

31ST DECEMBER, 1914.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR F. H. MAY, K.C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL F. H. KELLY, C.B. (General Officer Commanding Troops).

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN (Colonial Secretary).

HON. MR. J. H. KEMP (Attorney-General).

HON. MR. E. D. C. WOLFE (Colonial Treasurer).

HON. MR. A. F. CHURCHILL (Director of Public Works).

HON. MR. E. R. HALLIFAX (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

HON. MR. C. McI. MESSER (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. WEI YUK, C.M.G.

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK, K.C.

HON. MR. E. A. HEWETT, C.M.G.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

MR. M. J. BREEN (Clerk of Councils).

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Financial

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of His Excellency the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 93 and 94, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Paper

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of His Excellency the Governor, laid on the table report of the proceedings of

the Finance Committee held on December 24th, and moved that it be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

**Kowloon-Canton Railway
(British Section)**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the following resolution:—"It is hereby resolved that a sum of \$348,866.93 be advanced out of funds in the custody of the Government for the construction of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (British Section) during the year 1914." In doing so he said—Sir, with regard to the resolution standing in my name, at the last meeting of the Council I stated that I did not propose to proceed with it then but to refer it to the Finance Committee for consideration. The various sums which go to make up the amount asked for in the resolution were considered by the Finance Committee and approved of, but attention was drawn by one or more of the unofficial members to the late period in the year on which this matter had been brought forward, involving as it does the expenditure of a large sum on capital account, and the hope was expressed that in future years such an account should be brought forward earlier in the year. I had already expressed regret in Council for the late period at which the account had been brought forward, and said that the Government will certainly be very careful that such an account is brought forward earlier in the year in future. There were reasons for it being later this year, but I certainly think that it should not have been brought forward at the last moment, as it was in this case. I have already made it clear that all the amounts asked for will be spent on capital account; all these various items are such as are required to complete the railway. The hon. member who represents the Chamber of Commerce (Hon. Mr. Hewett), also suggested that the members of Council should have had something before them at the time the Colonial estimates were under consideration. I think he realised that these capital

sums for the railway have nothing to do with the ordinary revenue and expenditure of the Colony, but he thought that the Council should have before them some idea of what they were committing themselves to on account of the railway, because, incidentally, the Colonial revenue is affected by the interest charges on the capital sum expended on the railway. That is so, and if it is possible, at the time when the estimates are brought forward, to give some indication of what might have to be spent in the coming year, that will certainly be done. In this particular case I have pointed out that the only sum out of the \$1,100,000 approved of that was known to be necessary when the estimates were under consideration in October, 1913, was the sum for the Kowloon Railway Station. All the other items have arisen since, as there was necessity for them. I now beg to move the resolution.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

HON. MR. HEWETT—I should like to say one or two words in reply to what the Colonial Secretary said just now. The point I raised at the last meeting was—it was in Committee—that it was just as necessary for the authorities in charge of the British section of the Kowloon-Canton Railway, as for any other business undertaking, to prepare the estimates in advance and thus give some indication of the amounts which may have to be expended during the year. I quite understood that it was the capital account which was affected, and that this amount had nothing to do with the Colonial vote. But it did not seem to us (the unofficial members) that there was any reason why the railway authorities should not have prepared the estimates in advance and put their figures before this Council. As it is necessary for a business man to give a forecast of the possible expenditure during the next twelve months, so it is equally necessary for the Government, when placing the Budget before us, to show what they propose to spend and hope to gain during the next twelve months. It seemed to me unbusinesslike that this money should have been asked for at the last moment, not only the \$80,000 odd on the railway station, but also that the rest of these three and a half lakhs would probably be expended during the current year. That was the whole of my point.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Sir, I simply rise to say that I quite agree with what has fallen from my hon. friend opposite.

HIS EXCELLENCY—The point which the hon. member has drawn attention to will be borne in mind.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee followed, the COLONIAL SECRETARY presiding.

Judicial and Legal

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$250 in aid of the vote Judicial and Legal Departments, *D.* — Attorney-General, Other Charges, Incidental Expenses.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is a special charge owing to pressure of work which has taken place in the Attorney-General's department. It was thought desirable that assistance should be obtained in framing certain legislation which it was desirable to bring before the Council at an early date. It is a fee which has to be paid for the preparation of legislation, and it is desirable that it should be paid before the end of the year. The work has been done, and the Bill, which has been prepared, will be brought before Council.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—It is one Bill and a set of regulations.

Police and Prison

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of six thousand six hundred and eighty-four dollars and twenty-eight cents (\$6,684.28) in aid of the following votes:—

<i>A.—Police, Other Charges.</i>	
Clothing and Accoutrements	\$1,402.57
Launches and Boats—Repairs	2,665.72
Light	610.53
Passages and Bonuses	1,077.55
Small Stores	36.40
<i>B.—Fire Brigade, Other Charges</i>	
Stores	891.51
Total	\$6,684.28

THE CHAIRMAN—This has been brought forward at a very late moment. As to "Clothing and Accoutrements \$1,402.57": This is due to the increase in the price of materials and the low

exchange, and also the providing of accoutrements for the Special Constables. It was expenditure which could not be foreseen. The second item, "Launches and boats, repairs, \$2,665.72": This vote includes a sum of \$1,225 for altering a launch which was chartered to replace No. 2 launch. This launch was past repair, and has since been sold. There were also repairs to certain other launches. When these launches come in for repairs it is frequently found, when the boilers are lifted out, that a great deal more has to be done than had been estimated for. The excess on account of light is really not for light, but chiefly on account of installing fans in various police stations in place of punkahs. As a matter of fact, there is a saving really, because the wages of the punkah pullers cease, and the extra cost for current is very little. "Passages and bonuses": This is due to more recruits being engaged from England and more married men going Home on leave than was anticipated when the estimates

were drawn up. The charge for stores for the Fire Brigade is due to 1,500 feet of hose being ordered urgently from England. It is for the float.

THE CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE—It is chiefly due to the big fire at Laichikok when hose was destroyed by the fire.

Council then resumed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—Sir, I beg to state that Financial Minutes Nos. 93 and 94 have been agreed to by the Finance Committee, and I move that they be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

HIS EXCELLENCY — That is all the business. There will not be another meeting until the New Year, and I therefore wish you all a happy and prosperous one. Council stands adjourned *sine die*.