

17TH JULY, 1915.

PRESENT:—

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

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL F. VENTRIS (General Officer Commanding Troops).

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN (Colonial Secretary).

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

HON. MR. A. M. THOMSON (Colonial Treasurer).

HON. MR. W. CHATHAM, C.M.G. (Director of Public Works).

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

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

HON. MR. E. SHELLIM.

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

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

New Member

MAJOR-GENERAL FRANCIS VENTRIS took the oath of allegiance as a member of the Council, in succession to Major-General F. H. Kelly.

Vote of \$50,000 for West River Disaster

H. E. THE GOVERNOR proposed the following resolution:—"This Council deeply deplores the unprecedented disasters by flood and fire in the Kwangtung Province and desires to express its heartfelt sympathy with the Government of the Province in this sore trial. This Council hereby votes a sum of \$50,000 as a contribution towards the relief of suffering caused by these disasters." In doing so he said— I have asked you to meet to-day in order to propose the resolution which stands in my name. I had hoped to be able to bring the resolution before the Council last Thursday, but, unfortunately, I did not get the sanction of the Secretary of State in time for the vote which is involved in the resolution. The disaster which has befallen the Kwangtung province and its capital is appalling. The extent of the destruction of life and property will not be known for a very considerable time and one feels almost helpless in rendering any effective

help in such a terrible catastrophe. The comparatively small sum which I ask this Council to vote is little more than an earnest of our heartfelt sympathy with the Government and the population of the neighbouring province. What is wanted there at the moment is not so much food, which can be bought with money, but the means of getting food to the starving people. We have done what little we can to assist transport, but, unfortunately, situated as we are in a state of war, we cannot release nearly so many vessels as we should like to do, or as we should be able to do if we were in a state of peace. The Commodore has very kindly been able to spare two tugs from his service, and these will be very useful in towing lighters conveying provisions to Canton, where the river steamers are unable to get alongside the wharves and discharge cargo of that nature. And, in addition, we have sent up the *Stanley*, the lighthouse tender *Stanley*, and a Police launch to assist in the distribution of relief in the West River itself, and we have also sent the *Victoria* to assist in relief found and about Canton— five vessels in all, and that is all we have been able to do. The Chinese community has responded in an extraordinarily generous manner to the cry for relief from Canton, and the Tung Wah Hospital has taken a very active part in assisting the charitable institutions in Canton City. The Secretary for Chinese Affairs is in close co-operation with the Tung Wah Hospital authorities, and he is assisting them as far as he possibly can on behalf of the Government. The funds which the Government is able to contribute and which the European population will perhaps be able to contribute—indeed, some have already contributed largely— will be administered by the Tung Wah Hospital Committee in co-operation with the Secretary for Chinese Affairs. I do not think I can add anything more except to read to you the words of the resolution which stands in my name, and which I am sure will find a sympathetic echo in the hearts of this Council and in those of the entire population of Hongkong.

THE HON. MR. WEI YUK seconded, and the resolution was unanimously carried.

HIS EXCELLENCY—That is all the business, gentlemen.