

23RD SEPTEMBER, 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. MCL. MESSER (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. S. B. C. ROSS (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

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

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

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

**Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

**Papers**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the following paper:—Annual report of the Superintendent of Imports and Exports for the year 1914.

**Financial Minutes**

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 41 to 45, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded,

and this was agreed to.

**Financial**

HON. COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the report of the Finance Committee held on September 10th (No. (?), and moved its adoption.

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

**The Colony's Water Supply**

HIS EXCELLENCY—Gentlemen, in connection with Financial Minute 44 (the voting of a sum of \$24,000 for the construction of catchwaters, etc.), I should like to give hon. members some information. We have at the present time sufficient water in the reservoirs to maintain a full supply until the middle of January only, and if we were to adopt a curtailment which could be effected through the introduction of the Rider Main system we might extend that supply until the middle of February. The season, as you no doubt have observed, is a very abnormal one owing to the very early date on which the north-east monsoon has set in, and, as far as we can humanly foresee, the probabilities of having any further large rainfall at this late season of the year before the dry season thoroughly sets in are rather slender. Therefore, it is very desirable that we should take some immediate steps to further augment our supply of water lest next Spring we should be faced by a water famine. I have therefore decided to adopt the system of the distribution of water through street fountains. That will enable the supply that we have at present, if it is not further augmented, to last only until the middle of May and you may remember that we have experienced droughts lasting, to my recollection, as late as June 17th. Therefore, it is quite evident that it is necessary to take this step. I know that it will entail some hardship upon the poorer classes of the community in carrying water to their dwellings, but it is better for them to do so now than

hereafter to suffer much more severely from a water famine, and also the much greater inconvenience that would result to them from that. This is the first measure that we have decided upon taking, and since the figures I have given you are based upon the total amount of water in the reservoirs, and would entail the actual emptying of these reservoirs, it is necessary to augment the supply, because you can easily understand that it is not desirable, nor is it physically possible, to entirely empty a reservoir. Therefore, the vote of \$24,000 which you will be presently asked to consider in the Finance Committee is for the purpose of leading the water by means of two catchwaters from streams that we can tap into the already formed basin behind the dam of the new Tytam Tuk reservoir. By this means we hope to impound between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 millions of gallons, and that will form a very acceptable addition to our water supply. I need only add that if our forecasts are belied, and if a friendly typhoon was to pass southward and with as wish of its tail fill our reservoirs, then we shall be only too glad to close down our fountain supply and revert to more normal methods of distribution.

The matter was then referred to the Finance Committee.

### **The Evidence Ordinance**

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Evidence Ordinance, 1889." In doing so he said:—This Bill, Sir, deals with two subjects, firstly, the admissibility in evidence of affidavits and similar documents taken and made before British Consular Officers, and, secondly, the taking of dying depositions. Clauses 2 and 3 deal with the Consular affidavits, and the only effect of them is to bring the local law up-to-date in accordance with the law in force in England. Put shortly, what these two sections effect is to enlarge the list of Consular Officers in whose cases affidavits sworn before them will be accepted as admissible in evidence by the Courts here. The 4th clause of the Bill deals with the subject of dying depositions. This part of the Bill, Sir, deals with a subject which has been noted for amendment at a suitable opportunity for some time. Sub-clauses (a) and (b) deal with grammatical mistakes in the present section. Sub-clause (d)

deals with a mistake which is not of any great importance, but which has the effect in the existing section of introducing a certain amount of unnecessary language. The main part of this clause is Sub-clause (b), and the effect of that, Sir, will be to make it no longer necessary, before a magistrate can take a dying declaration, that a medical practitioner should certify that the person who has been injured, or who is ill, is not likely to recover. It frequently happens that a doctor is not willing to say that the patient is not likely to recover, though the patient is sufficiently seriously ill to make his ultimate recovery far from certain. In such cases it is desirable that his evidence should be taken if he can give any information on the matter of the charge, and this Clause has the effect of enabling the Magistrate to take evidence in such cases, even though the medical practitioner may not be willing to say that the patient is not likely to recover. I beg to move the second reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was read a second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment, and

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that it be read a third time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was then read a third time and passed.

### **Land Registration Ordinance**

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to amend the Land Registration Ordinance, 1844." In doing so he said:—The present Land Registration Ordinance, Sir, which was passed in 1844, provides for the registration of judgments in the Land Office, but by a curious omission it requires that the Memorial of Registration must, in the case of judgment, be signed by the plaintiff. As in some cases judgment is given for the defendant, and as sometimes the unsuccessful plaintiff is not very well disposed towards the defendant or is unwilling to help him, it frequently happens that the defendant finds difficulty in getting plain-

tiff's signature to the memorial to enable him to register the judgment. The effect of Clause 2 of this Bill will be to enable judgment to be registered in the Land Office by either party. The other two Clauses of the Bill, 3 and 4, deal with another defect in the present Ordinance, though a less important defect. The present Ordinance provides that the Memorial of Registration of a judgment must contain the amount of the sum secured or recovered by the judgment, but as some judgments do not result in the recovery of any sum of money, the provision cannot be fulfilled in the case of such judgments, and these two sections, Sir, provide that the Memorial shall contain the amount recovered or secured only in those cases where a sum of money is recovered or secured. I beg to move the second reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was read a second time.

Council then went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment, and

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that it be read a third time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was then read a third time and passed.

HIS EXCELLENCY — Councils stands adjourned *sine die*.

### A Royal Gift

HIS EXCELLENCY — Before we part I should like to mention that I have had the honour of receiving a most gracious gift from their Majesties of pictures of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. These are, of course, gifts to the Colony, but as usual in such cases they find a fitting resting place at Government House, where they are now to be seen in the dining-room though they have not yet been hung. If during this week, exclusive of this afternoon, any members of the community would like to view the pictures they can do so.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Financial Committee

followed, the COLONIAL SECRETARY presiding:

### Expenditure on Telegrams

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000) in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services, Telegraph Service, Telegrams sent and received by Government.

THE CHAIRMAN — This vote is for telegrams. The amount required cannot be accurately estimated.

The vote was agreed to.

### Water Meters

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500) in aid of the vote Public Works, Recurrent, Hongkong, Water Works, Water Account (Meters, etc.).

THE CHAIRMAN—This is on account of meters; perhaps the Director of Public Works can explain.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—It is due to the extended use of meters. A considerable number of new houses have been erected, in the western part of the city more particularly, for which it has been necessary to provide meters, and the result has been that we have exhausted the vote and we require the sum now applied for to carry over the year. The work is remunerative, as rent is charged for the use of the meters, and revenue will be received on account of the water supplied, in many cases.

The vote was agreed to.

### The New Magistracy

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of seven thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$7,750) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Building, New Magistracy.

THE CHAIRMAN—This vote is required to cover several different items. The first item is on account of the Magistracy building. The

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building is \$111,000. Up to the end of last year a sum of \$96,072 was expended which would, of course, leave \$15,000 to be paid on the original estimate, but only \$12,000 was provided in this year's estimates. The actual expenditure on the building up to date has been \$114,787; which is \$3,780 over the revised estimate, and \$96,072 was spent last year, which leaves \$18,715 for this year. That means that a supplementary vote is now required on account of the building of \$6,715. Then experience since the building has been brought into use has shown certain alterations are required. In connection with the dock it has been found desirable to close the staircase leading up into the dock by which prisoners are brought in and certain alterations have had to be made in the dock which cost \$50. Then there are a number of other items in the building which have been found necessary, more ventilation, and small alterations in the Magistrates' rooms, etc.

The vote was agreed to.

#### **Central Police Station Extension**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$245,000 in aid of the vote Public Works Extraordinary Hongkong, Buildings, Extension of Central Police Station.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is required in connection with acquiring certain properties adjoining the Central Police Station, which it is proposed eventually to extend.

The vote was agreed to.

#### **New Catchwaters**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of Twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000) in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Water Works, Construction of Catch-waters.

THE CHAIRMAN—A sum of \$7,000 is at present included in Public Works Recurrent. The actual cost of the work required is \$24,000, and it is proposed to allow the vote of \$7,000 in Public Works Recurrent to lapse, and to take the vote now asked for in the financial minute. It is not properly a recurrent vote, but should come in under Public Works Extraordinary, as it is to carry out work which will not require recurrent expenditure.

The vote was agreed to.

#### **Kowloon-Canton Railway**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$486,144 for the construction of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (British Section).

THE CHAIRMAN—A resolution was put down in connection with this, but it was pointed out by the Treasurer that this sum was already approved by the Finance Committee for expenses during the current year, and now this financial minute is taken to provide the money.