

23RD OCTOBER, 1917.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR FRANCIS HENRY MAY, K.C.M.G.

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

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN, C.M.G. (Colonial Secretary).

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

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

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

HON. MR. Mc.I. MESSER (Captain Superintendent of Police).

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

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

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

HON. MR. C. E. ANTON.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL.

HON. MR. HO FOOK.

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

Minutes

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 65 to 71, and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Finance Minutes

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table report of the proceedings of the Finance Committee, No. 12, and

moved that it be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Paper

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table Sessional Paper 19—return of excesses on sub-heads met by savings under heads of expenditure, for the third quarter of 1917.

His EXCELLENCY — The last meeting of Council was such a full one that I regret I overlooked the fact that it was the last Council on which Mr. Wei Yuk would sit as a member. It was laid down in 1913 by the Secretary of State for the Colonies that Unofficial Members of this Council, other than members nominated by the Chamber of Commerce and the Justices of the Peace, should not be reappointed for more than one period of service. When Mr. Wei Yuk's third term of service on this Council expired in 1914 an exception at my urgent request was made in his favour and he was appointed for a term of three years. He was unwilling to serve longer owing to advancing age and to a very laudable desire not to stand longer in the way of younger men. His public services began, however, long before he became a member of this Council. He was one of the publicspirited Chinese who instituted the Tung Wa and Po Leung Kuk in their present form and made them the valuable Institutions they have become. Particularly has he always identified himself with the cause of law and order. Thus he has always identified himself with the District Watchmen's Force. The full value of his services is only known to the five Registrars-General whom he has assisted, and to myself, to whom as Captain Superintendent of Police he rendered services which I shall never forget and for which I shall always be grateful. He has ever been a man of action, who liked always to get things done, rather than to talk about them in this Council. Since the outbreak of war his energy and experience have been invaluable in connection with the Chinese contingent of the Police Reserve, and the enthusiasm of the Chinese in this direction has been largely due to his initiative.

His valuable services have been recognised by His Majesty by the bestowal of the Companionship of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George. But though we lose his services on this Council I rejoice to know that we shall still have his valuable help on the District Watchmen's and on numerous other committees, through which the Government is kept in close touch with the Chinese community, a duty for which his education of six years at Home peculiarly fits him. His foreign education has not had the effect of warping as it sometimes does his instincts as a Chinese gentleman, it has only broadened his outlook. Mr. Wei Yuk, on

behalf of this Council, I tender you our profound respect and esteem on your leaving us, and, on my own behalf, I wish to express my affectionate regard. (Applause.)

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK—I hope I may be permitted to say a few words in addition to the very eloquent tribute which you, Sir, have just paid to my esteemed colleague, Mr. Wei Yuk. I was present here, Sir, in this Council, like your Excellency and like the Hon. Mr. Thomson, who is at present absent from the Colony, in December, 1896, when the honourable member opposite took his oath on first taking his seat as a member of this Council. For some years, Sir, as acting Attorney-General I received assistance from the honourable member who is now retiring, and for over 12 years as an unofficial member of this Council I have been associated with him in the work of the Council. I can truly say I have always found him a most helpful and most loyal colleague. Mr. Wei Yuk, as your Excellency pointed out, has never sought to make himself conspicuous in the public eye, but it is well known to all acquainted with the work done amongst the Chinese in this Colony that he has done yeoman service. It is a great pleasure to us, Sir, in parting from Mr. Wei Yuk to feel that, although leaving us, he is still in the fullest possession of health and strength, and it is characteristic of him that when he announced to me the other day that he was leaving this Council he assured me that he would at all times be ready, whenever I required it, to give me his advice and assistance.

HON. MR. WEI YUK—Your Excellency and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council. Gentlemen,—I really cannot find words that are strong and deep enough in their meaning to express my feelings of gratitude and thankfulness for the kind words which His Excellency has just used in alluding to my past services as representative of the Chinese of this Colony. Indeed, His Excellency has been more than a friend to me during the many years I have served on this Council, and I do not know how to thank His Excellency for the great confidence which he has always been pleased to place in me. Owing to advancing age, I now feel that I am not equal to my younger days in the performance of my public duties,

and, consequently, I have been obliged to retire and to sever my connection with this honourable Council. To you, Honourable Members of this Council, I owe my heartfelt thanks for the great kindness and courtesy which you have always shown towards me, and, on this the eve of my retirement, I wish you one and all success and prosperity.

The Hon. Mr. Wei Yuk then shook hands with His Excellency the Governor and retired, and Mr. Ho Fook took the oath of allegiance and assumed his seat as a member of the Council.

The Budget

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to apply a sum not exceeding eight million, three hundred and sixty-eight thousand, nine hundred and ten dollars to the Public Service of the year 1918."

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK—Sir, I have been asked by my unofficial colleagues on the Council to speak on their behalf on the subject of this Bill. In the first place, we desire to congratulate your Excellency and the Colony upon the favourable nature of the Revenue figures which you have been able to lay before us, and to express our satisfaction with the fact that the Government is turning its attention to the compilation of trade statistics. Before dealing with items in this year's Budget, I propose to occupy the attention of the Council for a few minutes by pointing out that there are certain matters, referred to by unofficial members, in their Budget speeches a year ago, which are still unremedied, namely:—

1.—The improvement of the lunatic asylum, which we repeat is highly discreditable to the Colony.

2.—The malodorous state of the foreshore on Praya East, which tends rapidly to get worse.

In connection with this foreshore we would submit two suggestions:—

1st.—That the power of the Naval and Military authorities to drain into the Harbour, unchecked apparently by any municipal legislation (see section 4 of the Public Health Ordinance 1903), ought to be taken away; and

2nd.—That, not only in the interests of those living in and passing along the Praya East, but also in the interests of the health of the boat-people themselves, those boat-people ought to be restrained by legislation from digging in the fetid mud on the foreshore of

Praya East for shell-fish or other things.

3.—Next, we would suggest that there is still room for improvement in the methods adopted in searching Chinese passengers entering or leaving the Colony, and more particularly in regard to attempts by searchers to squeeze money out of such passengers.

4.—Passing on to the subject of Education, we would again emphasize the necessity for the better teaching of English to Chinese boys, and would urge that more attention be paid to English and less to a multitude of other subjects, and that, if possible, two sides to a School be established, one side a Commercial side, and the other a University side, for we think that there is too great a tendency to educate Chinese boys as if their ultimate educational destiny must necessarily be the University.

5.—Before passing away from the subjects dealt with in last year's Budget, we would once more urge the Hongkong Government to press upon the Chinese Authorities the necessity for fulfilling their agreement to link up the Kowloon-Canton Railway with the railway, under construction, from Canton to Hankow.

Turning now to the Budget for 1918, our main criticisms are not unnaturally directed to the important Department of Public Works, and we should like to know:—

1.—Why no provision has been made for the erection of a screen wall near the Southern entrance to the Harbour of Refuge at Yaumati. In this connection it will be remembered that, in the typhoon of August of this year, considerable damage was done to boats and piers inside that Harbour of Refuge, by reason of waves rolling in through that entrance.

2.—Why no provision has been made for the erection of a serviceable and sightly roof to the Queen's Statue Wharf?

3.—Why there is no clock on the station tower at Kowloon?

4.—What steps are being taken, and when they are likely to be completed, for linking up Nathan Road, Kowloon, with Coronation Road?

5.—Why the programme for training nullahs, a step which is so valuable for the diminution of malaria, is so much smaller for 1918 than for 1917?

6.—Whether it would not be practicable to provide better class-room accommodation for the boys at Saiyungpun School?

7.—Whether it would not be possible to provide for more effective Police Supervision at Yaumati and in the neighbourhood?

8.—Whether in view of the considerable sum of money to be expended on the new Imports and Exports Office it would not be practicable to have that office erected in a more central position than the proposed site?

As a large sum of money is to be expended on this building, it appears to be most desirable that the site selected should be as convenient as possible and easily accessible for the principal mercantile and shipping firms.

Before concluding, we should like to add that, in rainy weather, residents frequently experience considerable inconvenience and annoyance from the fact that the public chair-coolies stop at home instead of turning out and attending to the requirements of the public. This is a matter which we commend to the notice of the Police in the hope that some remedy may be found. We presume that the responsible parties are under bond to the Government, and we suggest that the terms of that bond ought to be made wide enough to impose some penalty for the inconvenience complained of.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—With regard to the various queries put by the hon. member, the reason why no provision has been made for the erection of a screen wall at the southern entrance to the Harbour of Refuge is that the experience gained has not been sufficient to show exactly what provision should be made. So far only one typhoon has visited the Colony that has brought into marked operation the new Harbour of Refuge and the damage wrought during that storm was not great. It chiefly arose owing to the various craft dragging their anchors, and that is a matter which, I am afraid, cannot be guarded against. The refuge performed its part well, I believe, as a wave protection. It can never be made an effective protection against wind, and, therefore, unless the craft are reasonably securely moored they are apt to be driven on to the Praya wall, where they would suffer damage. The next question was why no provision has been made for a roof to the Queen's Statue wharf. This wharf is of such a rudimentary nature and in such bad condition that it would be inexpedient to construct any substantial roof over it. The question of a roof should wait until some permanent structure in the shape of a pier has been erected there. With regard to the clock on the railway station at Kowloon, this formed the subject, two or

three years ago, of a recommendation by the Public Works Committee that economy should be effected by omitting the clock. Since then no further steps have been taken that I am aware of in connection with the matter. The linking of Nathan Road, Kowloon, with Coronation Road is now in progress on a temporary —not the permanent—line, and in a very short space of time I hope it will be available for traffic. The more permanent work will remain in abeyance until the hill has been excavated to a greater extent for obtaining material for reclamation, and other purposes. The next question was directed to nullah training, with a complaint that smaller provision had been made in next year's estimates than in the estimates for the present year. Nullah training has now progressed to a very advanced stage, and I am not aware of any urgent works of this nature that require attention. The question of accommodation for Saiyingpun School is one which scarcely comes within my purview. I am not aware that any question of that nature has been raised by the headmaster of the school. With regard to the Imports and Exports Office and the question of the practicability of obtaining a more central site for the same, in my opinion the site which has been chosen is a very central one. I cannot see that it is open to any serious objection on that ground. Moreover, it is the only piece of Crown land that is available anywhere near the centre of the City that is in any way adequate for the purpose.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I would like to ask the hon. member on my left whether there is any project for renewing the Queen's Statue wharf within any reasonable time.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The matter has been before the Government in past years, but it was not considered of sufficient urgency to justify the provision of funds for its construction. The intention of the Government is that a pier of a very substantial nature and of much greater dimensions than the present pier should be erected in this position, and naturally owing to the depth of water the expenditure involved will be heavy.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—With regard to Saiyingpun School, I think there was a committee which reported on that school a few months ago. I think they mentioned something about the class-room accommodation being deficient.

His EXCELLENCY—Yes, but I will deal with the questions *seriatim*. The Lunatic Asylum.—We admit it is not an ideal place, but it must be remembered that we do not keep European lunatics here permanently. The policy for some years past has been to repatriate them. Chinese lunatics are really the only ones permanently kept in that place, and for them the place is quite good. It is an expensive business to provide a new lunatic asylum, and I think the work might well stand over for the present. The Praya East Foreshore.—I am afraid we cannot interfere with the drainage on to that of the military and naval establishments. It would be a very heavy work to undertake. As far as the boat-people are concerned, they have their vested interests. Their delving in the mud is certainly a nuisance, but not an insanitary or dangerous nuisance; it creates a smell, but not a smell dangerous to health. The real necessity is to reclaim the foreshore, and I hope this will soon be taken in hand. Searching Chinese Passengers.—We took considerable pains on the representation of honourable members last year to effect an improvement. We are going into the question again and will consult hon. members to see if we can do anything more. Teaching of English.—We have already taken steps to train Chinese teachers of English at the University. It is a work which will take some little time before we can judge of its utility. The only other alternative is to engage a very much larger number of English teachers, and if we had the means and the will to do so we certainly could not obtain the men. However, it is a question to the importance of which we are very alive and we will not lose sight of it. We are also exceedingly alive to the question of linking our railway with the Canton-Hankow line, and nothing that can be done will be left undone in that connection. The Honourable Director of Public Works has answered the next two questions raised. There is a project for building a new Queen's Statue wharf, but it would be a considerable and expensive undertaking and hon. members will perhaps agree that it might stand over for the present. The clock on the station tower at Kowloon is a small matter, and if hon. members press it and are willing to vote the funds next year no doubt we could get a clock. The cost would be about (E02)450. The Saiyingpun School report, to which the hon. member representing the Justices of the Peace referred, condemned the site of this school. It is cramped and crowded in by a large number of buildings. The only

real remedy is to remove the school altogether. That is an expensive and rather difficult project. Crown land in that vicinity is very scarce. It is a matter which will doubtless come one of these days, but, in the meantime I do not see any immediate remedy. I am not aware that any increase of crime has taken place in Yaumati district. It is partly an urban and partly a rural district, and attention has been called to the need of greater police protection more than once. I will go into the matter with the Captain Superintendent of Police and see if any additional protection is really required. As regards the site of the Imports and Exports Office, I do not see how that can be moved. First of all it is necessary for quick and expeditious work that it should be adjacent to the Harbour Office. It is particularly well situated for dealing with the large junk traffic, and it is not far removed from the principal offices of the European shipping firms. I really do not think that we could find a much more convenient site, and I am afraid we shall have to adhere to this one, as we have already made arrangements for building on it. With regard to chair coolies and wet weather, it is a difficult problem. Even in London before the war the Police authorities there found it practically impossible to make cabdrivers keep to their stands in very wet weather. You can remember yourselves the difficulty, when coming out of a theatre on a wet night, of getting a hackney coach of any description. The only real remedy is to increase the chair coolie shelters. We have provided some, and I will consult the Captain Superintendent of Police to see if anything more can be done. In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the hon. member who spoke upon the estimates upon his very lucid and very clear statement of criticism.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I want to make my point clear about the Praya East. It is not only undesirable that the boat-people should dig about in the mud, but it is very undesirable from the public health point of view that they should eat the shell-fish they get.

His EXCELLENCY—They seem to thrive on it.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—We only see those who live.

HIS EXCELLENCY—There is the question of public right.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—We might get over that. I think the Hon. Attorney-General will agree that it might be disposed of.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Is it really worth while creating a new offence and interfering with these people? As far as I can remember the Colony I have seen these people dig for shell-fish and it does not seem to result in any epidemic or any outbreak of disease or serious inconvenience. I think it would be better to wait until the foreshore is covered with cement and stone and brick.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—The hon. member who retired from the Council to-day was very strong on this point, and regarded it as a bad thing that the boat-people should eat these shell-fish.

HIS EXCELLENCY—I will make enquiries from the sanitary point of view and see if our medical records show anything in these things that might prejudice public health.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment, and, on Council resuming,

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Bill be read a third time.

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

The Council adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

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

Forestry Department

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of four hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the vote Botanical and Forestry Department, Other Charges, Brushwood Clearing.

THE CHAIRMAN—A great deal of extra clearing has been necessary in connection with surveys for the making of new roads which was not anticipated when the vote was put in.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—May I ask, sir, whether it is the intention to make a footpath up to the gap above Repulse Bay. There is a footpath for a certain distance up the hill, but when one gets half-way up towards the gap it does not proceed any further. I think a footpath would be a great convenience.

THE CHAIRMAN—I think the footpath is the trace of the projected road. Part of this extra expenditure is undoubtedly caused by the cost of clearing the trace of the roadway.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — Nothing is in contemplation at the present moment for the formation of a path as indicated. It has been in my mind for many years that a road could be constructed through that gap which would form an agreeable alternative route, but it is not one of the real pressing necessities in the matter of road-making.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I speak of a footpath.

THE CHAIRMAN—No doubt a path would make a nice walk and it could be made very cheaply.

The vote was agreed to.

Tai Po Imports and Exports Office

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred dollars in aid of the vote Imports and Exports Department, Other Charges, Alteration to New Tai Po Branch Office.

THE CHAIRMAN—The original vote for the conversion of the building at Taipo into a branch office for Imports and Exports was \$750. While the work was in progress it was found that the window bars did not enter the brick work and the extra cost of making them do so is \$90. A vote of \$100 is asked for.

The vote was agreed to.

Public Works

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of six thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Miscellaneous, (23) Miscellaneous Works.

THE CHAIRMAN—I will ask the Director of Public Works to explain this vote.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—This is a general vote which covers all manner of minor works. The provision made in this year's estimate was extremely moderate—\$12,000. That being exhausted it is necessary to supplement it. It is estimated that \$6,000 will serve for the rest of the year.

The vote was agreed to.

Imports and Exports

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred and ninety-four dollars in aid of the vote Imports and Exports Department, Personal Emoluments.

THE CHAIRMAN—It was necessary to engage two temporary 5th grade clerks in the Imports and Exports department from October 19th for statistical work. This vote is for their salaries to the end of the year.

The vote was agreed to.

Compensations and Resumptions

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of seven thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, New Territories, Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903, (51) Compensation and Resumptions.

THE CHAIRMAN—I will ask the Director of Public Works to explain this vote of \$7,000 for compensations and resumptions at Shamshuipo.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — Substantial progress has been made with the laying out of Shamshuipo, and in connection with that it is necessary to compensate the people for taking down and reconstructing their buildings. The vote provided has been exhausted, and this supplementary provision is necessary to carry on the work.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — Is this work nearly finished?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—There is a great deal more to be done.

THE CHAIRMAN—A new town is being made. There is an enormous amount of work still to be done, but it goes steadily on as opportunity offers.

The vote was agreed to.

Taiipo Road

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of five thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, New Territories, Communications, (45) Roads: (e) Taiipo Road,—Widening to 16' and improving bends, etc., between 5th and 9th milestones.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is anticipating the vote of \$40,000 in the estimates for 1918. The portion of the road alongside the Kowloon reservoir is narrow and dangerous owing to the curves being very sharp. If this work can be carried out this year it will enable the engineer in charge to move on, and he will not be troubled subsequently with this separate piece of work at the Kowloon reservoir.

The vote was agreed to.

Training Nullahs

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of three hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Drainage, (10) Training Nullahs: (b) Mount Kellet.

THE CHAIRMAN—I will ask the Director of Public Works to explain this vote.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The sum provided in the estimates for this work is \$5,000, but, of course, when dealing with work of this nature it is impossible to frame any exact estimate of the amount that will be required. The cost has exceeded the amount provided by the trivial sum asked for.

The vote was agreed to.