

28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 1898.

PRESENT:—

His EXCELLENCY the ACTING GOVERNOR, Major-General BLACK, C.B.

Hon. J. H. STEWART LOCKHART (Colonial Secretary).

Hon. W. M. GOODMAN (Attorney-General).

Hon. R. MURRAY RUMSEY (Harbour Master).

Hon. F. H. MAY, C.M.G. (Captain Superintendent of Police).

Hon. T. SERCOMBE SMITH (Colonial Treasurer).

Hon. R. D. ORMSBY (Director of Public Works).

Hon. C. P. CHATER, C.M.G.

Hon. HO KAI.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS.

Hon. J. J. BELL-IRVING.

Hon. WEI A YUK.

Mr. J. G. T. BUCKLE (Clerk of Councils).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

THE NEW GOVERNOR.

His EXCELLENCY—Before beginning the business of the day, I may mention to you the nature of a telegram that I have received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which he intimates that Sir Henry Blake will leave England on or about the 1st of May.

FINANCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY submitted the Report of the Finance Committee (No. 1) and moved its adoption.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

Carried.

THE PROPOSED NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

His EXCELLENCY—In regard to the resolution of the Director of Public Works on the

subject of the new Government Offices, I think it is hardly necessary to move the resolution again. It was moved at the last meeting of Council and therefore it is better just to continue the discussion upon it.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Before the resolution is discussed, may I move the resolution which stands in my name, in connection with the new Government Offices?

His EXCELLENCY—In reality you may move the motion now, but the Government do not propose to put the paper asked for on the table. The whole of the information contained in that paper relative to the question of the Government buildings has been before you in the other papers—absolutely the whole of it. I think I am right, Mr. Colonial Secretary, in saying that. I have read it myself and I think I am right in saying that the whole of the information regarding the Government Offices is before you. That is my impression.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—There is nothing, sir, in that despatch which would in any way facilitate the consideration of the question, which has been before the public for some time, and nothing which would enable us to come to a speedy decision on the question under discussion.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I would point out that that despatch, dated 5th June, 1896, requests the Government to forward the report by the Committee appointed to report on the Government Offices, and any further explanations the Government may wish to give. I submit, sir—

His EXCELLENCY—Are you moving the motion now? I have told you already that the Government do not propose to put a copy of the covering despatch on the table for the reasons I have just stated.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—I think, sir, with your permission, I will move the motion that stands in my name:—"That the Government lay upon the table a copy of its covering despatch forwarding to the Colonial Office the Report, dated 23rd November, 1896, of the Committee appointed 8th September, 1894, by His Excellency Sir William Robinson to report on the condition of the Government Offices and the desirability of locating the various Government departments under one roof, together with a copy of further explanations the Government may have given in connection therewith and as called for by the Secretary of State's despatch No. 126 of 5th June, 1896." Sir, the contents of that despatch, I feel sure, would be of very great interest to unofficial members. Certain plans were prepared by the former Director of Public Works, which, I understand, the Committee appointed by Sir W. Robinson to inquire into the question, condemned. From a leading article in the *Daily Press* of the 3rd of this month, I observe that—"The plans sent home, and which have been condemned by Messrs. Webb and Bell, the Colonial Office Consulting Architects, are those for which Mr. Cooper, the late Director of Public Works, was responsible. As they had already been condemned by the Committee appointed to consider the matter, it seems a little unfortunate that they should not have been at once discarded and competitive designs invited, for their submission to Messrs. Webb and Bell has only resulted in delay and needless expense." It would, sir, be of interest to know whether the plans which were condemned by the Committee were really those which the Government sent home. We cannot, I think, decide on this question thoroughly until we have the despatch from the Government with any further explanations the Government may have deemed it expedient to give the Secretary of State.

HIS EXCELLENCY—The resolution is not seconded. The next motion is in the name of the Director of Public Works. That motion has already been moved and the discussion may now proceed.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Sir, if I may be allowed to ask a question before the discussion is commenced I would like an explanation from the Director of Public Works. At the last meeting of Council he said, "The resolution I have proposed commits the Council to nothing." I should like to know what that really means. I do not understand it.

HIS EXCELLENCY—A question of that sort can hardly be asked. The discussion must proceed. The Director of Public Works has the right of reply after the motion has been argued by the hon. gentlemen present, and perhaps then the Director of Public Works will refer to the statement he has made, but the discussion must now proceed in the ordinary way.

The members then proceeded to discuss the

resolution, which was in the following terms:—"That in the opinion of this Council it is expedient—(a) To construct the New Law Courts and accessory offices on Plot No. 2 on the New Reclamation, namely, the larger of the two lots reserved for Government Offices, immediately in front of the City Hall; and (b) to retain the sites of the present Post Office and Supreme Court for the erection of a new Post Office, which should also afford accommodation for the Treasury and such other offices as may be decided on."

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—Your Excellency, in support of the resolution which is now before the Council and in connection with the recent report of the Public Works Committee on the proposed new Government Offices, I wish to offer a few remarks. I think they are called for, inasmuch as I am put on my defence by the action of the hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce, who entered a protest against my voting on the division which took place. He has asserted that he took this course because I as an interested party ought not to vote. In that case I respectfully suggest that he should have included the hon. member representing the Bench of Justices in his protest. My interest in this matter is small compared to that of the last named gentleman, whose extensive holdings on the Praya frontage are so well known. The property known as Beaconsfield, which the hon. Director of Public Works proposes the Government should purchase, was not offered by me; it was leased for a period of ten years at a rental of \$400 per month to Butterfield and Swire and considering the rise in rents since then it is now cheaply let at a rental of \$425 per month for six years to the Government, which will give me a return of 6 per cent. per annum on the proposed purchase money. I am spending a large sum on its repair and improvement, and I consider it to be worth more than the amount named. At any rate it is worth that to me, and it is immaterial to me whether it is purchased from me or not. Beaconsfield covers an area of 14,754 square feet, \$80,000 for the whole property would make a square foot worth \$5.42  $\frac{1}{2}$ , a very low price indeed compared to \$12 a square foot, a valuation put upon the present Post Office site by the hon. senior unofficial member. The hon. members opposite may entertain doubts in regard to the accuracy of this valuation. In that case they have my full consent to lay before the Government for sale any of their own houses provided it is cheaper than, and is as suitable as, Beaconsfield.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Excuse me one moment, Mr. Belilios. Will you kindly read the motion before the Council, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk of Councils thereupon read the motion.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS.—The removal of the Post Office and Treasury to the Praya would of course materially enhance the value of the adjoining lots, by ensuring the immediate occupancy at high rents of the great blocks in course of erection or to be erected there, and hence my hon. friend's anxiety to see these offices removed thither.

HIS EXCELLENCY—No, no, I do not think that is legitimate, Mr. Belilios. I do not think you should impute motives.

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—They attacked me.

HIS EXCELLENCY—No attack has been made in this Council on you, Mr. Belilios. I must ask you to keep to the point. I should have defended you if there had been an attack, because I am certainly satisfied that you acted as an honest man in the interests of the community, but you must not cast aspersions on hon. gentlemen who have not said anything to which you can take objection. (Hear, hear).

Hon. E. R. BELILIOS—The convenience of a large majority of the public has obviously been lost sight of by the hon. gentlemen opposite, who have been unable to set aside their own interests. The hon. member for the Justices, in his scheme, proposes to build a lofty Post Office on a portion of the marine lot on the Praya. He proposes out of 34,230 square feet of valuable land to utilize only 25,867 square feet, leaving 8,363 square feet for yards, thus sacrificing some \$80,000 of the public funds. Surely the hon. member will not for one moment think of dealing with land belonging to himself in this manner. On the contrary he will build to the very utmost limit of his boundary. He bases his estimates and figures on mere supposition, bare opinion. The figures I propose to place before the Council are based on authority—on the report of the Commission. It never occurred to the members of the Commission to retain the Post Office and Treasury on their present site; their attention was too much riveted to the Government reserves on the Reclamation. The question was therefore never discussed by them. Thanks, however, to the arrival of the present Director of Public Works we have new ideas and a proposal which will not only save the colony a large sum of money but secure its greatest convenience. My hon. friend opposite contends that the site of the present Post Office is more valuable than the Praya sites; if that is really the case it is so because the position is more central, and therefore better adapted for the purpose. By utilizing the present site we should also save a large sum in piling foundations and by using some of the present materials. I am confident the public are in favour of the scheme put forward by the Director of

Public Works, and I believe my hon. friends opposite, if not unconsciously biased by their own interests or inclinations, would be compelled to admit its superior advantages. Turning now to the memorandum of my hon. friend the member representing the Bench of Justices, he has there in set down three items, viz., \$150,000, \$40,000 and \$50,000 or an aggregate of \$240,000 as the sum required to erect his ideal block of Government Offices on Plot No. 1, the marine lot in front of the City Hall and close to the Hongkong Club. On reference to page 8 of the report of the Commission appointed to consider this question, it will be found that \$700,000 is laid down as the amount necessary to cover Plots 1 and 2 with buildings. The hon. member on my right (Mr. Ormsby) proposes to devote \$400,000 of this sum to the erection of new Law Courts on Plot No. 2 next to the City Hall. This will leave \$300,000 for the provision of Post Office and other departmental buildings. My hon. friend the member for the Justices is therefore out in his calculations to the extent of \$60,000. This is a detail of course, but in making calculations of this kind it is well to be exact, if possible. The building area at the disposal of the Government at present is—

	square feet.
Plot No. 1 on Reclamation .....	34,230
Plot No. 2 „ „ .....	49,630
Total .....	83,860
Of this it is proposed to sell Plot 1 ..	34,230
Leaving .....	49,630
Add sites of present Post Office and Supreme Court House (to be retained) .....	25,860
Add area occupied by "Beaconsfield" (to be purchased) .....	14,754
or a total of .....	90,250

square feet. After purchasing Beaconsfield the Government (supposing it adopts this scheme of the Director of Public Works) would have at its disposal an extra area of 6,391 square feet of land for building purposes. This would be partially carrying out the recommendation of the architects consulted by the Crown agents, for in their report they tell us that the area of 83,860 square feet now at the disposal of the Government is not sufficient for the requirements. By purchasing Beaconsfield therefore an expenditure of \$63,910 would be saved, because

to acquire 6,391 square feet of land in the vicinity of Queen's Road at least \$10 per square foot would have to be paid. I think this is sufficiently demonstrated. Now for the funds required. The report of the Commission shows (on page 9) the aggregate sum needed to be ..... \$557,600

Mr. Ormsby in his memorandum, however, does not recommend the erection, at present, of a store house for the Public Works Department. We can therefore 90,000 deduct ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Leaving ..... \$467,60  
0

The estimated cost of Mr. Ormsby's scheme is .....	162,000
Which deduct from the amount named by the Commission, leaves .....	\$305,600
Or including the surplus area of 6,391 square feet (acquired if Beaconsfield be purchased) at \$10 per foot .....	63,910
This means a total saving to the colony of .	\$369,510

by the adoption of the scheme of my hon. friend on my right. This is a very large saving, and the scheme should be adopted without hesitation, more especially if we endorse the gloomy views of our financial position taken by the hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce, who a few weeks back prognosticated in this Council that in our gold engagements alone the colony stands to lose one million of dollars. If, however, for the sake of economy, it is subsequently deemed desirable to add one, two, or three extra stories to the proposed two-storied structure in Queen's Road instead of continuing to occupy the cool, airy, and quiet quarters secured for the officials in Beaconsfield, the money so saved will go to still further augment the \$369,510 I have already mentioned as the amount saved by the adoption of the scheme of the Director of Public Works. With these remarks, Sir, I beg to record my vote for the resolution which is now before the Council. This resolution contains nothing about the purchase of Beaconsfield; therefore the hon. member opposite can have no ground to lodge another protest against my voting on this occasion.

Hon. T. H. WHITEHEAD—Your Excellency, I rise to make a few remarks, and to begin with I would state emphatically that I am pledged to no scheme. I am here with an open mind. I am not interested in property on the new Praya Reclamation or elsewhere and I am here to vote for the scheme which will be the most efficient, give us the best service and be the most economical. (Hear, hear.) Your Excellency at the last meeting of Council said that the whole community had had ample time to consider this question. Sir, the question which the community have had time to consider is the question as put before the Government by the Committee appointed by Sir William Robinson in September, 1894,—the Committee that sat for two years and two months and reported in a report dated 23rd November, 1896. That Committee, sir, was composed of five members. Two of them were the former Director of Public Works and the officer

holding the dual office of Postmaster-General and Treasurer. In regard, sir, to the late Director of Public Works, all will admit that he was an extremely able and a most industrious officer—(hear, hear)—and one thoroughly independent and thoroughly competent to advise the Government as to what was best for the proposed new Government offices. I will now refer, sir, to the lay members of the Committee. There was Mr. Jackson, who has had an experience—a very practical experience—of the colony during the last thirty-four years. Mr. McConachie, another member of that Committee, has been Chairman of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and has also had an experience of some thirty years of the colony. The senior unofficial member (Mr. Chater) has also had an experience of upwards of thirty-five years of the colony. I submit therefore that that Committee was thoroughly representative of the community, and they unanimously reported in favour of the retention of the sites in front of the City Hall for the proposed new Government offices. That scheme differs from the one propounded by the Director of Public Works a few weeks after his arrival here. If in the course of another month another Director of Public Works arrives possibly he may have another scheme; but the absence of continuity on the part of the Crown colonial Government is a defect in that system. The Committee appointed by Sir William Robinson recommended the retention and utilization of the sites on the Praya Reclamation in front of the City Hall. No doubt the sale of the site of the present Post Office would be unpleasant to many, partly on account of sentiment and otherwise. There is a feeling that if it were sold it would be converted into Chinese houses and bring the Chinese into the midst of the European part of the town; but these reasons will not stand. We may be sorry at the removal of an old land mark, but the site of the present Post Office, I am assured on the very best authority—experts and other gentlemen outside of this Council—is more valuable by forty to fifty per cent. than the present site opposite the Hongkong Club. The Director of Public Works at the last meeting of Council said:— "My office is resorted to at all hours of the day by overseers, contractors, and land-holders, and to have a stream of such constantly passing up a two-storey building would be most objectionable to all the other offices in the block." That little difficulty might be very easily got over by making a separate entrance which would have no connection whatever between the two offices. The financial side of the scheme is one with which I am not satisfied. I am informed on the very best authority, after careful investigation and calculation, that it will be a long time before the front site on the reclamation can be sold at the

valuation placed upon it. Some estimate the value at twenty per cent. less than that placed upon it by the Director of Public Works. There are other schemes, however, which could be suggested. Why not add one or two storeys to the building in which we are now? The foundations are amply sufficient to carry two more floors and to

yield the best offices, certainly as good offices as any in the colony for light, air and ventilation. I am afraid, sir, that this question has not been approached without bias and without prejudice, but opinions are divided and there is no hurry to push forward with this scheme. The Government have provided extra accommodation for the Post Office and have also leased Beaconsfield. Your Excellency at the last meeting said the Government were most anxious to know the real wish of the colony on the subject because it is a matter which not only affects us now but affects the colony for all time, at least as far as we are concerned for the next fifty or sixty years. That is true. The colony, I believe, sir, is in its infancy, as it has been decided to open the internal waters of the vast Empire of China to foreign trade and steam navigation. Therefore, if the Government really wish to meet the wish of the community in this matter, involving the expenditure of three-quarters of a million of dollars, I would suggest that the Government follow the same course as was followed recently by the appointment of a small Committee of five, presided over by an impartial Chairman, to wit, the Chief Justice, invite suggestions for fresh proposals to be sent in within a fortnight take further evidence and report to this Council. All that could be done within six weeks or two months at the outside. It is, I agree cordially with the Government, most desirable to facilitate matters for the Chinese in regard to the new Post Office, but the question of the distance between the front site on the Reclamation and the present Post Office is but a matter of three and a half minutes. To walk it would take only three and a half minutes, while to go in a ricksha is a question of two minutes. Take, on the other hand, the question of wharves. Pedder's wharf is the most important wharf in the colony. It is already—at all events it will be when ready—as it was in former years, overburdened with traffic, and to land mails there it would be necessary to take them from the launch to the wharf, from the wharf to a trolley, from a trolley to the present Post Office site, and then carry them into the Post Office. Whereas if the front site on the Reclamation is utilized there is Queen's Statue wharf which could be used for mail purposes and the mails could be carried to the Post Office across a 75 feet street and *vice versa*. There is much to be said on the financial side of the question, and therefore I am not now in a position to record my vote in favour of the second portion of the resolution. I quite agree with the first portion, but I submit that the Council are not now in a position to vote until we have made further

enquiries and satisfied ourselves as to the financial side of the scheme brought forward by the Director of Public Works, which scheme is entirely at variance with the recommendations of the Committee, who sat for two years and two months. I may just one word more. The reason why I question the value placed on the front site on the reclamation is this, that the new blocks of offices already in course of construction, and others which are about to be constructed are, I understand, all already let. The principal firms, the insurance companies, the shipping and other companies have been secured as tenants for these offices on long leases. I have a list of those firms and companies, over a score in all, who have already been booked. And, sir, all the Banks own their premises or hold them on long leases, while the other principal firms—Jardine, Matheson and Co., Butterfield and Swire, and the P. and O. Company—own their premises.

Hon. HO KAI—I rise, sir, to make a few remarks in support of the motion. Notwithstanding what the hon. member for the Chamber of Commerce has said that the Council are not ready or not in a position to vote on this question, I contend, on the contrary, that we have had a long time to consider this question and we ought really to come to a speedy decision. I remember some time ago the hon. gentleman I refer to was just on the contrary track. He rather blamed the Government for not bringing this question forward in a speedy manner, as his idea of a Commission appointed to enquire into a particular subject was that it was always equivalent to shelving the question altogether. Now, on the contrary, he wishes your Excellency to appoint another Commission to enquire into this question. It is all very well for the hon. member to say it might finish its work in six weeks, but as far as my experience goes a Commission lasts a good deal longer than six weeks; it lasts ten times longer than that and perhaps two years. Now, I say I come to this Council with just as open a mind as the hon. member who has just spoken. I shall vote for the most economical and most efficient scheme, and at the same time I shall also vote for the most convenient scheme of all—the scheme that is proved to be the most convenient to the public, not to a section of the public, but to the majority. Sir, whether the new scheme proposed by the Director of Public Works is the more economical or not is the question we have to consider. It has the advantage over the other three schemes of saving three lakhs of dollars or more, and even if we take off the amount

which the hon. member (Mr. Whitehead) says ought to be deducted from it, say twenty per cent., it would still be more economical by a sum of nearly two lakhs of dollars. Whether the scheme is efficient or not is a matter no doubt for those who will have to occupy the main premises, that is to say, the Postmaster-General, the Treasurer, the Director of Public Works himself, and others. Whether the new scheme would provide enough room for them and in the most convenient



form they can give their own testimony upon, but assuming for the present that they are in favour of the scheme, there is therefore no doubt that the scheme proposed by the Director of Public Works would be the most efficient. Now I say that the keeping of the Post Office and the Treasury on the present site is undoubtedly the most convenient to the majority of the European community—(hear, hear)—and decidedly so to all the Chinese community; and as representing the Chinese community I must say that so far as I know their opinion is unanimously in favour of keeping the Post Office and the Treasury on the present site. An assertion has been made that the Post Office is generally and mostly used by large European firms. Now, sir, I would remind the gentleman who made that statement that during the last few years we have tried our utmost to make the Chinese use the Post Office, and it will not do after having got the Chinese to make use of the Post Office to remove it some five minutes' or even three and a half minutes' walk away from the central position of the town and entailing on them an extra two cents in the hire of a ricksha. And, furthermore, the Chinese make use of the Treasury more than the Europeans. The European sends his cheque in payment of rates, taxes, and so on, but the Chinese have to go to the Treasury and pay in cash and get a receipt from the Treasurer. In that way also three and a half minutes' walk more or less to the Chinese would be a great hardship. Of course if other cases have to be considered we may force the Chinese to walk a little further, but since we can save a couple of lakhs of dollars by this scheme I really do not see why we should vote for the Post Office and Treasury to be removed to a plot of land a long distance away from the centre of the town. Especially to remove that site would be an inconvenience to the majority of the European community as well. For these reasons I have no hesitation in supporting the new scheme as propounded by the Director of Public Works, and I shall cordially support the resolution that he has proposed.

Hon. WEI YUK—Sir, I quite concur with all that the hon. member (Hon. Ho Kai) has said.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—Sir, I came prepared this afternoon to combat arguments against the resolution, but I am in the pleasant position of not being called upon to do so. It appears to me, sir, that the first consideration—the chief consideration—in regard to the Post Office site is that it should be on

the main road, and, other things being equal, I think that the old site is as suitable for the purpose of a Post Office as any new site. I do not think there can be any question for a moment that the old site is more central than the new site. It seems to me, sir, that the old site is a most commanding site. If you knock down the Clock Tower, as I believe it is the intention of the Government to do, you will have a very fine frontage to the east and you have already a fairly wide road on the south, and with the skill of the builder we could no doubt have a building surrounded on all four sides by roads. Now, sir, it has not been stated in this Council to-day—but I may as well refer to that point—that there is doubt in some quarters about the sufficiency of light and air on the old site. If you have roads all round the building it seems to me that that question in the hands of skilled workmen, and skilled designers, is a question that could be very easily solved. It is not a question of superfluity of light. Undoubtedly the position on the Praya would give a good deal more light than the old site, but the question is could the old site provide sufficient air and light? I think there can be no doubt—in view of proper construction of windows, &c., and an open space all round the building—that the building would be furnished with sufficient light and air. Something has been said to-day about the great advantage in the saving of time if you could transfer the mails from the wharf just across a 75-feet road. Suppose that saves two minutes. Those persons who wait for their mails—the Chinese and the Europeans living on the upper levels—will have to go a further walk after getting their letters, so really it is not a saving to them. It may be a saving to the Post Office, but I think the matter which should be considered is the convenience of the public. There is one portion of the community who are peculiarly located. I mean the residents of Kowloon. How about their claims? Is the old site or the new site more convenient to them? Is it more convenient to land at the old Pedder's Wharf and go to the old site or to land at the old Pedder's Wharf and go to the new site? With regard to the remarks which the hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce made about the original Committee having sat for two years and two months considering the scheme for the erection of Government buildings and then unanimously considering that the proper site for the Post Office was on the Praya, I surmise that that question of building on the old site was never brought before the Committee. Nor does any sentiment enter into the question of retaining the old site; it is a matter of

convenience and neither the people of Hongkong nor the members of this Council have any sentimental regrets. I do not propose to deal with the financial side of the scheme because I do not think it is before the Council. However, if I am allowed, I should like to say that I have worked out the figures, and it appears to me that whichever way we look at it the building of offices on the old site is the most economical scheme that has been put before us. I think, sir, that we are in need of new offices, and I think we should hurry on this work as fast as we can. Now with regard to my own

office, the Treasury, I am quite of opinion that the Treasury ought to be re-erected on its present site, and I think the balance of convenience points that way. I have here rough figures showing, the number of Europeans who might use the Treasury and the number of Chinese. The number of European owners of tenement in Victoria and the villages is 297 and the number of Chinese owners of tenements, in Victoria alone is 1,066. That seems to prove conclusively as far as the population is concerned that the balance of convenience is in favour of the Treasury being where it is.

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—I think there is very little for me to reply to, but I should like to make some remarks with regard to the statements by the hon. member for the Chamber of Commerce. It may have been a slip when he described the site of the old Post Office as being the centre of the European portion of the town. As I say, it may have been a slip, and if it was I do not wish to take advantage of it; but that description could not be applied to the site on the front of the Praya, which, when the Naval reclamation is completed, will be at one corner, I may say, of the business quarter of the town. There is the harbour in front on one side and the Naval reclamation a few hundred yards on the other side. With regard to the sale of Plot 1, I said nothing in my resolution about the financial side of the question. I said that the Post Office and the Treasury could be built on the present site for \$90,000. I have gone into the figures in several different ways and I am convinced that the estimate is a very fair one. I said nothing about the sale of lot No. 1, because I hope eventually that it will not be necessary to sell that at all. The Hongkong and Shanghai Bank have treated the colony in a most handsome manner, leaving two front lots vacant, while they also gave up a strip of land on each side of their building, widening Wardley Street and the old Praya, and they also gave up a strip of land on the south side, an act which unfortunately was not copied by the

building next to it. With regard to the remark that there is no need for hurry, the present state of the Post Office shows there is considerable need for hurry. Never in my experience have I seen a Post Office worse arranged or more inconvenient than the Hongkong Post Office. There is no proper place to put the mails, no security, and confusion runs in the place because there are no proper arrangements and no space. Therefore I think considerable hurry is necessary. With regard to the new Pedder's Wharf, I think perhaps it is not known that the new pier has been ordered. It will be 200 feet long and 40 feet wide and certainly the finest in the harbour. It has already been ordered from England and when it is erected there will be no fear whatever of overcrowding it even with the ferry service. There will be plenty of room for the mails to be brought in there and to be transferred by means of a tramway—as I hope they will be—into the new Post Office. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was then put and carried by a majority of eight votes. Hon. T. H. Whitehead and Hon. C. P. Chater voted against the resolution.

#### THE PRISON ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to further amend The Prison Ordinance, 1885.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages as no alteration was made in Committee.

#### NATURALIZATION ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance for the Naturalization of Leung P'ui Chi, alias Leung Chak Ch'ang, alias Leung Chung.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Bill read a second time and passed through its remaining stages.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.