

14TH FEBRUARY, 1901.

PRESENT:—

His EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR (SIR HENRY BLAKE, G.C.M.G.).

Hon. J. H. STEWART LOCKHART, C.M.G. (Colonial Secretary).

Hon. W. MEIGH GOODMAN, K.C. (Attorney-General).

Hon. A. M. THOMSON (Colonial Treasurer).

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

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

Hon. BASIL TAYLOR (Acting Harbour Master)

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

Hon. Dr. HO KAI.

Hon. J. THURBURN.

Hon. R. M. GRAY.

Hon. J. J. KESWICK.

Hon. WEI A YUK.

Mr. R. F. JOHNSTON (Acting Clerk of Councils).

PAPER.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the report of the Widows and Orphans' Pension Fund for the year 1900 and also the report of the Superintendent of Victoria Gaol for the year 1900.

FINANCIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table Financial Minute No. 8 and moved that it be referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was carried.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the report of the Finance Committee, and moved its adoption.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded and the motion was carried.

THE LAWS RELATING TO TRUSTEES.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL laid on the table the report of the Standing Law Committee as to the Bill entitled an Ordinance to consolidate and amend the laws relating to trustees, and gave notice that at the next meeting of the Council he would move that the Bill be read a third time.

THE SALARIES OF SUBORDINATE OFFICERS.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S REPLY.

The Hon. R. M. GRAY—I beg to ask the question of which I have given due notice.

The question was as follows:—

"I should like to know what, if any, reply has been received from the Secretary of State with regard to the recommendations of the Committee appointed to enquire into and report on the salaries of subordinate officers in the Civil Service of the colony?"

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—In answer to the question of the Honourable Member, I beg to lay on the table the reply

of the Secretary of State and to inform the Council that the instructions contained in the reply are being carried out.

The reply was as follows:—

"Secretary of State to Governor, Hongkong.

"Downing Street, 31st December, 1900.

"Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 421 of 3rd October last, forwarding a copy of the report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the salaries of subordinate officers in the Hongkong Civil Service.

"2.—I have to request that you will convey my thanks to the Committee for the useful work which they have done.

"I shall be glad if you will consult the heads of departments and the Executive Council, if you have not already done so, and submit a scheme which shall to some extent combine the recommendations of the Committee with those of the Acting Colonial Secretary. Such a scheme shall contain a complete classification of the whole subordinate service, with salaries attached to grades and offices rather than to individual officers.

"4.—I shall also be glad if you would submit definite recommendations as to the systematization of their allowances.

"5.—I concur in the view of the Committee that the Government may reasonably require say seven hours' work a day from its clerks.

"I have, &c.,

"(Sd.) J. CHAMBERLAIN.

"Governor, Sir H. A. Blake, G.C.M.G."

THE NATURALISATION QUESTION.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL proposed the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to repeal all Ordinances for the Naturalisation of Persons as British Subjects within this Colony and to make provision for the Preservation of the Rights of such Persons. He said—I would like to make one remark as regards this Bill. It will be observed that all the naturalisation ordinances contain a provision that the person specified shall be naturalised upon taking the oath of allegiance, under the Promissary Oaths Ordinance, 1869. After going through the whole of the Ordinances of Naturalisation—some 60 or 70—with a view to preserving the rights of all those persons without encumbering the Statute Book, it is proposed that all these Ordinances shall be repealed, and that the present Ordinance shall take their place. Some few of these persons have not taken the oath of a l l e g i a n c e

at all. The fact is that a person who does not take the oath of allegiance after the passing of the Ordinance is not naturalised. It would be well if the notice of those of the gentlemen whose names are down here, and who have not taken the oath of allegiance, were called to the fact. The earliest of these is Pang Im, whose Ordinance was passed in 1881, but in the case of two gentlemen—Wong Ping Lam and Yeung Cheuk Hin—naturalised in 1899, there is no record of their having taken the oath. It would be as well for their attention to be drawn to the fact. I shall probably ask His Excellency's permission to insert in future ordinances of this kind a time—say six months—within which the oath of allegiance shall be taken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—It is the practice for persons naturalised to be notified as to the taking of the oath of allegiance, and there must be some reason which I am not now able to give why some of these gentlemen have not taken that oath. However, the matter shall be enquired into at once.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded and the motion was carried.

THE LAW OF LIBEL AND SLANDER.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY -GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, a Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend the Law of Libel and Slander was read a first time.

SUPREME COURT.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL proposed the third reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend and declare in certain respects the Law to be administered in the Supreme Court. He added that he had submitted to the Clerk of Councils the report of the Standing Law Committee as to the Bill. No alterations had been made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded and the motion was carried, and the Bill was read a third time and passed.

CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL proposed the third reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to establish a Code of Procedure for the Regulation of the Process, Practice, and Mode of Pleading in the Civil Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the Colony. He added that the Standing Law Committee had been through the Bill and had made no material alterations. He took that opportunity of thanking his colleagues on the Standing Law Committee for the very arduous work which they went through so cheerfully in order that there might be no delay in passing this very important measure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded and the motion was carried, and the Bill was read a third time and passed.

CIVIL PROCEDURE.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY -GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the Bill entitled An Ordinance to repeal various Statutes relating to Civil Procedure or Matters connected therewith was read a third time and passed.

MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

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

A vote of \$50 to cover the cost of the construction of a water-boiler for the use of the New Territory Police Stations was agreed to.
