

5TH DECEMBER, 1895.

PRESENT:—

A meeting of the Hongkong Legislative Council was held on Thursday afternoon in the Council Chamber. Present:—

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

Hon. J. H. STEWART-LOCKHART, Colonial Secretary.

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

Hon. A. M. THOMSON, Acting Colonial Treasurer.

Hon. F. A. COOPER, Director of Public Works.

Hon. R. MURRAY RUMSEY, Harbour Master,

Hon. COMMANDER W. C. H. HASTINGS, Acting Captain Superintendent of Police.

Hon. C. P. CHATER.

Hon. HO KAI.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS, C.M.G.

Hon. A. McCONACHIE.

Mr. J. G. T. BUCKLE, Acting Clerk of Councils.

NEW MEMBER.

Hon. Commander W. C. H. Hastings took the oath and his seat vice Hon. F. H. May, absent on leave.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

CORRESPONDENCE *re* MILITARY CONTRIBUTION.

Hon. C. P. CHATER asked the following question.—Will the Government lay upon the table copies of all the correspondence that has passed between the Government of Hongkong and the Colonial Office on the subject of the Military Contribution since the receipt here of the Marquis of Ripon's despatch on that subject of the 27th June, 1895?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The question was received at three o'clock this afternoon, but your Excellency had already decided to have the correspondence to which it refers laid upon the table, and it is already in print. I now beg to lay it accordingly. In doing so I should like to remind the hon. member on my right (Hon. C. P. Chater) that it would be more convenient if due notice were given of a question because, although there may be occasions when urgency requires the waiving of the usual notice it is more convenient as a rule for the conduct of the public business if proper notice were given.

DRAIN FLUSHING.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—I beg to give notice of my intention at the next meeting of the Council to ask the two following questions—Will the Government

be good enough to say why (experiments having shown the practicability of such a course) steps are not taken to pump up sea-water to the higher levels in order to wash out the drains, which in the present dry weather are becoming daily more offensive and obnoxious—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I do not think that question is in order; it is introducing "matter of debate." I have by me *May's Parliamentary Practice*, and I would call the attention of the hon. member to page 355, where it is stated that "all questions should be limited, as far as possible, to matters immediately connected with the business of Parliament or administration, and should not involve opinion, argument, inference, imputations, irony, or hypothetical cases, nor are any facts to be stated unless they be necessary to make the question intelligible and can be authenticated." I am sure the hon. member will not deny that his question infringes this practice.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—I do not know really how to put the question in any other way.

His EXCELLENCY—You must not express an opinion in your question.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—I did not, your Excellency.

His EXCELLENCY—Yes, you said that the drains are daily becoming more and more offensive.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—This is not an opinion but a fact, I think; I did not think there was any doubt—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I rise to order; it is not a proper question.

His EXCELLENCY—The question is out of order.

His Excellency directed the Clerk of the Councils to strike out the last few lines of the question so as to bring it into accordance with Parliamentary practice.

THE QUEEN'S STATUE.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—My other question is—Will the Government kindly inform the Council of the reasons for the suspension for many months and the apparently indefinite postponement of all work upon the base and pedestal for the Jubilee statue of Her Majesty the Queen? Is there any insuperable obstacle in the way of erection of this statue, which has now for nearly a year been interred in a godown, instead of being placed in the position for which it was designed?

PAPERS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, in addition to the Military Contribution correspondence, he had to lay on the table the Finance Committee's report.

THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the proceedings of the Public Works Committee held on the 25th November.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—May I suggest that that report would appear in a more business-like way if the cost of the buildings were stated against each item as was done—

His EXCELLENCY—I do not know what you are referring to.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I am referring to the Public Works Committee's report and suggesting that it should contain the cost of each item therein as the reports which come from the Finance Committee to the Council do.

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The hon. member will find the cost stated in the printed copy of the estimates.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question, which varies slightly in its terms from the notice given:—Will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the correspondence which has passed between the Government (including the elaborate memorandum of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary which accompanied it) and the home officials, and between the latter and the Colonial Government, concerning the petition from the ratepayers of Hongkong to the Commons of England praying for reform in the constitution of the local Government, and for the rights and privileges common to the British people in the smallest parish in England or Scotland of settling their local municipal affairs in their own way and to their own mind; as well as copies of all communications on the subject of the appointment of two unofficial members to the Executive Council, and two additional unofficial members to the Legislative Council?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—As the matter to which the question refers is still under the consideration of the Secretary of State, nothing definite having been decided with regard to it, it would be premature to lay on the table any portion of the correspondence which has taken place on the subject.

INTENDED PREMISES FOR THE PO LEUNG KUK.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—With reference to the Colonial Secretary's letter No. 1187 of 27th June, 1892, to the Registrar-General, forwarding a *precis* of correspondence *re* Home for Girls, the following paragraphs appear in the latter—

"Five Chinese houses were accordingly erected near St. Stephen's Church in accordance with plans which the Po Leung Kuk Committee had seen, and which, it was understood, they approved....."

"The cost of building these houses was \$8,000; the land on which they stand was valued at about \$12,000.

"There seems to have been some misunderstanding with regard to the rents to be derived from the lower floors, the Po Leung Kuk Committee thinking that they were to go towards the maintenance of the Home, while the Government decided that they were to be paid into the Treasury.

"When the buildings had been completed the Po Leung Kuk objected to move into them because they considered them unsuitable, etc....."

and in the report to the Colonial Secretary dated 1st February, 1892, on a petition from the Po Leung Kuk, the Registrar-General says:—

"I understand that it is the intention of the Government to sell the five houses, the top floors of which were intended for a Home. Their value, together with that of the ground on which they stand, has been estimated by the Surveyor-General at \$21,000."

Will the Government inform the Council whether these houses, erected at the public expense, were built upon inland lot No. 1,129; if so, have they been sold by private contract, the name of the buyer, and at what price? In connection with the sale, if there has been one, will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the correspondence which has passed between the Government and the Colonial Office on the subject?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—(1). No; the houses were built on inland lots 1,129 to 1,133. (2). Yes; to Mr. Moses for \$8,600 on a 999 years' lease, the Crown rent payable being \$100 a year. (3). The Governor is unable to see what useful public purpose would be served by laying the correspondence asked for on the table.

THE LICENSING OF PRIVATE VEHICLES.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—Will the Government lay upon the table a statement of the number of convictions, the amount of fines imposed and paid, in respect of offences against Ordinance No. 13 of 1895, from the date it came into force until the end of last week, and a copy of the correspondence which has passed between the home authorities and the Colonial Government in connection with the Bill, and also inform the Council whether it has yet received the sanction of the Imperial Government, and if not, state the cause of delay?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—There have been seven convictions under the Ordinance referred to; the fines imposed and paid since the Ordinance came into force amount to \$8. There appears to be no reason of a public nature for publishing the correspondence which has passed on this subject. The Ordinance has been confirmed.

NEW PEAK ROAD.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked the following question:—With reference to the numerous

signed petition to your Excellency, from Peak residents, house owners, and other ratepayers, praying for the construction, with all reasonable speed, of a new road in lieu of the present steep and unsuitable one—really the original mountain path, widened and improved to meet the requirements of a traffic ever on the increase, and which has outgrown the road's capacities—leading from Victoria Gap, passing on the south of "Treverbyn" and "Stolzenfels," on a comparatively easy gradient, and terminating near the Peak Club or Mount Kellet—will the Government inform the Council whether it is proposed to proceed with this very necessary public work, good road communication being very necessary and earnestly desired by the large resident community; state the probable cost of the road, and if the work is not to be undertaken at present, what are the reasons which delay its being carried out?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The question of the construction of a new road at the Peak from Victoria Gap is receiving attention and plans and sections have been prepared by the Director of Public Works. When the Government has received his report and estimate, they will be duly considered and an answer will be sent to the petition on this subject.

A POINT OF ORDER.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Having received your Excellency's permission to do so, I beg to withdraw the next question of which I gave notice at the last meeting.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Sir, I rise to order. No notice of withdrawal has been given.

His EXCELLENCY—Read the question first.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the reports or letters to the Government from the sub-Committee appointed by the General Committee elected at the public meeting held at the City Hall on 27th September, 1894, to consider and report upon the question of recognition of services rendered during the suppression of the Plague last year, and a copy of all the correspondence which has passed between the Government and the home authorities in connection therewith? Having received permission to withdraw—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Sir, I rise to a point of order. The Clerk of Councils has received no information with regard to the withdrawal of this question, and I consider that in not giving notice of his intention to withdraw he has treated this Council with great discourtesy. I have in my hand the correspondence, which has been printed and is ready to be laid upon the table in accordance with the hon. member's request. If the hon. member has reasons for not wishing the correspondence to be laid on the table he should have notified the Clerk of Councils in the usual way. I consider he is entirely out of order.

His EXCELLENCY—I am not not at all surprised at the remarks which the hon. Colonial Secretary has made, looking to the treatment which the Government receives at the hands of the hon. member, in regard to the bewildering and somewhat useless questions

which he sometimes puts; but unfortunately (as the hon. Colonial Secretary will think) I have led Mr. Whitehead to believe that I would permit him to withdraw this question. When I did so, I was not aware that the correspondence conveying the answer was actually in print, but I will adhere to my promise; I will keep my word and allow the question to be withdrawn, although it is not strictly in order to do so. I do it not so much out of consideration for the hon. member as out of regard for Mr. Francis, who has been dangerously ill, and has I believe expressed a desire that the correspondence or at all events some of it should not be made public. I cannot allow the question to be withdrawn without stating that I think it furnishes another example of the vexatious, not to say aimless, nature of the questions put by the hon. member. I do not see that the interests of the community or the Chamber of Commerce are advanced by such questions or benefited by the expense which the Government is put to in furnishing and printing the replies to them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Sir, I was quite unaware of the reasons which your Excellency has given, and which I think the hon. member might have communicated in the usual way to the Clerk of Councils.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Sir, I apologise for having omitted to inform the Clerk of Councils. This has been a very busy day; we had a meeting of the Unofficial Members at twelve, and another important meeting at Government House at 12.30; and, as your Excellency is well aware, it has been an exceptionally busy day. I therefore overlooked it, and for my unintentional omission to communicate with the Clerk of Councils I humbly apologise to the Council. I am extremely sorry that your Excellency thinks that some of my questions are of a useless nature. I may mention that a great many of the questions which I have put to-day and asked on previous occasions have been put at the instance of a very large number of members of the community, and on their behalf, and not at my own instance; and on many occasions I have been requested by a large number of leading members of the community to put certain questions. I now beg to ask—Will the Government lay upon the table—

His EXCELLENCY—Is this a fresh series?

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—No, it is a question of which I gave notice before.—Will the Government lay upon the table a copy of the despatch from the Secretary of State to the Colonies sanctioning the pension to be paid to

the Honourable Mr. Justice Ackroyd on his retiring from the service?

The Colonial Secretary laid the despatch upon the table.

PROFESSIONAL REPORT ON GAP ROCK LIGHT-HOUSE.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked—Will the Government inform the Council on whose recommendation Mr. Matthews was requested to visit Hongkong, inspect professionally the Gap Rock lighthouse, and state the cost of his report?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Mr. Mathews, who happened to be on a professional visit to Ceylon, was requested to come to Hongkong by the Governor. The cost of his report is not yet known.

GOLF CLUB HOUSE AT WEST END OF WONG-NEI-CHONG.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked—Will the Government inform the Council as to the conditions on which the Golf Club have been granted authority to build their club house at the west end of the Wong-nei-chong Valley, and the terms of the lease, if there is one?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—The following are the conditions on which the Golf Club have been granted authority to build their club house at the west end of the Wong-nei-chong Valley:—

- (a).—Term of lease 25 years
- (b).—Annual Crown rent \$100
- (c).—The exact area and position to be apportioned by the Wong-nei-chong Committee and the Director of Public Works.
- (d).—That the ground be used only for the purposes of a golf club house and should the Golf Club at any time cease to use it as such, the land, buildings, and all improvements thereon revert unconditionally to the Crown.

ROAD FROM PLANTATION ROAD STATION TO MAGAZINE GAP.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked—Will the Government inform the Council whether it is proposed to proceed with the construction of the much needed and desirable new road between Plantation Road Station and Magazine Gap; the probable cost; if the work is not to be proceeded with at present, what causes the delay, and when will the work be taken in hand?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—It is not intended, at any rate for the present, to proceed with the road in question. The probable cost is estimated at about \$13,000. The work is not to be proceeded with at present because there are no funds available. It is not possible to state when the work will be taken in hand.

COST OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD asked—Will the Government lay upon the table a statement showing the total cost of the administration, or the expenditure of the Government under the head of salaries, including allowances if any, pensions, exchange compensation, &c., for the years 1892, 1893, 1894,

and 1895, separately.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—In reply to that question I beg to lay upon the table a statement showing the total cost for the years 1892-1894; the exact cost for 1895 has not yet been ascertained as the accounts have not yet been closed. Now, having replied to all the hon. member's questions, I trust to be permitted to remind him that there is a certain established practice guiding questions. I again refer to *May's Parliamentary Practice*, which lays down the practice on this subject and the rules observed in Parliament. Some of the hon. member's questions infringe these rules, but in order not to appear in any way to burke the questions, I thought it would be better to allow him to put them and then draw attention to this after they had been answered. I am sure it will be quite sufficient to draw the hon. member's attention to this in order to secure that he will not in future introduce into his questions matter involving "opinion, debate, irony," etc., which he can express later on if he wishes to bring forward any subject in the form of a motion.

MR. JUSTICE ACKROYD'S RETIREMENT.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD gave notice that at the next meeting of the Council he would move the following resolution:—That His Honour Mr. Justice E. J. Ackroyd (recently retired after forty-one years of true and faithful work in the Colonial Service, of which he served in Hongkong for fourteen years as Registrar of the Supreme Court, Puisne Judge, and Acting Chief Justice) rendered very many and most valuable services to the colony, outside and in addition to the duties of the various offices held by him. That from 1882 to 1890 he was a member of the commission for the revision of the laws of the colony; he was on the Crown Lands commission; on the Squatters commission; on the Board for adjusting the claims of the squatters; on the commission of enquiry into the defalcations in the Post Office, and in the Treasury; on the enquiry into the working of the emigration laws; and on the enquiry into the difficulties in 1891 which arose between the Opium Farmer and the Government. He rendered services of great value as Chairman of the enquiry into the expenditure and the cost of the administration, and as Chairman of the Committee appointed to enquire into the resumption of the Taipingshan district, he carried out a most difficult, arduous, and delicate work with promptitude, impartiality, and to the entire satisfaction of the Government and the claimants. The Council desire to tender to the Honourable Mr. Justice Ackroyd their hearty thanks for all his zealous labours, ever readily and cheerfully rendered, and for his devotion to promoting the welfare and the interests of the colony, and to wish him every health and happiness, as well as a continued career of usefulness.

SUPREME COURT FUNDS ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend the law as to certain moneys paid into the Supreme Court or to the Registrar thereof.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read the first time.

THE STAMP ORDINANCE.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—I have the honour to move the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to further amend "The Stamp Ordinance, 1886."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Bill read the first time.

THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I have the honour to move the second reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to apply a sum not exceeding two millions four hundred and seventy-nine thousand and sixty-two dollars to the Public Service of the year 1896. It has been usual sometimes to enter into full details in moving the second reading of this Bill. On this occasion, however, I do not propose to detain the Council with any remarks of mine, as your Excellency has so fully and, as the senior unofficial member stated at the last meeting, so lucidly explained the financial position of the colony, that it is quite unnecessary for me to enter into particulars now. When the Bill is being considered in Finance Committee I shall be very happy to afford any information that members may desire and which has not been explained in the papers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded.

Bill read the second time.

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSIONS ORDINANCES.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER moved the second reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Widows and Orphans Pensions Ordinances of 1890 and 1891 (Nos. 30 of 1890 and 18 of 1891). He said that if any explanations were required he would be glad to give them in Committee.

Bill read the second time.

Council went into Committee and the Bill was reported without amendment.

THE POLICE FORCE CONSOLIDATION ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to moved the second reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance to further amend the Police Force Consolidation Ordinance, 14 of 1887. The Ordinance makes some slight changes in two sections of Ordinance 14 of 1887, which is the present law regulating the police force, and these alterations are very simple. It seems very undesirable that Chinese constables, for instance, should be able to get a quinquennial bonus of three months' full pay in lieu of a passage home to their own country. It was intended

to afford constables a holiday at the end of five years and when the passage money was as much as three months' pay there was no objection to a constable receiving three months' pay as a bonus if he did not wish to go home. The right is now restricted by section 2 of this Ordinance. In future it will be for a constable to elect at the end of each five years of service either to get a free passage home or else a bonus equal to the cost of that passage provided such sum does not exceed three months' pay. Section 3 gives the Governor power to withdraw distinctive badges or medals for long and faithful or extraordinary services in cases of subsequent misconduct. The fourth section makes some alterations in the numbers of the Police force, and gives the Governor power to state generally how many should be drafted to the various departments.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read the second time.

Council went into Committee.

Bill read clause by clause and passed.

FIRE INQUIRIES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the second reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance to authorize in certain cases judicial investigations into the causes of fire. The Ordinance 23 of 1888 could be worked properly only by two Magistrates, because it provided that one Magistrate shall hold the preliminary enquiry and then if there was any charge made against anybody who was suspected of having committed any offence, such as arson, the evidence, before he was committed for trial, had to be taken by another Magistrate. Therefore the decision to have only one Magistrate rendered the previous Ordinance practically inoperative; therefore it has to be altered. Section 6 in the previous Ordinance seemed undesirable. It provided that no use should be made at all of evidence taken at the preliminary enquiry against a prisoner, because I suppose it was thought it would be hard to use evidence which was not taken in the presence of a prisoner. But the section did not say that the evidence could not be used in his favour, and I recollect in one case we had some difficulty, as the section was so worded that it was questionable whether we could make use of the evidence at all, even indirectly. I find the section was inserted when the 1888 Bill was passed, and I think it might well come out. The other alterations are scarcely worth mentioning, and there are one or two verbal alterations to make the Bill clearer. The only clause about which there might be any discussion is that about the examining of witnesses. Section 4 reads, "It shall be lawful for any Inspector of Police or for any interested person present at such investigation, with the leave of the Magistrate, to examine the witnesses and to cause such persons to be examined as may give

due and proper information touching such case of fire." These words are precisely the same as those in the Ordinance which has been in force since 1888, and I have not thought it right to make any alteration. On one occasion there was some public criticism on the way in which the Magistrate exercised his discretion. I do not think we can interfere with the discretion of the Magistrate who conducts the inquiry. In nearly all the cases in which he has exercised his discretion satisfaction has been expressed. There was one case in which some dissatisfaction was expressed, but I would not like to say the Magistrate was wrong. I think you must give him power to stop examination if necessary, and the sole question is how he should exercise that power. If it is thought desirable to examine personally or by counsel I shall have no objection to alter the clause. I now beg to propose the second reading of the Ordinance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read the second time.

Council went into Committee.

Clause 4.—The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER—Are the words "present at such investigation" necessary?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I do not mind the words coming out: certainly the person examining would have to be "present at such investigation."

It was resolved to make the following alteration:—"It shall be lawful interested person, with the leave of the Magistrate, to examine at such investigation, personally or by counsel or solicitor, &c."

The Bill was reported and Council resumed.

THE BRITISH POSSESSIONS PROBATE ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to provide for the recognition in the colony of probates and letters of administration granted in British possessions.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read the second time.

Council went into Committee and the Bill was reported without amendment.

The Bill was then read a third time and passed.

THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I have the honour to move the second reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance to further amend "The Bankruptcy Ordinance, 1891." As I have already written my reasons I do not propose to detain you long, but if further explanations are asked for by hon. members I shall be glad to give them. Section 1 carries out the instructions received from the Secretary of State as to the payment into the Treasury of fees and commissions by the Official Receiver. Section 2 seeks to remedy a hardship under the Bankruptcy Ordinance of 1891. In this colony cases often arise of Chinese traders in difficulties commencing to remove their goods for the purpose of putting them beyond the

reach of their creditors. Proceedings taken at considerable expense by a creditor who gets an order of the Court for seizure of the goods may, in the event of a bankruptcy petition being filed, simply result in the preservation of those goods for the general body of creditors at the cost of that particular creditor. It seems only just that, in such cases, the Court should have power in its discretion to allow a priority to the costs of the legal proceedings of the creditor whose exertions have thus benefited the estate, similar to that at present accorded to the costs of the bankruptcy petitioner.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read the second time.

Council went into Committee and the Bill was reported without amendment.

The Bill was then read a third time and passed.

THE MARKETS ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—I beg to move the second reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance to further amend "The Cattle Diseases, Slaughter-houses, and Markets Ordinance, 1887." I may say this Bill was brought forward at the request of the Sanitary Board. Hon. members will remember that last year an Ordinance was passed making it an offence to forge the broad arrow brand which is required to be stamped by an officer upon all animals taken into the slaughter-house to be killed. Some little time ago a case arose in which a drover drove a steer into a slaughter-house. The animal had the broad arrow stamped upon it, but it turned out that the mark was forged, and before the Inspector detected it the animal was killed and its hide taken off. The drover was summoned, but it was found impossible to prove that he applied the mark; he said he was in total ignorance as to the way it got on. Unless it could be proved who put the brand on a conviction could not be obtained. The Magistrate required very strict proof of that, and it turned out that it was always very difficult to prove who did put the brand on. The Sanitary Board came to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary to prevent animals with a forged mark from being introduced into slaughter-houses and there slaughtered, and this Ordinance not only hits the drover but the owner as well, as they are both liable in cases of contravention of the Ordinance. On conviction the animal will be forfeited, and the forfeiture will prevent a rejected or unfit animal from being surreptitiously disposed of for human food. I trust this will meet the views of hon. members. I may add that it is almost impossible by legislation to meet all the dodges and subterfuges which are resorted to by persons who wish to introduce diseased meat into the market.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to second that. I trust that hon. members will consent to the Ordinance being passed to-day, seeing that it is so very near Christmas and that meat is a prime necessity on that festive occasion.

Bill read the second time.

Council went into Committee, and the Bill was reported without amendment.

The Bill was then read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

His EXCELLENCY—The Council now sits in Finance Committee and I adjourn the Council until next Thursday at 3.30.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was then held. The COLONIAL SECRETARY presided and all the members were present.

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

The CHAIRMAN—Hon. members are aware that our object to-day is to consider the Appropriation Bill, and I propose that we adopt on this occasion the course which has previously been followed, that is, to take each item on the Bill, and explanations can be given on any item that hon. members ask about. I take it that that course is agreeable to hon. members.

The whole of the items were adopted with the exception of one—Military Expenditure \$440,215. In regard to this,

Hon C. P. CHATER said—I would ask that consideration of this item be postponed till the next meeting. The answer from the Secretary of State to his Excellency's despatch was received by the Unofficial Members late on Monday afternoon, and we have scarcely had time to consider so important a question. I would therefore ask that the consideration of this question be postponed till this day week.

The CHAIRMAN—I do not quite understand the hon. member. Do you mean to say that the consideration of this question should be postponed in the Finance Committee till next week?

Hon C. P. CHATER—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN—Do I understand you to mean that we are to hold an adjourned meeting of the Finance Committee before the meeting of Council, so that we can consider this item in Finance Committee first and then in Council?

Hon C. P. CHATER—Certainly.

Hon HO KAI—In consequence of the despatches laid on the table to-day we should like to have some little time to study them.

The CHAIRMAN—I am sure the Government has no desire to hurry the consideration of this matter, but the despatch, of course, has been in the hands of the Unofficial Members for some days, and it was also published in the press at the earliest opportunity.

However, on the understanding—

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—We understood, at the meeting we had to-day, that there are other despatches of a former date from the Governor containing certain recommendations in support of what had been represented to the Government by the Unofficial Members in the matter of the £40,000 contribution. If those despatches could be supplied to us it would enable us to give fuller consideration to this important item than we would otherwise be able to give it.

The CHAIRMAN—I think all the important despatches have been printed and laid on the Council table.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I understood several despatches had been written by the Governor. At the opening of the Council last year in his address he stated, I think, and also on some other occasion that he had been in communication with the Secretary of State and had forwarded the views of the Unofficial Members on this subject.

The CHAIRMAN—I will ask his Excellency if he has any other information to give the members, but it must be clearly understood that this item must be brought on at the Council next Thursday. It is important that the estimates should reach home at an early date, and there can be no delay after next Thursday.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—If there are any other despatches will you let the Unofficial Members have copies within the next few days?

The CHAIRMAN—I am unable to answer any question of that kind. I think if his Excellency had had other information of use to the Unofficial Members he would have laid it on the table. It is impossible to wait any longer than next Thursday. In fact, it is at the special request of Unofficials delay has taken place already. The Government does not want to appear to hurry discussion, but it is necessary that the estimates should reach home at an early date. I understand the Committee has no objection to adjourn till next Thursday, say till a quarter to three.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL—What time is the Council meeting?

The CHAIRMAN—At half-past three.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Members might not have time to say all they have to say before the meeting of Council, and we could not keep the Council waiting.

The CHAIRMAN—I think a quarter to three will be early enough.

Hon. C. P. CHATER assented.

The CHAIRMAN—As the hon. member on my left suggests, Wednesday might be a more convenient day.

Hon. HO KAI—We shall want Wednesday for ourselves.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—I think a quarter to three on Thursday would be very convenient.

The CHAIRMAN—That gives us three quarters of an hour. I hope hon. members will have made up their minds so fully on the subject that discussion will not be necessary.

Hon. C. P. CHATER—Our minds are made up, but we want to consider the mode of procedure. There is not one amongst us who has not made up his mind to vote against it, but what other course of procedure we may follow we do not know.

The CHAIRMAN—The Government does not desire to appear to hurry matters, and it is

agreed to meet on Thursday next at half-past two. I trust that will be convenient for Officials and Unofficial Members. This item is therefore left over for consideration until next Thursday.

The Public Works Extraordinary items were then passed *en bloc*.

ADJOURNMENT.

The CHAIRMAN—The Committee stands adjourned until Thursday next at 2.30. That is all the business, gentlemen.

