

6TH JUNE, 1907.

PRESENT:—

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

MAJOR-GENERAL R. G. BROADWOOD, C.B.A.C.D.

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

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

Hon. Mr. C. McI. MESSER, (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. HEWETT.

Hon. Mr. E. OSBORNE.

Hon. Mr. H. KESWICK.

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

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

HIS EXCELLENCY appointed the Hon. Mr. H. Keswick to fill the vacancy on the Public Works Committee caused by the departure of the Hon. Mr. W. J. Gresson.

FINANCIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to lay on the table the report of the Finance Committee (No 3), and move its adoption. The only amount involved in the report is the advance on railway construction for the current year.

The following is the resolution which the Finance Committee unanimously agreed to:—"It is hereby resolved that a Sum of Two million four hundred and thirty-eight thousand Dollars (\$2,438,000) be advanced out of Funds in the Custody of the Government for the purposes of construction of the Kowloon-canton Railway (British Section) during the year 1907."

The COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was carried.

PAPERS.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL, by command of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table the report of the Standing Law Committee on the Ordinance to amend the Bills of Exchange Ordinance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table the following papers.

—Report on the Evening Continuation Classes;

Report on the Post Office for the year 1906; a Minute by the Principal Civil Medical Officer on the Public Health and Building Ordinance Commission.

THE RATING ORDINANCE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the following resolution: Resolved by the Legislative Council that the percentages on the valuation of tenements payable as rates in the undermentioned places be altered from the 1st day of July, 1907, as follows:—

Quarry Bay,	From 7 %	to 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ %
Sham Shui Po,	„ 7 „	to 9 „
To Kwa Wan,	„ 7 „	to 9 „
Ma Tau Wei,	„ 7 „	to 9 „
Kowloon City,	„ 7 „	to 9 „
Tai Kok Tsui,	„ 7 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Fuk Tsun Heung,	„ 7 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Shaukiwan East,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Shaukiwan West,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Shaukiwan Road,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Po Kau Wat,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Tsing Shiu Ma Tau,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Sai Wan Ho,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Whitfeild,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Tung Lo Wan,	„ 9 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Hok Un,	„ 2 „	to 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „

The differences, as a rule, were on account of the fire brigade, police, lighting and water services.

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

THE COMMISSION'S REPORT.

Hon. Dr. HO KAI—Sir, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of Council I will ask the following questions:—

(1) What steps does the Government propose to take, and when, in regard to carrying out the recommendations of the Public Health and Building Ordinance Commission?

(2) If the Government does not propose to carry out the recommendations of the Commission *in toto*, which of such recommendations does the Government propose not to carry out?

(3) Will the Government make a statement of what they propose to do with regard to the recommendations of the Commission?

WANCHAI WATER SUPPLY.

Hon. Mr. H. E. POLLOCK asked the following questions:—

1. (a) Has the Government received complaints with reference to deficiencies in the supply of water to houses in Wanchai?

(b.) If so, has the Government taken any, and what, steps to remedy such deficiencies?

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS replied: A complaint in writing, dated the 25th March last, was received from one, Mr. T. Spafford, regarding the inadequacy of the supply of water to his house, No. 12, Sau Wa Fong. An inspection was at once made, and it was discovered that the rider main valve had become choked. The valve was cleared on the 26th March. A verbal complaint was made on the 11th May by a Mr. Petersen regarding deficiency of water in Sau Wa Fong and, after inspection, it was decided to put in an additional connection from the principal main to the rider-main thus enabling an increased supply to be obtained. The work was completed on the 14th May. A constant supply was turned on the 17th May, and no further complaints have been received.

PEAK FIRE APPLIANCES.

Hon. Mr. POLLOCK asked:—

2. (a.) What Government appliances exist for the extinguishing of fires at the Peak?

(b.) Does the Government consider that such appliances are sufficient? If not, what steps does the Government propose to take, and when, to remedy such deficiencies?

THE CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE replied:

2. (a) A fully equipped hose cart is kept at each of the two Police Stations.

(b) Not altogether. Steps are being taken to place a Despatch Box at Mountain View Terrace. But to establish in a rural district like the Peak a satisfactory system of protection against fire would involve large expenditure which the Government is not prepared to undertake.

TREES FOR SHATIN.

Hon. Mr. POLLOCK asked:—

3. Will the Government consider the advisability of planting fir-trees and camphor-trees along and on the Northern slope from the road which runs at the side of the catch-water in the Shatin Valley?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:—

Pine trees have been planted in the made ground on the northern slopes of the catchwater this year, and pine and camphor trees will be planted along the road in the level ground next year. The hills above and below the catchwater are also included in the planting programme for next year.

THE COMMISSION.

Hon. Mr. POLLOCK asked:

4. (a.) Has the Principal Civil Medical Officer stated in writing to the Government his views with reference to the Report of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance Commission?

(b.) If so, will the Government lay a copy of the writing containing such views upon the table?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:

4 (a). Yes.

(b) Paper laid on the table.

BRITISH SUBSIDIARY COINS.

Hon. Mr. OSBORNE asked:

1. Will the Government cause notices to be exhibited at the paying in counters of the Treasury, Post Office, Harbour Office, Magistracy and other departments; also inserted in Chinese newspapers, informing the Public that British Subsidiary Coins are legal tender up to \$2 in silver and \$1 in copper on each bill; that Government shroffs are bound to receive them up to the above amounts, and that the Public are not bound to accept more than these amounts, as change?

2. With a view to creating a demand for British Subsidiary Coins, will the Government consider the advisability of increasing the limit to which they are legal tender?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:

1. (a). A notice will be sent to Departments accordingly and a notification to the public on the subject of subsidiary coin generally is being considered.

(b). A debtor is bound to tender the exact amount of his debt in legal currency, but there is no objection to adding this to the notification.

2. The suggestion underlying this question is contrary to the accepted economic principles governing the issue of subsidiary coinage.

THE RICKSHA SERVICE.

Hon. Mr. OSBORNE asked:

3. Will the Government say what steps have been taken towards improving the Ricksha service, in view of what was stated in this Council on 7th June, 1906?

The CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE replied:

The Government after careful investigation are of the opinion that, owing to the large decrease in the demand for rickshas incident upon the opening of the Electric Tramway, the licensees, if called upon to provide a better type of ricksha, will not have sufficient inducement to carry on their business unless the scale of fares is raised or the licence fee is reduced. It is considered that it would not be expedient to make either of these concessions.

It was decided in October last to abolish the restriction on the number of licences issued and to leave the matter of an improved service to private enterprise. There are grounds for believing that an experimental service of ricksha of an improved type with rubber tyres may shortly be introduced.

GAP ROCK TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION.

Hon. Mr. OSBORNE asked:

4. Will the Government state how long telegraphic communication with Gap Rock has been interrupted?

5. In view of the approaching typhoon season will the Government take steps to have the cable repaired at an early date?

The DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS replied:

(4) Telegraphic communication with Gap Rock has been interrupted since the morning of the 18th September last, when the land line was broken by the typhoon. The cable itself was broken by the typhoon of the 29th September.

(5) A Proposal for establishing a wireless installation is under consideration, pending settlement of which no steps are being taken to repair the cable.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE AMENDMENT
ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved that Council resolve itself into a committee of the whole Council to consider the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Bills of Exchange Ordinance, 1885."

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

The Bill was then considered clause by clause, after which Council resumed.

HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANK.

Hon. Mr. KESWICK moved the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to authorise the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation from time to time to increase the Capital of the said Corporation from the sum of Ten Millions of Dollars to a sum not exceeding the sum of Twenty Millions of Dollars; and to continue incorporated for a further term of 21 years; and to continue in force for a further period of 21 years the provisions of Section 3 of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ordinance, 1899, with regard to the Excess

Issue of Bills and Notes payable to bearer on demand."

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

THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to authorize the Appropriation of a Supplementary Sum of Four hundred and seventy-seven thousand eight hundred and forty-nine Dollars and fifty-three Cents, to defray the Charges of the Year 1906."

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

The bill was then read a third time, passed, and became law.

VALIDITY OF A JUDGE'S DECISIONS.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to remove doubts as to the validity of the proceedings of the Supreme Court of this Colony during the time that ALFRED GASCOYNE WISE, Esquire, held the office of Puisne Judge of such Court from the 25th day of June, 1902, down to the present time."

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

The Bill was then read a third time, passed, and became law.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY -GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Married Women's Property Ordinance, 1906."

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

The Bill was then read a third time, passed, and became law.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Council stands adjourned until this day week.