

10TH DECEMBER, 1918.

PRESENT:—

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

HON. MR. A. G. M. FLETCHER (Colonial Secretary).

HON. MR. J. H. KEMP, K.C., C.B.E. (Attorney-General).

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

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

HON. MR. C. MCI. MESSER, O.B.E. (Captain Superintendent of Police).

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

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

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

HON. MR. HO FOOK.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL.

MR. A. DYER BALL (Clerk of Councils).

ABSENT:—

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

Papers

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table Sessional Papers Nos. 11 and 12 — Papers and Correspondence relating to the signing of the Armistice between the Allied Powers and Germany and the Quarterly Returns of Excesses on sub-heads met by savings under heads of expenditure.

Finance Minutes

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table Financial

Minutes Nos. 84 to 104 and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded and this was agreed to.

Arms and Ammunition Ordinance, 1918

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to amend further the Arms and Ammunition Ordinance, 1900."

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

The "Objects and Reasons" state:—"This bill amends the definition of the term "arms" in the principal Ordinance so as to make it include air guns. There have been recent cases in Hongkong where injury has been caused by the use of air guns. One case resulted in the loss of an eye."

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The Council adjourned and a meeting of the Finance Committee was held, the Colonial Secretary presiding:—

Rainstorm Damages

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two thousand dollars in aid of the following votes:—

Public Works, Recurrent.

Kowloon, Miscellaneous, (34)	
Typhoon and Rainstorm	
Damages	\$1,000
New Territories,	
Miscellaneous, (45)	
Typhoon and Rainstorm	
Damages	1,000
	<hr/>
Total	\$2,000
	<hr/>

THE CHAIRMAN—This expenditure was necessitated by the heavy rains.

The vote was agreed to.

Magistracy

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two thousand seven hundred dollars in aid of the vote Judicial and Legal Departments, *B.*—Magistracy, Personal Emoluments.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is due to the transfer of Mr. Wolfe, who was made Police Magistrate, from dollar to sterling pay. It is merely a matter of adjustment. It includes £150 duty pay.

The vote was agreed to.

Incidental Expenses

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of thirty dollars in aid of the vote Attorney-General's Department, Other Charges, Incidental Expenses.

The vote was agreed to.

University Examination Fees

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of three hundred and forty dollars in aid of the vote Education Department, Queen's College, Other Charges, University Examination Fees.

THE CHAIRMAN — The vote is \$250. Increased attendance accounts for this excess.

The vote was agreed to.

Boundary Stones

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Miscellaneous, (22) Boundary Stones.

THE CHAIRMAN—The vote of \$1,000 was found not to be sufficient.

The vote was agreed to.

Filter Beds

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of nine hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Recurrent, New Territories, Water Works, (46) Maintenance of Laichikok.

THE CHAIRMAN — Two filter beds were choked and had to be re-laid.

The vote was agreed to.

Kowloon-Canton Railway

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two thousand six hundred dollars in aid of the vote Kowloon-Canton Railway, Special Expenditure, Typhoon and Rainstorm Damages.

THE CHAIRMAN—Members will doubtless remember the large block in the line caused by the heavy land-slides. This money was needed to repair the damage.

The vote was agreed to.

Path to Tregunter Mansions

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of four thousand four hundred and fifty-eight dollars in aid of the vote Public Works Extraordinary, Hongkong, Communication, (5) Roads, (c) Path from May Road Station to Tregunter Mansions.

THE CHAIRMAN—The vote was for \$2,200, but there was much more rock cutting and nullah training than was expected.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — Is this the final payment?

THE CHAIRMAN—Yes. The path is finished and has been opened.

The vote was agreed to.

Car Shelter at Deep Water Bay

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two thousand six hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Erection of a Car Shelter at Deep Water Bay.

The vote was agreed to.

Communication with Outlying Islands

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of five thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, New Territories, Miscellaneous, Telephonic Communication with outlying Islands.

THE CHAIRMAN—The sum of \$24,000 is in the estimates but the work has been pushed forward and it is expected that \$5,000 will be spent this year.

HON. MR. POLLOCK — Which are the Islands?

THE CHAIRMAN—Tai O and Cheung Chau.

The vote was agreed to.

New Road Traces

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of nine hundred dollars in aid of the vote Botanical and Forestry Department, Other Charges, Brushwood Clearing.

THE CHAIRMAN—In connection with the tracing for new roads a great amount of brushwood had to be cleared up.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Might I mention again the subject I brought to the notice of the Council some months back regarding making a forestry path up from the western side of Repulse Bay to the gap above Tytam. I do not know if any steps have been taken to do this.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—I am not aware that any steps have been taken.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I will move that the path should be made. I am not asking for a motor road; only a forestry path.

THE CHAIRMAN—I will take a note of it.

The vote was agreed to.

Road from Tytam Tuk Dam to Tytam Gap

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of five thousand four hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Communications, (5) Roads: (b) Tytam Tuk to Tytam Gap—New road from north end of Tytam Tuk Dam to Tytam Gap.

THE CHAIRMAN—The Work has gone on quicker than was expected. The estimates next year will be reduced by a corresponding amount.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—When will this road be through?

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS — This section is practically completed but the old road

has still to undergo improvement from Shaukiwan to the Gap.

The vote was agreed to.

Maintenance of Nullahs

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand five hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works Recurrent, Kowloon, Drainage, (28) Maintenance of Sewers, Nullahs, etc.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is partly due to the heavy rains washing sand and debris into the nullahs and partly due to the rise in the price of materials.

The vote was agreed to.

Tai O Police Station

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of six thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Recurrent, New Territories, Buildings, (37) Maintenance of Buildings.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is for the practical reconstruction of the Tai O Police Station.

The vote was agreed to.

Rent Allowance and Stationery

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of thirty-six thousand two hundred and sixty dollars in aid of the following votes:—

Miscellaneous Services.

Language Study Allowance	\$	150
<i>New Government Offices.</i>		
Electric Fans and Light		650
Rent Allowance		17,460
Stationery		18,000
		Total
		\$36,260

THE CHAIRMAN—Regarding the Language Study allowance the vote of \$1,300 was not sufficient; the \$150 is an addition. The amount of \$650 is required in excess of the vote for fans and electric lighting. With regard to the rent allowance the original vote was for \$30,000 but it was very difficult to foretell the exact amount required. The total expenditure has been \$47,460.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Does this refer to the rent allowance for Government servants? the sub-heading is rather misleading.

THE CHAIRMAN—Yes. With respect to the stationery considerable bills from England have to be met. The prices have gone up enormously.

The vote was agreed to.

Lighting

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of ten thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Recurrent, Hongkong, Lighting, (10) Gas Lighting, City and Suburbs and Hill District.

THE CHAIRMAN—The contract of the Gas Company was for ten years from July, 1910, but they made representations that the cost of materials, coal especially, had gone up enormously and the Government considered the matter and allowed 20 per cent. rebate from the 1st January this year.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—Might I ask for an improvement in the lighting in the road from Victoria Gap to Plantation Road? It is being used very considerably now that the tramway is undergoing alterations and the present lighting is very bad.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—A light also seems badly wanted below Craigieburn outside the side entrance to the Peak Club.

THE CHAIRMAN—I will make a note of the suggestions.

The vote was agreed to.

Resumption of Land

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of three hundred and eighty-three thousand eight hundred and seven dollars and ninety cents in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Kowloon, Miscellaneous, Resumption of Kowloon Marine Lot No. 83 and Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1178.

THE CHAIRMAN—I think members are aware that this is the lot known as Macdonald's lot in Hunghom. The Government want to resume it for future extensions to the railway and so on.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—There was a Board to assess compensation I suppose.

THE CHAIRMAN—The matter was very fully gone into.

The vote was agreed to.

Launch Repairs

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of three hundred dollars in aid of the vote Sanitary Department, Other Charges, Launch, Steam Barges, etc., Repairs.

The vote was agreed to.

Children's Playground in Kowloon

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand two hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Kowloon, Miscellaneous, (36) Shelter in Children's Playground.

THE CHAIRMAN—The sum of \$3,500 appears in the estimates but the cost of materials for a tiled roof and so on have gone up and this additional sum is required.

HON. MR. DODWELL—Is it not possible to have a children's playground at the Peak?

THE CHAIRMAN—The question of utilising the triangle between Chamberlain Road and Mt. Kellett Road is being considered. There is already one below the road but the children, or rather the amahs, won't go down there. The triangle suggested is about the only piece of vacant ground.

The vote was agreed to.

Imports and Exports

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of nine hundred and fifty dollars in aid of the following votes:—

Imports and Exports Department, Other Charges, Factory, Miscellaneous Stores	\$ 200
Factory, Fuel	750
	—
Total	\$ 950
	—

The vote was agreed to.

Pavilion for Police R.C.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of five thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, extraordinary, Buildings, Erection of a Pavilion for the Police Recreation Club.

THE CHAIRMAN—The Police Recreation Club formerly had a matshed which was in a very bad condition. The Government was approached on the subject and agreed to erect a pavilion at a cost of \$11,000. The building is completed up to the roof level and this vote is now asked for. The work will be completed early next year.

The vote was agreed to.

COUNCIL RESUMES.

The Council then resumed and the Colonial Secretary reported that Financial Minutes 84 to 104 had been passed by the Finance Committee without amendment and moved that they be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT said:—As Honable Members are no doubt aware, Mr. Thomson, the Treasurer of the Colony, is retiring from the Public Service to-day on the expiration of 31 years service. After a brilliant career at Aberdeen University, an institution that has given many distinguished men to the service of the Empire, Mr. Thomson was appointed a Cadet Officer at the end of the year 1887, and in accordance with the custom of that period passed nearly a year in the Colonial Office. It is more than twenty-five years since he first sat as a Member of the Executive and Legislative Councils, and for more than twenty years he has sat as Colonial Secretary and as Treasurer on both Councils continuously, which constitutes a record for any officer in the history of the Colony. It is a record of very honourable and useful service for which the Government is deeply grateful. Mr. Thomson's advice on the various financial questions that have arisen during his term of office has been of immense service to the Administration. The Colony has passed through times of difficulty when it was essential that expenditure should be carefully safeguarded, and it is much to be regretted that in these times of increased

prosperity the Government will no longer have the services of an officer whose advice on the financing of many important matters now under consideration would be of the greatest assistance. The post of Treasurer is one, that, apart from its heavy responsibility, demands from its holder certain rare qualities of discretion in carefully interpreting the laws under which the revenues are collected. There are matters in which even the most carefully worded enactment occasionally leaves room for ambiguity, and while guarding the public revenues Mr. Thomson has adopted a reasonable attitude which has, I think, been recognised by those members of the public with whom he has been brought into contact. By his colleagues in the Service Mr. Thomson has always been held in the highest estimation; and their personal regard for him was shown only a few minutes ago in this room when the honour fell to me of making him a presentation. In bidding farewell to him in this Council I desire on behalf of the Official and Unofficial Members to assure him that our best wishes will accompany him in his retirement, with a fervent hope that in a better climate he may be entirely restored to health and may live for many years to enjoy his well-earned repose.

HON. MR. H.E. POLLOCK—On behalf of the unofficial members of this Council, I desire to state that we associate ourselves most cordially with the sentiments in regard to the retiring Treasurer which Your Excellency has just expressed. Formerly, as Attorney-General, and, latterly, as an unofficial member of Council, I have sat in this Council for a period of over 15 years at the same table as the hon. member now retiring, and I can safely say, sir, from that long experience, that I have never met a man who so combined the qualities of sterling commonsense with the facility of going straight and direct to the very heart of the matter under discussion. As Your Excellency has pointed out, Mr. Thomson has had a very long and distinguished period of service in this Colony, and I hope, sir, I am not infringing any rule of etiquette when I say that there is a somewhat general desire among the people in this Colony, if it would please H.M. the King, to give Mr. Thomson some mark of recognition for the long and distinguished service which you, sir, have referred to.

Mr. Thomson, in the course of his long residence in the Colony, has made a very great many friends, and he will carry away with him, on his departure, the cordial good wishes of the members of the community of Hongkong.

HON. COLONIAL TREASURER—As has been remarked, it is over 25 years since I first took my seat on this Council, and I am very much obliged for the kind expressions which have fallen from Your

Excellency and from my hon. friend on my left. My experience of the Council has always been a happy one. Such small "scraps" as have occurred have left no mark on the general good-feeling prevailing. I am sorry to go. I may say that it is the most painful thing that has happened in my life up to date to have to take leave of you to-day. I beg to thank you for your kind wishes, sir, and to say farewell.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.
