

1ST NOVEMBER, 1906.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR MATTHEW NATHAN, K.C.M.G.

Hon. COLONEL DARLING, R.E. (Officer Commanding the Troops).

Hon. Mr. T. SERCOMBE SMITH (Colonial Secretary).

Hon. Mr. H. H. J. GOMPERTZ (Attorney-General).

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

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

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

Hon. Mr. F. J. BADELEY Captain-superintendent of Police).

Hon. Dr. Ho KAI, M.B., C.M., C.M.G.

Hon. Mr. WEI YUK.

Hon. Mr. H. E. POLLOCK, K.C.

Hon. Mr. E. A. HEWETT.

Hon. Mr. W. J. GRESSON.

Mr. A. G. M. FLETCHER (Clerk of Councils).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

NEW MEMBER.

Mr. H. H. J. Gompertz took the oath and assumed his seat as a member of the Council.

FINANCIAL MINUTES

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 84 to 90 and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Financial Minute No. 84 makes further provision of \$1,200 to repair typhoon damages incurred by the Botanical and Forestry Department. The previous vote of \$1,200 was for the purpose of repairing buildings and re-erecting trees. The present vote is for additional labour required to clear the streets of branches, etc. Financial Minute No. 85 is to provide \$180 for the hire of a house in which to carry on the work of the Land Office at Taipo, the matshed formerly used for that purpose having been destroyed by the typhoon. Financial Minute No. 86 is for an additional \$1,000 for repairs to typhoon damages incurred by the Police and Prison Departments. We have already voted \$5,000 for raising and repairing police launches and pinnaces. The present vote is for raising and beaching the floating fire engine. Financial Minute No. 87 for \$480 for light and fuel and washing at the Civil Hospital is required on account of the higher price of fuel. Financial Minute No. 88 is for \$15,000 on account of survey and preliminary work on the railway. It will be repaid to revenue from the railway loan; a vote is, however, being taken for it, as this particular part of the railway work is being paid for in the first instance by the Public Works Department. Financial Minute No. 89 makes a further provision of \$1,000 for the item, refunds of revenue. It is required on account of refund of rates for vacant houses. Financial Minute No. 90 of \$175 is to cover a few small rewards given to the junior clerks and coolies at Taipo for good work they did in assisting Mr. Clementi, the Land Officer, and Mr. Mackay, the Land Bailiff, in saving land records when the Land Office matshed was blown down in the typhoon.

FINANCIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the report of the Finance Committee (No. 11) and moved its adoption.

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

REPORT OF PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS laid on the table a report of the proceedings of the Public Works Committee (No. 2).

The report is as follows:—

The chairman laid before the Committee a chart of the Harbour, on which were shown possible sites for harbours of refuge.

The following is a statement of these:—

(i). Mongkoktsui—A detached breakwater extending from near Taikoktsui to opposite the south end of Yaumati and enclosing an area of 166 acres.

(ii). Cheungshawan. — A detached breakwater extending from near Laichikok to near Shamshuiipo and enclosing an area of 166 acres.

(iii). Stonecutters.—A detached curved breakwater off the east end of Stonecutters' Island extending from near the North-eastern point to near the South-eastern point and enclosing an area of 107 acres.

(iv). Kellett's Bank. — A breakwater extending northwards from Green Island, curving round and then extending southwards to about opposite its point of commencement and enclosing an area of 136 acres.

(v). Kennedy Town.—A curved breakwater projecting from Belcher's Point and enclosing alternatively an area of 32 or 75 acres according to the length to which it is extended.

After full discussion, it was unanimously agreed to recommend the construction of a harbour of refuge at Mongkoktsui, Mr. HEWETT favouring the construction of such a harbour either at Mongkoktsui or Cheungshawan and expressing the opinion that probably the latter site possesses greater advantages than the former.

Mr. GRESSON stated that there was a strong feeling among the boating population in favour of another harbour of refuge in the Western District, off Kennedy Town, even at the expense of curtailing the scheme proposed for the north side of the harbour. The Committee, however, considered that, unless the Government can see their way to undertake both schemes, precedence should be given to the one at Mongkoktsui.

WORKMEN'S TRAMS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—Sir, with respect to the resolution regarding the running of workmen's cars, one of the items under the heading of Business, it will be within the remembrance of hon. members that it was proposed to move this resolution last week, but owing to certain difficulties in arriving at the right figures, consideration of the resolution was adjourned until to-day. In the meantime other considerations have arisen which render it advisable

that this resolution should not be moved to-day. I therefore beg to propose that it be adjourned *sine die*.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL seconded and the motion was agreed to.

HARBOURS OF REFUGE.

Hon. Mr. POLLOCK asked the following questions standing in his name:—

1. (a). When does the Government intend to commence work on the construction of a new Harbour of Refuge?

(b). Will the Government state the respective situations, areas and estimated cost of construction of the various new Harbours of Refuge which have been suggested at different times?

2. (a). Will the Government state what is the area of the present Harbour of Refuge at Causeway Bay?

(b). Has the Government obtained any, and, if so, what estimates with reference to the dredging and deepening of the shallow portions of such Harbour of Refuge?

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS replied:—

1. (a). As soon as the necessary plans and estimates can be prepared.

(b). The situations are more particularly described in the Report of Proceedings of the Public Works Committee, which has been laid on the table. No reliable estimates of the cost of the various schemes can be given without extensive preliminary work, but the following are roughly approximate figures for purposes of comparison:—

(1). Mongkoktsui	166 acres	—————	\$600,000
(2). Cheungshawan	166 acres	—————	\$600,000
(3). Stonecutters	107 acres	—————	\$765,000
(4). Kellett's Bank	136 acres	—————	\$1,170,000
(5). Kennedy Town:—			
	Small scheme	32 acres	—————\$360,000
	Large scheme	75 acres	—————\$600,000

2. (a). Area 57 acres.

(b). Basing on a tender, which was at one time received for the dredging of a shoal in the harbour, it has been estimated that the cost of dredging Causeway Bay harbour to a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms (9 feet) at low water would amount to about £100,000 (say, \$900,000 at the present time).

HIS EXCELLENCY—I should like the hon. member who put those questions to make a little clearer his object in asking question 2 b. Does he consider that by dredging the present harbour at Causeway Bay that the harbour would be made more safe for junks and sampans, or does he consider it would provide additional accommodation for them? I have noticed on many occasions that the typhoon anchorage, when a typhoon is reported, is completely filled, both in its shallower and deeper portions, and when I visited the anchorage on the night of the 28th-29th September, which was the occasion of the last typhoon, I observed that though owing to

the unfortunate disaster of the 18th the anchorage was by no means full, yet all the small craft were in shallow water right up against the roadway, so that I rather infer that the small craft are, or at any rate think themselves, safer in the shallow than in the deep water of the existing anchorage.

Hon. Mr. POLLOCK—Sir, I am very sorry I did not come prepared for the question by your Excellency, but I certainly never contemplated any dredging of this harbour of refuge at Causeway Bay to the extent foreshadowed in the statement of the Director of Public Works. I certainly never contemplated it should be dredged so as to give a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms all over, but it seemed to me there were places in this harbour of refuge that it was advisable to deepen. I cannot say exactly without further information where these spots would be. It is quite natural that small craft would go up against the wall near the Polo ground because, being furthest away from the entrance, it would be the smoothest portion of the refuge. But, Sir, supposing the present harbour refuge is kept by itself, it will probably be found that big ships, which are only able to lie in safety some distance from the inner water wall, are compelled to go in the harbour directly a signal is hoisted, because if they do not get their berth they are in danger of being crowded out. This is a question that will have to be considered in connection with whatever further accommodation it is proposed to give at Mongkoksui and elsewhere. If further harbours of refuge are provided, there will not merely be this harbour in Causeway Bay for large junks to resort to, but also other harbours available for junks. The question of deepening Causeway Bay, and the extent to which it should be deepened, must necessarily depend very much upon the other harbours of refuge established in Hongkong.

WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' PENSION FUND.

The COLONIAL TREASURER—I beg to move the second reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Fund Ordinance, 1900." As the Bill does not concern any question of principle, I don't propose to detain Council long on the second reading. The second section only makes a slight amendment to the existing law, and the third contains no modifications beyond the fact that officers locally engaged are to be treated as not being contributors to the fund until they have been three years in the service. Section four is to provide for the return of contributions in cases where the fund has contracted no obligation, or has ceased to have such. Section five provides for giving an officer time to make up his mind whether he will contribute on his salary or only on his pension. The schedule to the principal Ordinance has been repealed and the Ceylon schedule substituted therefor. The fund in Hongkong is in just as good

condition as the one in Ceylon. Any other matter requiring explanation I will answer in committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded the motion and the Bill was read a second time.

Council then went into committee and the Bill was dealt with clause by clause.

On resuming, the COLONIAL TREASURER reported that the Bill had passed through committee stages without amendment, and said if members had no objection he would move the third reading.

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

His EXCELLENCY—Council stands adjourned till after the meeting of the Finance Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was then held, the Colonial Secretary presiding. The following votes were passed.—

TYPHOON DAMAGES

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200) in aid of the vote Botanical and Forestry Department—other charges, Repairs of Typhoon Damages.

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred and eighty dollars (\$180) in aid of the vote Judicial and Legal Departments, Land Office, New Territories— other charges, Typhoon Expenses.

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of One thousand Dollars (\$1,000) in aid of the vote Police and Prison Departments, A.—Police—other charges, Repairs of Typhoon Damages.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of four hundred and eighty dollars (\$480) in aid of the vote Medical Departments —other charges, for the following items:—

B—Hospital and Asylums.

CIVIL HOSPITAL

Light and Fuel----- \$300

VICTORIA HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Washing----- 180

Total ----- \$480

KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY.

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of Fifteen thousand Dollars (\$15,000) in aid of the vote Public Works Extraordinary, Communications:— 15.—Railway to Canton,—Survey and Preliminary Work.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of One thousand Dollars (\$1,000) in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services— Refunds of Revenue.

JUDICIAL AND LEGAL.

The GOVERNOR recommended the Council to vote a sum of One hundred and seventy-five Dollars (\$175) in aid of the vote Judicial and Legal Departments, D.— Land Registry Office, for New Territories— other charges, Rewards for Services in the Typhoon.

On Council resuming the COLONIAL SECRETARY reported that at the meeting of the Finance Committee just held, Financial Minutes Nos. 84 to 90 had been considered and passed, and moved that they be adopted.

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

THE OBSERVATORY INQUIRY.

HIS EXCELLENCY.—As it will probably be some little time before we meet again I think the Council would

wish to hear the result of the committee appointed to inquire into whether an earlier warning could have been given of the typhoon of the 18th September. The committee report that reviewing the evidence as a whole, they find that prior to 7.44 a.m. on the 18th September there was no indication of a typhoon approaching Hongkong, and that the warning by the hoisting of the black drum on the morning of the 18th was given as soon as, in the circumstances, was practically possible. I propose to publish the report in anticipation of laying it on the table of this Council. I propose also to send the report, with all the evidence and the exhibits laid before the committee, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to whom I shall also send the reports published by the Observatories of Siccawei and Manila, and to ask the Secretary of State to obtain, for the information of this Government, the observations of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. I propose to await receipt of those observations before making any further inquiry locally, having in view the difficulty of obtaining locally sufficiently expert members for a committee to go into the questions that have arisen in connection with the working of the Observatory.

Council stands adjourned *sine die*.

