

5TH APRIL, 1893.

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, Director of Public Works.

Hon. R. M. RUMSEY, R. N., Harbour Master.

Hon. C. P. CHATER.

Hon. HO KAI.

Hon. E. R. BELLIOS.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD;

Hon. J. J. KESWICK.

Mr. A. Seth, Clerk of Councils.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

PAPERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I have the honour to lay on the table the report on the Widows and Orphans' Fund, the report of the Superintendent of the Botanical and Afforestation Department, and the returns of the Superior and Inferior Courts for the year 1892. I have also the honour to submit the financial minute which stands in my name and move that it be referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—I beg to second that. Agreed.

THE PRAYA WHARVES AND PIERS ORDINANCE.

The Council went into Committee on this Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—On the last occasion the Bill proceeded through Committee with the exception of the preamble. When that is read I will move that we resume.

The preamble having been read the Council resumed and the Bill was read a third time and passed.

MASONIC BENEVOLENCE FUND INCORPORATION
ORDINANCE.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Sir, in rising to propose the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance for the incorporation of the trustees of the Hongkong

and South China Masonic Benevolence Fund I feel that it is not necessary for me to speak at any great length. I am sure that the name alone of the institution on whose behalf I am introducing this Bill is sufficient to ensure the sympathy of your Excellency and the hon. members present. I may, however, be permitted to make a short statement of its origin and the reasons which have made it necessary to ask for its incorporation. This fund was started on the 1st of July, 1890, with the object, as its name implies, of providing assistance to Masons who are in distressed circumstances and of relieving the wives and widows of deceased Masons. Since its start the funds, I am glad to say, having steadily increased by donations received from Masons individually and various Masonic bodies working under the District Grand Lodge of Hongkong and South China, it was deemed advisable that this fund should be invested in mortgages instead of being kept at fixed deposit with the various banks, thereby ensuring a larger rate of interest. This was done in due course, but it has now been felt that the present system of vesting these mortgages in the names of individuals was productive of a great deal of inconvenience and expense, for should any of these trustees leave the colony powers of attorney would be necessary and other legal documents, whereas if the institution was incorporated (to which I shall ask hon. members to agree to-day) it would obviate all this difficulty and expense. It will enable the trustees for the time being to sign all necessary documents and carry on the business of the institution. In fact, sir, it is a Bill somewhat similar, nay I may say almost similar, to several we have passed of late, namely, the Incorporation of the Spanish Procurator, the French Mission, and the last which I had the honour to propose—the incorporation of the Diocesan Home. I therefore trust that the hon. members present will consent to this first reading. Any further information or further formalities required by the Government I shall be glad to give between now and the next meeting.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I have much pleasure in seconding.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I notice that it says in the first section that the gentlemen named "having placed in the hands of the Governor satisfactory proof of their being the duly appointed Trustees of the," &c. I understand that the hon. member is prepared to present these proofs before the next meeting of the Council?

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Certainly.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—We shall afterwards have to consider the proposal to make a statutory transfer of the land which is registered. I have no doubt that it is all in order, but it is necessary to take the usual precautions and know something of the title.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—With regard to the second difficulty brought forward I may mention the properties in question are not transferred to individuals as the trustees, but simply as individuals, and consequently there will be no difficulty in re-transferring from their names to the names of the trust.

The Bill was then read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

His EXCELLENCY—Gentlemen, the Council will now meet in Finance Committee, and I propose to adjourn the Council *sine die*. I may say that the report of the Committee to enquire into the Po Leung Kuk is the only matter the Government has to deal with, and in about three weeks' time, when we have received their report, I will call the Council together to consider the proposals of the Committee.

The Council then adjourned.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held immediately after the adjournment of the Council. The Colonial Secretary presided.

The CHAIRMAN said—The only business before the Committee is the financial minute which I have just brought up in Council. The Governor recommends the Council to vote a sum of \$19319.48, for the construction of new roads at Kowloon. This item is made up as follows:— Re-vote of unexpended balance of last year's vote of \$10,000, \$4,319.48; additional vote asked for, \$15,000. The Committee will probably recollect that in the Appropriation Bill for the current year provision is made for such public works extraordinary only as are chargeable against the loan, and that I stated when introducing the Supply Bill that for such other public works extraordinary as it might be decided to execute during the year it would be necessary to provide by means of financial minutes. The cost of constructing the Kowloon roads is estimated at \$25,000. The plans and estimates have been approved by the Public Works Committee and a vote of \$10,000 on account was taken in the Supply Bill for 1892. Of this a sum of \$5,680.52 was expended in 1892, and the balance of \$4,319.48 lapsed at the end of the year. The Committee is now asked to agree to a revote of that balance and to a vote in addition of a sum of \$15,000 which is required to complete the roads. The completion of the roads is, I believe, generally acknowledged to be a work of public utility, and the Committee will, I imagine, have no objection to agree to the expenditure recommended in the minute. If any member requires any further information in connection with the minute I shall be happy to afford it.

No observations being made upon the minute the Committee agreed unanimously to recommend the vote.

The Committee then adjourned *sine die*.