colony is not the question before the Council. The question before the Council is a re-vote and the increased military contribution as demanded in March, 1890, and still demanded, on the ground that in the opinion of the Imperial Government circumstances render it necessary to increase the garrison in Hongkong. Lord Knutsford's despatch of the 28th January, 1890, bears me out in that statement. Paragraph 5 says. —

"The garrison in 1863-4 was estimated at 1,000 of all ranks, and its annual cost at £100,000. In 1888 the garrison numbered 1,445 of all ranks (exclusive of volunteers), and its cost has risen to about £160,000 a year, while the Colonial contribution has remained at £20,000."

Paragraph 6 reads: —

"The future Garrison, including local regulars, but excluding militia and volunteers, will be approximately as follows: —Imperial troops, 2,525 of all ranks; local regulars, 493 of all ranks. The details are given in the table A annexed to this despatch."

And paragraph 7 is as follows: —

"The cost of the Garrison will be about £280,000 a year and will consequently be nearly three times as great as was the expense of the Garrison in 186; when the Colonial contribution was fixed. Her Majesty's Government, however, do not propose that the contribution should now be increased in the same proportion, and will only call upon the Colony to provide £40,000 a year for each of the three years 1890-1-2, the Colony bearing in addition the cost of any militia and volunteers which it may raise, and the contribution to be paid after 1892 being subject to re-consideration during these three years."

The concluding sentence of paragraph 8 is: —

"And in now informing you of the amount which Her Majesty's Government demand from the Colony as its contribution to the increased Garrison, I desire to draw your attention to the following considerations, which have been duly weighed before that amount was determined."

I would also quote from the report on the Blue Book for 1889 written by the Officer Ad-

ministering the Government during your Excellency's absence: —

"The military contribution so-called was in 1889 the same as in former years, viz. £20,000 a year, although it has since been increased, under the instructions of the Imperial Government, to double that amount, on the assumption that the garrison is to be considerably enlarged."

The increased contribution was voted by this Council last year entirely on the ground stated by Lord Knutsford, namely, that the proposed increased garrison would necessitate increased expenditure, and the vote was associated with and accompanied by certain resolutions, which were also unanimously agreed to by the official and unofficial members. As soon as the Imperial Government perform their portion of the agreement this Colony will readily execute its part. With your Excellency's permission I will read the resolutions that were passed: —

"1. —That this Council, while recognising the justice and fairness of the demand made upon the Colony for an addition to the Military Contribution, desires to place upon record the fact that the vote authorising the additional payment has been passed by the unanimous voice of the members, official and unofficial, in the belief that the proposed increase in the strength of the troops stationed here is essentially necessary for the safety of the Colony and with the full assurance that the force mentioned in the appendix to the Secretary of State's despatch of the 20th January, 1890, 3,018 men of all ranks, of whom 2,525 are to be Europeans, will be present in the Colony within the year, and will be retained here."

"2. —It is the unanimous hope of this Council that as the additional moneys voted have been asked for and granted as the Colony's contribution to an increased garrison *and principally, if not entirely* because of the proposed increase, no demand will be made by the Imperial Government for the payment thereof until the strength of the garrison has actually been raised to the full extent of the figures in the Secretary of State's despatch, *and that, if any additional payment is demanded before that point has been reached, it should be proportional to such increase as shall from time to time be made in the force stationed in the Colony.*"

"3. —That in the opinion of this Council the attention of the Secretary of State should be directed to the fact to which no reference is made in Lord Knutsford's despatch of the 20th January, 1890, that the Military Departments are in the occupation of rather more than 337 acres of land in this Colony, of which 84 acres are in the City of Victoria; that these 84 acres are situate in the very centre of the town and are, at the very lowest, of the value of Three millions of Dollars, representing a revenue in the shape of Crown Rents and Taxes of \$50,000

a year lost to the Colony, and that this being so it is earnestly hoped that no further demand will be made on the Colony in respect of Barrack Expenditure, referred to in paras. 20, 21 and 22 of the despatch above-mentioned, at all events unless the land in the centre of the town be given up by the Military Authorities, as has been suggested, in exchange for other sites nearer the batteries."

There is also a paragraph in the despatch of the Officer Administering the Government of last April which I would like to quote, paragraph 9, which says: —

"I trust that your Lordship will not fail to give due consideration to the statements contained in the 3rd of the enclosed Resolutions. They but repeat what Sir G. William Des Voeux forcibly drew attention to in paragraph 16 of his Despatch, No. 334, of the 31st of October last, viz: —that what is called 'Military Expenditure' by no means fairly represents the burthen which is really borne by the Colony on account of the garrison here."

The resolutions state that the increased vote should only be availed of in proportion to the increase in the garrison expenditure, and were at one time warmly and cordially supported by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Colonial Office despatch of 23rd May last to the War Office says: —

"With reference to the letter from this Department of 24th January last regarding the Hongkong military contribution, I am directed by Lord Knutsford to transmit to you to be laid before Mr. Secretary Stanhope, for his consideration, copy of a despatch from the Officer Administering the Government of Hongkong reporting that the Legislative Council had unanimously voted the increased contribution but had also adopted certain resolutions bearing on the subject."

And paragraph 3 reads: —

"As regards the second resolution, Lord Knutsford considers that when the increased garrison has been supplied the Colony may be expected to pay its proportion of the cost, viz., £40,000 per annum, provided there is no very large deficiency of men at any time, but as the basis of the present demand is the provision of additional troops his Lordship thinks there is reason in the contention of the Legislative Council that they should not pay the increased contribution until the troops are provided."

And paragraph 5: —

"Lord Knutsford desires me to add that the liberal manner in which the unofficial members of the Hongkong Legislature have met the demands of the Imperial Government has enabled a constitutional crisis to be averted, and it will in his Lordship's opinion be politic to make any concession which may be possible to meet their views."

The War Office has not sent any extra troops, the average number of all ranks here was actually

less in 1890 than in 1889, the Government has incurred no additional expenditure on the garrison since the date of Lord Knutsford's despatch of 20th January, 1890, yet in spite of Lord Knutsford's appeal for a concession in our behalf Her Majesty's Ministers persist in demanding from this Colony a military contribution just double the amount formerly paid without giving us any *quid pro quo* as agreed upon. In acknowledging the Colonial Office despatch of 23rd May the War Authorities shift their original grounds and endeavour to justify the continuance of their increased demand for other reasons and on other grounds which I submit have not been before this Council and which we have not had the opportunity of discussing. The very able despatch to the Colonial Office of the Officer Administering the Government, Hon. F. Fleming, dated 10th September last, for which we are most grateful, states our case very fairly and bears most comprehensively on the whole subject of the increased military contribution. Paragraphs 2 and 3 say:—

"I notice with pleasure the concluding paragraph of Mr. Wingfield's letter to the War Office of the 23rd of May, in which he states that your Lordship desired him to add that the liberal manner in which the unofficial members of the Legislature met the demands of the Imperial Government, enabled a constitutional crisis to be avoided, and that it would be politic, in your Lordship's opinion, to make any concession which it might be possible to meet their views."

"I entirely agree with your Lordship that it would have been politic in the circumstances had the War Office given some consideration to your Lordship's very reasonable suggestion. But far from doing this they seem to take advantage of the Council's liberality by having recourse to a different line of argument to that conveyed at their dictation in your Lordship's Despatch No. 8, of the 20th of January last."

"That despatch, as does the letter from the War Office of the 14th of July, unquestionably refers to what the garrison in Hongkong was in 1863; to the amount of contribution then paid and to the revenue of the Colony in that year, and it then goes on to compare the state of things at that period with what exists at present."

"But the real purport of that Despatch was to make a demand for a further contribution on the ground that circumstances rendered it necessary to increase the garrison here."

"This is clearly shown in the first paragraph, where your Lordship addresses me on the subject of the additional garrison required by the fortifications recently erected at Hongkong and their armament."

"Again in paragraph 7 Your Lordship says, 'The cost of this garrison (*i.e.* the future garrison)

will be about 280,000*l.* a year and will consequently be nearly three times as great as was the expense of the garrison in 1863 when the Colonial contribution was fixed."

"In paragraph 19 your Lordship remarks that 'the 40,000*l.* which the Colony will pay in each of the next three years is only the cost of one-seventh of the garrison, while the remaining six-sevenths, 240,000*l.*, will still be borne by the mother country.'"

"Could anything be plainer, more particularly from this last mentioned paragraph, than that the Imperial Government intimated that they intended during these three years to expend £280,000 per annum on an increased garrison out of which they requested the Colony to contribute £40,000?"

"But now the War Office takes a different line. The letter of the 14th of July insinuates that the increased contribution is not asked for so much because we are to have an increased garrison, but because the Colony's revenue has considerably augmented since the year 1863, and because an intention, then announced, to increase the Military Contribution at the end of five years was never carried out."

"These might have been very good reasons for requesting the Colony to increase its contribution, and had they been straightforwardly and undisguisely submitted to the Legislature I doubt not that the Unofficial Members would have given them that impartial consideration which they are at all times prepared to give to proposals emanating from Her Majesty's Government."

"But these were not the grounds upon which the Council were asked to vote the additional money. The real reason was, and there can be no attempt to disguise it, that the garrison would be increased during the three years particularly referred to, whereas there seems to be little chance of any substantial increase this year or indeed within any limited period."

This despatch has been acknowledged but it has not been answered. The Colonial Office has evidently knuckled under to the War Office, and ceased to support our just cause. Lord Knutsford appears to have forgotten and to have abandoned what His Lordship at one time termed our reasonable claim, and requests this Government to vote the increased contribution well knowing that no addition has been made to, and that no increased expenditure has been incurred on, the garrison. Possibly the Government could not carry this vote if all the official members vote in accordance with their convictions on this subject; the officials have, however, been reticent as to what their views are, in strange and striking contrast to the officials in the Singapore and Ceylon Legislatures on this very subject of Military Contribution in these Colonies; but whatever their opinions may be they are allowed no choice

in the matter and will be required to vote as Government directs them. If the Government press this question and take the extra £20,000 from the colony by means of the more numerous official vote, I think the position of matters may become so serious and so grave as to render it advisable for the unofficial members to take into their serious consideration the utility and propriety of their continued presence here where their votes, their opinions, and their resolutions are so completely disregarded and over-ridden, and to compel them to submit to Her Majesty the Queen by petition a statement of their reasons for contemplating such a course of action. I submit this would be the only effective protest to be made to the arbitrary policy of the Home Government and its decision to impose a fresh burden of £20,000 a year on the ratepayers of the Colony without any *quid pro quo* and without giving them or their representatives an opportunity of discussing the new position and the new grounds taken up by the Right Hon. the Secretary of State. The proceedings of the Imperial Government on this question are not characterised by reason or equity. I submit they are arbitrary and unjust. In my opinion they are calculated to imperil good government and must tend to weaken and impair the allegiance and alienate the goodwill towards the mother country of one of the most loyal of Her Majesty's Colonies. There is a distinct breach of faith on the part of the War Office, and a glaring violation by the Imperial Government of a solemn agreement of its own framing and deliberately entered into. It might be well for Her Majesty's advisers to bear in mind that, as stated in the Singapore Council the other day, loyalty is a hardy plant that requires and demands a fair field and no favour, and that under injustice loyalty withers. Against such unconstitutional doings and such a serious injustice to the taxpayers of Hongkong as is now contemplated I most earnestly and most emphatically protest.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I have listened very carefully to what has been said by hon. members and I venture to think that the point made by Hon. P. Ryrie is the only important one made, namely, that of the question of the stoppage of public works. Of course we do not know what the meaning of the telegram received is, but if that telegram means that this military contribution is really going to prevent us from carrying out much-needed public works without a serious addition to our taxation, I must say that the point is a serious one. But we do not know that at present. It may be that other public works are considered of greater importance than those that we have passed. It may be it is thought well not to proceed until we have obtained some financial assistance from a loan such as we were well entitled, according to all ordinary principles, to have raised for the Tytam Water Works and re-

productive works of that nature. But of course if it means what Mr. Ryrie imagines then I should say his point has some considerable force. I have also listened with great attention to the heroics indulged in so largely by the hon. member who last spoke, but I am bound to say that I think the whole is beside the point. He says that hon. members have had no opportunity of discussing the intrinsic justice of this vote apart from the promise apparently made and unfulfilled. I say they have had that opportunity. It was a most unfortunate promise to make in the first instance but, as he very justly remarked, the ground has been entirely shifted. The increased contribution is now claimed on the ground that we are only asked to pay what we should pay; the other is entirely left out. I say there has been full opportunity both on this and the last occasion of discussing that point. It has been most distinctly brought before the Council, and to say that there has been no opportunity for discussing it is to say what is not a fact. There has been abundant opportunity for discussing the question entirely apart from the despatch which originally recommended this vote, the unfortunate nature of which nobody acknowledges more fully than I do. It is because I consider that the demand is a just one entirely apart from that that I can conscientiously recommend this vote to the Legislature and do recommend it. I could only have wished that members would have touched on the question which I deliberately put forward at the last meeting but which has not been touched upon, namely, supposing the demand had been made, as Mr. Fleming suggests, without the promise of additional troops, would it have been just? If you are prepared to say it would have been just, then the promise however unfortunate has nothing to do with the question. I regret what has occurred, I regret the feeling that has been produced, not an unnatural feeling I admit, because there has been bound together with this vote what was completely and entirely distinct from it. The vote should be considered entirely apart from that point, and the question now is whether the demand is a just one in itself. I now feel it my duty to put the question, and following the usual course here, I will first put Mr. Ryrie's amendment, which is that the vote be postponed until a despatch has been received from the Secretary of State in reply to the protest of the unofficial members.

The Council then divided on the amendment with the following result:—

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

The amendment was therefore lost by a majority of one.

The question "that the vote do pass" was then put and carried, all the unofficial members voting against it.

Hon. P. RYRIE gave notice of protest against the vote on behalf of the unofficial members.

PROPOSED STOPPAGE OF THE INCREASE TO OFFICIAL SALARIES.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—By permission of your Excellency I beg to ask the following question:—"Are the Government Officials now drawing the enhanced rates of pay recommended by the Special or Select Committee of this Council or are they still drawing the old rates of pay and allowances pending the Secretary of State's approval?"

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY—I have to inform the hon. member that officials are drawing the old rates of pay and are awaiting the decision of the Secretary of State.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I beg to give notice that I shall move the following resolution at next meeting:—"That in consequence of the enhanced Military Contribution still demanded by the Imperial Government this Colony is not in a position to pay the increased salaries recently recommended by the Unofficial Members, and that the Secretary of State be requested by telegram to withhold his sanction."

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME.

A Bill to amend the Printers and Publishers' Ordinance 1886 and a Bill for the naturalisation of Lau Sai, otherwise Lau Wai Chun, were read a first time.

THE GAMBLING BILL.

His Excellency—The next item on the orders of the day is the Committee on the Bill entitled the Gambling Ordinance 1891. Now, I may state at once that after full consideration of this matter I have determined to proceed with the Ordinance. I have the distinct opinion that neither this Ordinance nor any other will have any great effect upon gambling in this Colony, the instinct for which is so ingrained in the constitution of the people, and if it were a question of beginning legislation I should decline to do anything in the absence of special instructions. But it is not a question of beginning legislation. We have at present on the statute book a law which has, I may say, now become almost utterly useless. Whether the decisions were correct or not, I do not know, but the result is that by these decisions the law has been rendered almost utterly useless. Now it can be said of the Bill before the Council that it affords a better chance of doing some good than the present law or I believe any other that could at present be devised that would be permitted by the Home Government. For this reason, as the principle of the Bill has received a considerable amount of support, not only in the Council but in the Colony generally, I intend to proceed with it, because it cannot make matters worse than they are and may make them better. There is only one point as to which I was for a long time doubtful, and

that is the question of corruption. Of course the stricter you make the law, the greater apparently is the inducement to corruption, but on the other hand it has been pointed out to me that we very well know now where the great gambling takes place and we are always likely to know a short time after it has begun. The only reason we cannot touch it now is that the law in its present position does not enable us to do so. This law will enable us to touch this gambling at once, and though there may be greater inducement to corruption, if the places are not touched we shall know that corruption actually exists and know where it exists. It has been suggested, I fear not altogether without ground, that there is a large amount of corruption. Yet we are not certain about it. This law will enable us to be certain. If the gambling in particular places is not put an end to we shall know that the corruption exists, and either it will have to be corrected or the law will have to be given up altogether. It may be that the inducements to gambling are so great that no salaries we are able to pay will be sufficient to procure men who will altogether administer the law against gamblers with strict impartiality. Of course I know there are in the present police force men who, although they are in a humble position, would firmly resist offers to be bribed. I know there are such men and that they have resisted such offers, but taking an ordinary view it is a question whether men at such salaries as can be given in the Police Force within the means of the Colony would be able—the average man—to resist the large sums which it might pay gamblers to offer. However, this Bill will give the power of putting an end to gambling where it is known to exist and if it is not put an end to by this law, we shall at least know where we are; we do not know that at present. For these reasons I propose on the next occasion to go on with this Bill. I do not do so to-day, because at the last meeting I left it in doubt whether the Government would go on with it, and I do not suppose hon. members have read the details with the care necessary for the suggestion of amendments. I may say at once that the clause about the responsibility of owners certainly requires amendment. At all events owners should not be made responsible until they have received due notice that their houses are being used as gambling establishments and take no steps to prevent it. It is not intended to press that part of the Bill in its present shape.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council adjourned.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held after the Council meeting, the Acting Colonial Secretary presiding.



## THE SALARIES OF THE MASTERS OF VICTORIA COLLEGE.

The CHAIRMAN—Hon. members will remember that a minute recommending a vote for additional pay to the masters of Victoria College was held over from the previous meeting in order that further inquiry might be made. A doubt arose as to whether due consideration had been given to the matter of quarters. It has been found that consideration has been given to that point and therefore there is no undue increase in the amounts recommended by the Secretary of State. The history of this vote is that the \$1,830 for the increase of salaries of the masters of Victoria College arose from a petition sent home by the masters last year asking that they should be allowed the same rise as the other members of the Civil Service, and the Secretary of State has been pleased to approve of the petition with the small modification that the whole increase is not to be given at once but by a gradual increment from year to year until the maximum is reached. I have therefore to move that this sum of \$1,830 be voted.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Hon. P. RYRIE—If we are to have an increased military contribution we cannot go on increasing salaries too. I will vote against all increases.

On the vote being put a division took place.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL asked if he was compelled to vote, or if he could remain neutral.

The CHAIRMAN said that as the hon. member was at the table he thought he must request him to vote.

The votes were recorded as follows:—

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

The vote was therefore passed.

## STUDENT INTERPRETERS.

A vote of \$960 for the salaries of two Student Interpreters at \$40 per month each, in accordance with the scheme published in Government notification, No. 209, of 4th May, 1889, was passed.

## THE PEAK WATER SUPPLY.

The next vote was one of \$2,800, as a supplementary vote for the Peak Water Supply, being additional expenditure consequent on modifications recommended by Mr. Chadwick in the hydraulic motor and pump required for the Peak water works.

The CHAIRMAN said no one could doubt that it was most essential a proper water supply should be afforded to the Peak and he did not think there could be any objection to this vote, proposed as it was on the strong recommendation of Mr. Chadwick, the consulting engineer.

Vote passed.

## COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE.

A sum of \$600 was voted as a compassionate

allowance to the widow and children of the late Inspector Swanston, of the Hongkong Police Force.

## THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S QUARTERS.

The next vote was one of \$840, as an allowance for quarters for the Postmaster-General during the current year, at \$70 a month.

The CHAIRMAN said hon. members would be aware that since last year the Treasury had been established as a separate branch and that the office of Treasurer was now combined with that of the Collector of Stamp Revenue, and it became absolutely necessary to provide extra accommodation for the work of the Treasury, the old accommodation being found too confined for the extended work of the department. Pending what he feared might still be in the far distance, the erection of proper Government offices for the Colonial Treasurer and other departments, it was thought more advantageous for the public generally that the Treasury should be in such a central position as that occupied by the Post Office rather than that the suite of rooms above the Post Office should be occupied by the Postmaster-General as a residence. On a valuation of the rooms as offices it was thought they would be worth at least \$300 a month. The Government therefore considered they were making rather a good bargain in getting this suite of rooms at \$70 a month.

The vote was passed.

## TIDE TABLES.

The CHAIRMAN said the next vote was one of \$536.84, equivalent to £85, for defraying the cost of analysing the observations and readings of the tides at Hongkong for 1887-88 and making the results available for future predictions. It might be within the knowledge of hon. members that a book was published in England giving the tide tables for Singapore and Hongkong, and the author of that book, who was a specialist, had written out for a grant of £85 in order that these tables might be made more absolutely correct. From inquiry it appeared that these tables had been framed on the rather rough taking of the tide gauge by a Naval Yard constable in former years who was probably not very exact, but for the last two years the Government had had at work in the police basin at Tsim-tsa-tsui an automatic tide gauge. The markings of this gauge had been sent home to England and it was supposed that from the analysis of these returns much more correct tide tables would be available for the future. In other words the tide tables would be founded on mathematical observations instead of on somewhat rough and unscientific observations.

Hon. P. RYRIE said £85 seemed a large sum, and asked if the same amount was paid by other places in the East.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought the clerical work of analysing the tides for two years must be very great.

The vote was passed.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The sum of \$2,577.42 was voted to cover payments for the under mentioned works not completed before the 31st December last and for which no provision has been made in this year's estimates, namely, re-drainage of Government Civil Hospital \$119.82, and construction of a storm water drain in Jubilee Street \$2,457.60. The unexpended balance from 1890 was \$19,263.35.

THE HOSPITAL SHIP.

A sum of \$2,500 was voted to provide permanent moorings for the new hospital ship *Hygeia*; also \$29,300, re-vote, for the last two instalments to be paid for the building of the *Hygeia*.

In connection with the last item the CHAIRMAN, in reply to a question by the Attorney-General as to what the hospital ship was to be used for, said the lazaretto at Stonecutters had been given up to the military authorities for due consideration and the *Hygeia* would be used as a lazaretto hulk, or, should an epidemic break out, as an epidemic hospital.

Hon. C. P. CHATER asked what the consideration given for the lazaretto was.

The CHAIRMAN said the Government was going to receive \$20,000 for it. In reply to further questions he said that was the sum at which the building had been valued and he understood the amount would recoup the Government for the cost of erecting it, as it was almost new and there could have been very little deterioration.

DIVISION OF LAPSED SALARY.

A sum of \$188, being undrawn salary of the third bailiff of the Supreme Court from 1st

May to 22nd September, 1890, was voted to the first and second bailiffs in proportions recommended by the Registrar, the first and second bailiffs having done the work from the time the third bailiff absconded until a successor was appointed.

POKFULAM FILTER BED.

A sum of \$3,254.41, unexpended balance in 1890 on account of the Pokfulam filter bed, and \$485.59, excess over estimated cost, were voted.

COMPASSIONATE ALLOWANCE.

The next vote was one of \$888 as a compassionate allowance to the widow and children of the late H. L. Mather, second lighthouse keeper.

The CHAIRMAN said this amount was arrived at on the usual basis of one month's salary for three years' service, but he should explain that in this case it was calculated on the assumption that the increase of pay recommended by the Council would be granted by the Secretary of State, but at the same time precautions would be taken that the amount to be paid should be the amount according to the old rate pending receipt of the approval of the Secretary of State. It would make a difference of \$60 or \$70 to the recipients of the grant.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I am given to understand this man had served the Government for twenty-five years.

The CHAIRMAN—Yes.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—And is that all the allowance his family gets for it?

The CHAIRMAN—Yes.

The amount was voted.

The Committee then adjourned.