

7TH MARCH, 1894.

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

Hon. C. P. CHATER.

Hon. Ho Kai.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.

Hon. E. R. BELLIOS.

Mr. A. Seth, Clerk of Councils.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.

His EXCELLENCY—I may mention that the Colonial Treasurer is suffering from fever and I have excused his attendance to-day.

PAPERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I have the honour to lay on the table the report of Finance Committee No. 6, the Widows and Orphans' Fund account for 1893, the report of the Head Master, Victoria College; report of the Captain Superintendent of Police; returns of the superior and subordinate Courts; report of the Superintendent of Victoria Gaol; report of the Sanitary Surveyor; report of the Acting Registrar-General, all for the same year 1893, and a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies respecting a conditional offer of a non-pensionable allowance to certain members of the Hongkong Civil Service.

NOTICE OF MOTION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I also beg to give notice that at the next meeting of Council I shall move the following resolution—"That it is desirable to give effect to the suggestion of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that, in view of the fall in exchange, those of the civil servants who are domiciled in the United Kingdom or other countries having a gold currency, and are willing to draw their salaries

when on leave at the rate of 3s. to the dollar, should be granted such a non-pensionable allowance as will make the half of their salaries while on active service equivalent to the half of their present salaries calculated at the rate of 3s. to the dollar."

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

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

New Drainage, Separate System.

Will the Government furnish the Council with a return shewing—(1) the extent to which the new drainage scheme on the separate system as designed by Mr. Osbert Chadwick, C.M.G., has been carried out; (2) the departures, if any, from Mr. Chadwick's designs; (3) the total amount of monies expended on the new scheme up to 31st December, 1893; (4) the quantity of work remaining to be done; (5) the estimated cost of completing the same; (6) the cost of the deep sewer, commencing at the Murray Barracks nullah, running down Arsenal Street, and along the Praya to its out-fall about Fenwick's yard; and (7) what amount of the cost of this deep sewer, running through and draining property nearly one half of which belongs to the Imperial Government, has been paid or will be refunded by the Military Authorities; and further, will the Government state whether in the opinion of the responsible authorities the separate system has worked satisfactorily up to date, and if not, what are the reasons for its failure, and the remedial measures, if any, it is proposed to adopt?

Hongkong Post Office.

Will the Government lay upon the table a statement shewing the gross income and the gross expenditure of the Post Office for the years 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1893 separately, and any liability still outstanding connected with those years, also separately?

Post Office, Treasury, Court House, Land Office, &c.

Will Government procure and lay upon the table an estimate of what money these premises would probably realise if exposed to auction,

and what would be the probable cost of erecting a suitable Post Office and Court House, including a Land Office, &c., on Government ground on the new Praya Reclamation?

Opium Ordinances.

Will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the petition dated 12th December, 1893, to the Right Hon. the Marquis of Ripon, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, from the Hongkong, Canton, and Macao Steamboat Company, Limited, and the China Steam Navigation Company, Limited, praying for Government assistance in their efforts to suppress smuggling on board their steamships by causing such amendments to be made in the Hongkong law as may be though necessary and effectual, &c., &c. and a copy of any reply which may have been received thereto?

Crown Agents.

In view of the West Indian Colonies, including British Honduras and British Guiana, having recently passed resolutions through their Legislatures condemning the Crown Agency system as an expensive and wasteful medium for the transaction of their business, and as a like feeling obtains amongst a large number of ratepayers in this Colony, will the Government lay upon the table at the earliest possible date a copy of the Parliamentary paper C. 3075 of 1881, which is said to contain full information as to the arrangements existing between the Colonial office and the Crown Agents?

The Po Leung Kuk.

Will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the despatch No. 204 of 22nd December last, from the Right Hon. the Marquis of Ripon, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, in connection with my memorial, dated 27th June, 1893, praying His Lordship to return Ordinance No. 10 of 1893 to Hongkong for amendment in the directions indicated therein, and to recommend to the Colonial Government either to remove the Registrar-General from the governing body of the Po Leung Kuk, or to invest him with powers adequate to his duties and responsibilities to the women and girls under his care, under Ordinance No. 11 of 1890?

Finances.

Will the Government inform the Council—(1) what monies were expended by the Crown Agents in England, on account of the colony, during 1893; (2) how much of these were defrayed out of the proceeds of the colony's recent gold loan; (3) what amount, if any, of our revenue during 1893 has been remitted to or drawn for by the Crown Agents, from the colony, to defray their expenses, and the rates of exchange, if any; (4) have any monies derived either from revenue in 1893, or from Supreme Court, or Reclamation Deposits, been remitted to England or withdrawn from the colony during the past nine months, for any purpose other than to defray necessary expenditure in England on account of the colony; (5) if so what amount, from what funds derived, at what rates of exchange

remitted, how employed in England, and at what rates of interest, under what authority have such remittances been made, and for what reasons, and (6) what amount of the Colonial Government's funds now remain in England, how much thereof is derived from revenue, how much from deposits, and how much from the proceeds of the recent gold loan?

THE NEW LOAN.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Having obtained your Excellency's permission I now beg to ask the following questions:—"At a meeting of this Council, held on the 29th August of last year, in answer to certain questions put by an honourable member, we were informed that at that date none of the money received by the Crown Agents in London in respect of our new gold loan had either been remitted or drawn for; I should now be glad to know what is the present state of affairs, and, therefore, beg to ask whether any portion of this sum has yet been remitted, or drawn for, and if so, at what rate of exchange?"

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The answer is—No portion of the loan has been remitted or drawn for. (Applause).

THE MILITARY CONTRIBUTION.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—My next question, sir, is—"At a meeting of this Council held on the 13th Dec. last year, the hon. the Colonial Secretary stated on the subject of the military contribution that H.E. the Governor had addressed a very strong recommendation to the Secretary of State with a view to the reduction of this contribution; I would now beg to ask whether any answer has been received to this despatch, and if so to request that it be laid on the table."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—No answer has been received to the despatch in question. The attention of the Secretary of State will again be drawn to the matter and the opportunity taken of pointing out that the argument in favour of reduction of the military contribution has been materially strengthened by the heavy fall in exchange which has taken place since the date when the despatch in question was written.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—The hon the Colonial Secretary further said that he would place before the Governor the recommendation of the unofficial members, which was then expressed, that the amount of the contribution be fixed in dollars, and at the rate at which the first instalment was paid when the contribution was raised from £20,000 to £40,000. I should be glad to know whether anything has been done towards giving effect to this recommendation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The answer is that on 21st December last His Excellency the Governor recommended to the Secretary of State that the military contribution should be fixed at a stated annual number of d o l l a r s . N o r e p l y

has been received to that despatch. In the despatch which I have just mentioned, in answering the previous question, reference will be made to this matter also. (Applause).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY'S MOTION.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I might rise to order. With reference to the motion of which the hon. Colonial Secretary has given notice, perhaps the Government would cause a statement to be prepared showing what extra expenditure will be incurred by half of the salaries of the officials domiciled in Europe being paid at a 3s. dollar. It might perhaps enable us and assist us—

His EXCELLENCY—It is in course of preparation.

THE PO LEUNG KUK INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Po Leung Kuk Incorporation Ordinance, 1893. I do not propose, sir, on this first reading of the Bill to make any further remarks than to say that these alterations which have been made carry out the desire of the Secretary of State that they should be made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I rise to give notice of a motion that at the second reading of the Bill, Section 18 of the Ordinance No. 10 of 1893 should be amended and read as follows:—

"All buildings and premises of the Society shall be open at all reasonable times to the inspection of the Governor, of the Captain Superintendent of Police, of any two unofficial Justices of the Peace who shall be appointed by the Governor to be visitors, or of any other persons whom His Excellency may appoint or authorize in writing in that behalf."

His EXCELLENCY—You will do that in Committee?

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I give notice that I will do it on the second reading of the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—At the Committee stage, I think.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Certainly.

Bill read a first time.

JURY CONSOLIDATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Jury Consolidation Ordinance, 1887. I will reserve any remarks until the second reading. At present we have only the Bill before the house.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a first time.

THE SUPREME COURT SUMMARY JURISDICTION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Supreme Court Summary Jurisdiction Ordinance, 1873. This is also an Ordinance which but for technicalities would have been incorporated in the Bill which I have just obtained leave to read for the first time. It is a corollary and supplement to that Bill, but it was thought best to make it the subject matter of a separate Ordinance so that amendments of two different Ordinances should not be at all mixed up.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a first time.

THE SILVER WEDDING OF THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS OF JAPAN.

His EXCELLENCY—That ends the business before the Council on the agenda paper, but there is a matter on which I should like, before we separate, to ask the opinion and advice of the hon. members of Council. We can hardly call it an interchange of international courtesies, but an exchange of courtesies with an Eastern potentate who has certainly made great progress in Western methods. You will all have seen in the papers a statement from the *Japan Gazette* that on the 9th of March a very interesting celebration is to be held of the silver wedding of their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. I believe that this is the first time that such a celebration has been held by any potentate in an Eastern country. We all know that His Majesty the Emperor has ruled well and constitutionally over Japan for 25 years and has extended hospitality and civility to European travellers there, and also to residents of Hongkong, and that Japan, generally speaking, is being rapidly Europeanised, especially so in the matter of education, for the educational system of Japan is based on the best methods in force in Western countries. Not only has Buddhism been disestablished but the greatest tolerance has been shown to the Christian communities of all denominations. We have, *imagine*, a great commercial intercourse with Japan and that is likely to be increased rather than diminished owing to the new lines of steamers which the Japanese have been putting on between that country and Calcutta and other places. Therefore I wish to know whether you are desirous that some recognition of this interesting domestic event should be taken by us Mr. Chater, the senior unofficial member, has, I believe, with his usual kindness, spoken to the unofficial members on the subject and they have, he tells me, expressed their willingness that a message of congratulation should be sent through Her Majesty's Minister. I should like to know now whether the unofficial members desire one to be sent and whether they consider such action on our part fitting and appropriate. If the hon. senior unofficial member can give me such assurance I will move a resolution to the effect, which I have no doubt will quickly be seconded.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I have very much pleasure in assuring your Excellency that it is the feeling of the unofficial members that such a message should be sent.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Such being the case I propose to send the following message:—"We the Governor and Legislative Council of Hongkong on our own behalf and on behalf of the community ask your Excellency to convey to their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan our respectful congratulation of the celebration of their Majesties' silver wedding. We trust that His Majesty and His Imperial Consort may long be spared to direct the destinies of their

beautiful and flourishing Empire and to reign for many more years over its industrious and progressive people."

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I have very much pleasure in seconding the proposal that the message be sent.

Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I propose to adjourn the Council until to-morrow week.
