

22ND NOVEMBER, 1917.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN, C.M.G.

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

HON. MR. A. G. M. FLETCHER (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. P. H. HOLYOAK.

HON. MR. C. E. ANTON.

HON. MR. R. G. SHEWAN.

HON. MR. HO FOOK.

MR. J. A. E. BULLOCK (Clerk of Councils).

Financial

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table Financial Minutes Nos. 72 to 83, 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 Officer Administering the Government, laid on the table report of the proceedings of the Finance Committee, No. 13, and moved that it be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

Relief for the Flood Victims

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT said:— Honourable Members of the Legislative Council, this Council has during the last four years on two occasions voted sums of money for the relief of the suffering caused by floods in the Kwangtung Province and on the West River. Fortunately, during the past two years there has been no necessity to do so, but I feel sure that the whole community in this Colony has been deeply impressed by the magnitude of the disaster which has overwhelmed a great portion of the Province of Chihli, including the entire City of Tientsin. The extent of the calamity will be realised by the following figures. About 12,000 square miles of country have been flooded, and outside of Tientsin there has been damage to the extent of \$100,000,000 in the loss of crops. It is reported that, as the result of a fairly accurate survey, 80,000 groups of dwellings have been destroyed, while three million people are facing a bitterly cold winter in summer clothes and with a scanty supply of food. The Metropolitan Union Flood Relief Council have issued an appeal for help to meet the great want which exists. It is stated in the appeal that in order to enable the multitude affected by the disaster to exist through the winter a sum of at least \$5,000,000 is needed, and that at present a sum of only \$2,000,000 is available. Though the actual floods have in a great measure been overcome, the destruction of houses has left the population exposed to the cold winter winds. The sum which it is proposed to contribute may not effect much, but will at any rate show in a practical way the sympathy of this Colony with those who are suffering so acutely through an entirely unexpected visitation. I therefore move the following resolution:—

"That this Council desires to express its heartfelt sympathy with the Government of the Chinese Republic in the disastrous floods which have devastated an immense area of country in the

Province of Chihli and hereby votes a sum of \$100,000 as a contribution towards the relief of the suffering caused by this calamity."

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Sir, on behalf of the unofficial members of this Council, I desire to second the resolution which you, sir, have proposed. I am sure, sir, that every member of this Council feels very great sympathy for the Northern Chinese, who are suffering so severely in this present calamity, and all the unofficial members concur very heartily with the Government in this vote which is proposed in partial relief of the sufferers.

The motion was carried unanimously.

The Cost of the Camp

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK — Will the Government state what is the estimated cost to the Colony of the suggested Camp for Defence Corps training in the New Territories?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—The reply to the hon. member is that the estimated cost is \$12,000.

Opium Ordinance, 1917.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to make further provision against the counterfeiting of labels, wrappers and marks used in connection with Government opium."

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

The object of this bill is to make it an offence to be in possession of labels, wrappers, or marks resembling those used by the Superintendent in connection with Government opium, or of any die, block, or type apparently intended for the production of any such label, wrapper, or mark.

Contracts (War Restrictions) Ordinance, 1917

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to make provision with regard to the effect on certain contracts of certain requirements, regulations and restrictions rendered necessary by the present war."

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

The object of this bill is to provide relief against actions for breach of contract where the fulfilment of the contract has been interfered with by executive requirements or restrictions rendered necessary by the war. The bill applies only to contracts to be performed within the Colony. It is founded on section 1 (2) of the Defence of the Realm (Amendment) No. 2, Act, 1915, 5 and 6 Geo. 5, c 37.

The Ferries Ordinance, 1917

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to regulate Ferries."

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

The object of this bill is to take power to regulate the ferries of the Colony, other than the present service of the Star Ferry Company, Limited.

The main object is not revenue. but the interests of the travelling public.

It is intended at present to deal only with the ferries between Victoria and Yaumati, Mong Kok Tsui and Sham Shui Po.

The proposed regulations relating to these ferries will be published with this bill.

Fire and Marine Insurance Co.'s Deposit Ordinance, 1917

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to provide for the making of deposits by certain persons, firms and companies carrying on fire or marine insurance business."

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

This bill proposes to require all Fire and Marine Insurance Companies which carry on business in this Colony to make a deposit with the Registrar of Companies to the amount or value of \$100,000. The object is to check the growth of mushroom companies which have no sound financial basis.

As the subject is a technical one which affects the general public only indirectly, it does not seem necessary to explain in detail the provisions of this measure. They can be seen in the bill itself and in the regulations in the schedule.

**Pension Amendment Ordinance,
1917**

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to amend the Pension Ordinance, 1862."

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—

The object of this bill is to give the Governor-in-Council power to require any judge or other public officer to retire after he attains the age of 55 years, or to require any judge or other public officer to retire at any time on the ground of inability to discharge efficiently the duties of his office.

The bill is introduced in order to bring the law here into conformity with the law as it exists elsewhere.

The Council adjourned until Thursday next.

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

**Language Allowance and
Stationer**

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of fifteen thousand seven hundred dollars in aid of the votes:—

Miscellaneous Services, Language Study	
Allowance.....	\$ 700.00
Stationery.....	15,000.00
Total	\$15,700.00

THE CHAIRMAN—The \$700 is an allowance to Mr. Wood, who is studying Japanese in Japan. The \$15,000 is largely due to paper ordered from India. It was ordered in 1916, but was not paid for in the current year.

The vote was agreed to.

Transport and Travelling

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works Department, other Charges, Transport and Travelling Expenses.

The CHAIRMAN—This is largely due to the extension of roads in the Colony and to the increased travelling by overseers and engineers.

The vote was agreed to.

Pumping Water

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of thirty thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Recurrent, Hongkong, Water Works (20) Maintenance of City and Hill District.

The CHAIRMAN—This is due to the additional pumping required this year through the incidence of the rainfall being somewhat unequal, and to the largely increased cost of coal.

The vote was agreed to.

Miscellaneous Works

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of eight hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Kowloon, Miscellaneous (41), Miscellaneous Works.

THE CHAIRMAN—The original vote was a small one of \$3,500 and there have been numerous small works which necessitate this increase.

The vote was agreed to.

Purchase of Law Books

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the Attorney-General's Office, Other Charges, Books.

THE CHAIRMAN—There is an opportunity to get quite cheaply a set of Halsbury's "Laws of England," and the Government proposes to avail itself of that opportunity.

The vote was agreed to.

Harbour Buoys

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand three hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the vote Harbour Master's Department, *A.*—Harbour Office, Other Charges, Raising and Renewing Moorings of Ocean Steamships.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is in connection with taking over the buoys last year. The bill was not rendered until this year.

The vote was agreed to.

Relief for the Flood Victims

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred thousand dollars on account of Miscellaneous Services, Tientsin Flood Relief Fund.

The vote was agreed to.

Purchase of "Tanderagee"

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of forty-eight thousand dollars on account of Miscellaneous Service, Purchase of "Tanderagee," No. 132, The Peak.

THE CHAIRMAN—Hon. members are aware of the policy of the Government of buying property on the Peak. This house was on the market and was bought for \$47,550. The extra is required for incidental expenses in connection with the transfer.

The vote was agreed to.

D'Aguilar Wireless Station

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of three thousand three hundred and sixty dollars and seventy-three cents in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Buildings. Improvements to Cape D'Aguilar Wireless Telegraph Station.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is in respect to a number of improvements in the drainage of the station and in rendering the house mosquito proof.

The vote was agreed to.

Wireless Messages

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two thousand five hundred dollars in aid of the vote Royal Observatory, Special Expenditure, Installation for receiving Time Signals by Wireless Telegraphy.

THE CHAIRMAN—The original vote was \$6,000, but the price of materials has gone up and the height of the mast has been increased.

The vote was agreed to.

The Recent Outbreak of Anthrax

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand eight hundred and ninety dollars in aid of the vote Sanitary Department, Special Expenditure, Compensation for condemnation of carcasses in Slaughter House.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is under the Public Health and Building Ordinance in connection with the recent outbreak of anthrax. There is a regular scale for compensation laid down under the Ordinance.

The vote was agreed to.

Free Education

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one hundred dollars in aid of the vote Charitable Services, Charitable Allowance to Shin Lok-shang, son of Sin Yau-wai, late of the Education Department.

THE CHAIRMAN—Sin Yau-wai was an old servant of the Government and the late sub-inspector of Vernacular schools. He died in poor circumstances, and it is proposed to provide for his son's education at the University for five years on the condition that he joins the Government service after completing his education. That condition will be stipulated in a bond. The \$100 is for the first term at the University this year.

The vote was agreed to.