

28TH MARCH, 1904.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER
ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, F. H. MAY,
C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL VILLIERS
HATTON, C.B. (Commanding the Troops).

Hon. A. M. THOMSON (Acting Colonial
Secretary).

Hon. Sir H. S. BERKELEY (Attorney-General).

Hon. L. A. M. JOHNSTON (Acting Colonial
Treasurer).

Hon. A. W. BREWIN (Registrar-General).

Hon. Captain L. A. W. BARNES-LAWRENCE
R.N. (Harbour Master).

Hon. W. CHATHAM (Director of Public
Works).

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

Hon. Dr. HO KAI, C.M.G.

Hon. WEI A YUK.

Hon. GERSHOM STEWART.

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

FINANCIAL.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the
table Financial Minutes (Nos. 19 and 20) and
moved that they be referred to the Finance
Committee.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER seconded,
and the motion was agreed to.

EMPLOYMENT OF PILOTS.

The HARBOUR MASTER moved the first
reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to
provide for and regulate the Employment of
Pilots.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded,
and the motion was agreed to.

The objects and reasons attached to this Bill
are as follows:—This Bill is designed with the
object of exercising certain control over the
existing so-called Pilots of the Colony, and thus
establish a properly constituted Pilot Service
While no natural difficulty presents itself in the
navigation of these waters it is a well-known
fact that men are largely employed for the
purpose, in vessels using the Port, though
doubtless also the masters are glad of their
services for berthing their vessels, etc. Such
being the case, it has been deemed expedient
that desirable persons only should be employed
as pilots, if duly qualified. This Bill makes
provision for the same, while it safeguards the
service being one of option to the employers.

HILL DISTRICT RESERVATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first
reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance for the
Reservation of a Residential area in the Hill
District.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded,
and the motion was agreed to.

The objects and reasons of this Bill are as follows:—
This measure has as its object the reservation of that portion of the Island of Hongkong commonly known as "the Peak" as a place of residence for persons other than Chinese. The reservation of this district is desirable in order that a healthy place of residence may be preserved for all those who are accustomed to a temperate climate and to whom life in the tropics presents the disadvantage of an unnatural environment.

BANISHMENT.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 8 of 1882 entitled "The Banishment and Conditional Pardons Ordinance, 1882."

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

This Bill is to empower the Governor in Council, in the interests of order and good government, to remove from the Colony persons who after they have acquired by naturalization the status of British subjects become a source of danger to the peace, order and good government of the Colony. The Bill provides that in case of the banishment of any naturalized person his status as a British subject shall *ipso facto* be suspended or cancelled as the case may be. Power is reserved to His Majesty to disallow any suspension or cancellation of naturalization. Somewhat similar legislation has been adopted in the Straits Settlements. The object of the Bill is the prevention of crime in the New Territories. There are in that portion of the Colony many bad characters who go about in armed gangs robbing the peaceable inhabitants. There have of late been numerous cases in which inhabitants of the New Territory have been convicted of armed robberies on junks and boats and of robberies with violence in the night-time on land and afloat with and without arms. It is desirable that power should be taken to banish, if necessary, such persons after they have undergone imprisonment. There are also cases in which persons guilty of the serious crimes mentioned, though well known, escape punishment on account of the difficulty, for fear of reprisals, in getting witnesses to come forward against them in the Law Courts. As the law stands such persons, though a constant menace to peace and good order, cannot be banished if naturalized subjects by operation of the Lease of the New Territories or otherwise. The present Bill gives power to deal by way of banishment with such bad characters, and it is believed that when they learn that they may be banished from the Territory the effect for good upon them will be considerable.

BILLS POSTPONED.

The only other items on the orders of the day were the second reading of the Bill entitled An Ordinance to amend the Prepared Opium Ordinance, 1891; and committee on the Bill entitled An Ordinance to enable effect to be given in this Colony to a Convention signed the fifth day of March nineteen hundred and two in relation to sugar.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL asked the permission of the house to allow these items to be postponed till a later sitting of the Council.

This permission was granted.

The Council adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held after the Council, the Acting Colonial Secretary (Hon. A. M. Thomson) presiding.

LAND COURT.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$13,801 in accordance with the revised Estimate for the Land Court, New Territory:—

Personal Emoluments,	\$10,881
Other Charges,	2,920
Total,	<u>\$13,801</u>

A return was laid on the table containing the revised estimate for 1904, showing the excess over the original estimate to be \$7,746.80.

The CHAIRMAN explained that when the estimates for the present year were made it was thought that six months would be sufficient in which to finish the work. Since then it had been ascertained that there was still a large amount of work to do, chiefly in the way of registering and revising. The deciding of the disputed titles had mostly been finished. The work was now being pushed on as fast as possible, and it was hoped it would be got through in a comparatively short time.

The vote was passed.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$1,895.84 in aid of the vote Public Works Recurrent, Miscellaneous Works, to clear off all liabilities in connection with the construction of the Victoria Hospital.

The CHAIRMAN said this vote was necessary because the work had not been completed last year when the necessary provision was made for it.

The vote was passed.

There was no other business.