

10TH APRIL, 1919.

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. C. McI. MESSER, O.B.E. (Colonial Treasurer).

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

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

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK.

HON. MR. HO FOOK.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL.

HON. MR. C. G. ALABASTER, O.B.E.

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

ABSENT:—

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK, K.C. (Acting Attorney-General).

HON. MR. E. D. C. WOLFE (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

New Members

The Hon. Mr. S. H. Dodwell and the Hon. Mr. C. G. Alabaster, O.B.E., took the oath upon becoming members of the Council.

Members of Committees

H.E. the Officer Administering the Government appointed the Hon. Mr. S. H. Dodwell to serve on the Public Works Committee in place of Mr. Shewan, and the Hon. Mr. Alabaster to serve on the Law Committee in place of the Hon. Mr. H. E. Pollock, K.C.

Finance

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table Financial Minutes Nos. 13 to 20 and moved that they be

referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table report of Finance Committee No. 3 and moved that it be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and this was carried.

Proposed Crematorium

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table the report of the Public Works Committee No. 1 and moved that it be adopted.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS seconded and this was carried.

The report was as follows:—

The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Government considered it desirable to provide a Crematorium for general use and laid before them a plan showing a proposal to erect such a structure at the south-east corner of the Colonial Cemetery. The plan showed that direct access from Wongneichong Road to the Crematorium was to be provided so as to obviate the necessity of passing through the Colonial Cemetery itself in order to reach it. Quarters for a caretaker were included in the proposal, the estimated cost being \$3,300, if the Crematorium were erected close to the road, and \$5,300, if it were erected somewhat further back.

The Committee were unanimously of opinion that a Crematorium for general use should be provided and that the site suggested was a suitable one. They advised that the building should be constructed at some distance back from the road and that, notwithstanding any increase which might have to be made in the estimate, the structure itself and the apparatus required for Cremation purposes should be in accordance with the latest and most up-to-date practice.

Paper

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Officer Administering the Government, laid upon the table Sessional Paper No. 3—Extracts from Treasury Minute dated 30th September, 1918.

Commercial Wireless Station

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—I rise to speak to the resolution standing in my name:—

"That arrangements be made at once for the installation of a powerful commercial wireless station, capable of connecting direct with Colombo or some other station in Ceylon."

I submit that in these days it ought to be unnecessary further to debate this subject, but apparently it is. It was as early as 1911 if not before—as far as I have been able to carry my researches it was in 1911—that the question of establishing a high power wireless commercial station in this Colony was first mooted and discussed. It led to a debate in this Council on the 3rd of October, 1912, when the question of including Hongkong in the Imperial wireless chain system was thoroughly discussed. The result was a promise by the Governor to submit the debate to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and he begged that the issue should not be forced to a vote. In deference to His Excellency's wish this was not done. The result of that was that in course of time a low-power station was suggested and finally installed. I can only quote it as another instance of the short-sightedness of the administration of this Colony in taking the cheaper course to effect a temporary settlement of a public need. Personally, I regard it as false economy. In this connection I would beg leave to quote from a letter from the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce at that time, the late Hon. Mr. E. A. Hewitt, addressed to this Government as far back as April, 1911, dealing with the proposed alternative of a low power station. The following extract from the letter deals with the case in point. "We understand that the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company now propose to erect a station, but that this will only have a radius of some 250 miles. This our Committee considers altogether inadequate for our requirements. We are of the opinion that a station with an assured radius of 1,500 miles is urgently needed in the interests of the whole trade of the Colony and that nothing less should be accepted as meeting

our present needs."

The subsequent correspondence between the Chamber of Commerce and the Government will bear out my statement when I say that this essential need, whatever might be achieved as a stop-gap, was never lost sight of by the Chamber of Commerce. The need of it has been amply emphasised. The outbreak of war found Germany with a commercial wireless system established by a chain throughout the world by which she was enabled to advise not only her navy in Far Eastern waters to escape from Tsingtau but also her mercantile fleet to escape to neutral ports. As a result of this, valuable prizes were lost to us. The reason why the matter is being raised again now so emphatically is that the telegraphic system, as worked by the Eastern Extension Telegraph Companies, has so seriously broken down, by break-downs or otherwise in the cables, or through pressure of Government business, that commercial telegrams have been held up for no less a period than 12 or 14 days. Well, sir, I have often wondered whether it is clearly realised at Home how important a centre of trade—small though it may appear to be on the map—this island of Hongkong is in the Imperial chain. If its full importance was realised, I cannot believe that many of the urgent reforms which have been asked for from time to time would have been denied as long as they have. For the past two or three months business has to a large extent been paralysed, and trade which certainly could have been carried out to the benefit of the Empire has not been put through because no one would dare operate in these days with such serious delays before them. Therefore, we feel most strongly that the time has again come to urge the necessity for establishing at the earliest possible date a high-power commercial wireless station capable of communicating direct as far as Colombo or Calcutta and thence to London. Manila is in constant daily communication with New York, and, viewing the progress of the world and in consideration of the stress of competition which lies before us, which will be more acute in the future than ever it has been, Hongkong cannot afford to be at the beck and call of a cable system subject to such serious flaws as those evident today. Moreover, with regard to the exorbitant rates demanded, the establishment of a competitive wireless system would tend to cheapen the cost of sending telegrams, and that would be good for Imperial trade.

It has been suggested to me that, at any rate for the time being, the high-power naval station upon Stonecutters Island could be used, with the consent of the Admiralty and the assistance of the Government, during the temporary stress. Whether this could be arranged I do not know. I am prepared to be told that possibly this could be used also as the permanent system for commercial messages to save installing what we ought to have—another high-power station. If that is put forward I would like to say, in advance that the commercial community feel very strongly that at the time when we might most need the wireless system for commercial telegrams as we do to-day, in any stress of circumstances which might arise, at that precise moment the Admiralty would claim their own system and the commercial telegrams would be debarred.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL—I rise to second the motion. I have some notes on the subject here but I find that the points have been fully covered by the hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce. As Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce I would like to endorse what he has said. The dislocation of trade owing to the failure of the cable system is so serious that I think the immediate establishment of a chain of wireless stations throughout the Empire is demanded and I think that we, as one of the foremost shipping ports in the world, should take steps to place our link in that chain. Moreover, I hope we shall not experience the three and a half years' delay which attended the erection of the lower power station.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK—I agree with the views just expressed by the hon. members and I have pleasure in supporting the resolution.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—In reply to the hon. member who moved this resolution I would like to say that as far as the Government is concerned it entirely sympathises with the desire expressed for a high power wireless station establishing communication with all parts of the world in the interests of the commercial development of Hongkong. Before I proceed to any statement on the subject, I would like to recall to hon. members who have spoken what took place in this Council on October 3rd, 1912, reference to which has been made by the hon. member who represents the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Pollock moved on that occasion that this Council had read with pleasure the statement of the

Postmaster General, made in the House of Commons on August 7th, 1912, to the effect that it was the intention of the British Government to erect at its own cost for a sum of £60,000 a wireless telegraphic station in Hongkong and that such station would be used for the transmission of commercial cables. In reporting to the Secretary of State the proceedings which took place on that motion, Sir Henry May pointed out the immense value the station would be to a great emporium of trade like Hongkong and said he felt sure that the taxpayers of the Colony would willingly make sacrifices, if necessary, in order to have the Port included in the Imperial chain of wireless stations. The hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce was not quite correct in saying that in place of such a station as was asked for the low power station at Cap d'Aguilar was erected. That is not the case. That low power station was for what is known as "ship to shore" communication and it had to be provided in any case. It was after very careful consideration with all those who could give the best advice that that low power station for "ship to shore" communication was erected at Cap d'Aguilar. The area there was not large enough for a more powerful station and it was a position that could not be defended. It was, however, very suitable for such a station as has been erected and this station has proved its usefulness. As regards the larger station to which reference was made, there is no doubt in my mind, and I have seen nothing to alter my view, that the station erected at Stonecutters Island is the station which was referred to by the Postmaster-General. It is the station which, in ordinary circumstances I feel certain, would have been in full use long ago in connection with the Singapore station and other stations for commercial messages had not the war intervened. It was erected at great speed some years ago but it has been impossible hitherto to make use of it for commercial purposes. There is very little doubt in my mind that before very long we shall be in a position to use it for commercial cables. In considering whether another station—an even more powerful one as has been suggested by hon. members who have spoken on this motion—should be erected in this Colony,

I think we must have regard to what the experts tell us. They point out that to be efficient, a station which will maintain regular communication with Colombo would need to be an exceptionally high power one, and if such a high power station were erected with already two stations in the very limited area of this Colony, it would be probable that they would seriously interfere with each other's working. That may prove not to be the case but that is the view, I understand, the experts take at the present time. Therefore there are two opinions expressed by them—one, that the station at Stonecutters Island, with the chain of stations beginning at Singapore, would be amply sufficient for commercial messages to be transmitted, and, two, that a higher power station than the one at Stonecutters Island erected in the Colony would seriously injure the efficiency of the two stations already in existence. I am sure hon. members have seen the statement very recently made by one of H.M.'s Ministers that it is the extraordinary series of breakdowns in the submarine cables and the tremendous pressure of messages which has led to this unfortunate delay which it is quite clearly recognised is hampering trade in a very serious degree and that new cables are being laid to deal with the large increase in the need for rapid communication which is expected in the future. I think, therefore, it will be obvious to hon. members that with this expression of opinion by experts, this Government cannot proceed at once to make arrangements for the installation of a new and higher power station as suggested, and I hope, in view of what I have said, the hon. member representing the Chamber of Commerce will be prepared to withdraw his motion. The proceedings which have taken place here will be forwarded to the proper quarter and if I ask for an expression of opinion, as I am prepared to do, no doubt we shall receive a statement from elsewhere on this subject.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—I feel the matter is of such serious import to the Colony that I cannot agree to the suggestion that Your Excellency has made. It is not because I am opposed to what Your Excellency has said regarding your desire to help us in this matter because I am quite sure the Government is as desirous as we are to remedy the evils which exist, but to send the report of these proceedings home by mail would take at the very least six weeks and to wait for the dispatch of an answer would hold the Colony up for three months and I regard the matter as so serious that I think this should not be done. I have seen the statement made in the House of

Commons a few days ago—this itself was a greatly delayed message—that the Eastern Extension Company is doing everything in its power to repair its cables. We have been told this repeatedly for the last three months but the evil grows worse than ever. I regard it as of very great importance that we should have an alternative route. Surely, if we are to keep abreast of the times we cannot be dependent upon submarine cables, and whether it interferes with the established rights of the Telegraph Company or not, I submit that the matter must be put before the Home Authorities in the very strongest light possible. I expected opposition. We had it before from the cable companies and if it comes again—

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—I do not think the point of opposition on the part of the cable companies was raised by the hon. member and it was not touched upon by me. I do not think that need be raised.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK — Your Excellency referred to an extension of submarine cables.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT — When asking for the withdrawal of the motion, the point I made was that the erection of such a station as that now proposed would so seriously interfere with the existing stations that, in the opinion of the experts, the money would be more or less thrown away. That would be a serious thing. Moreover, I pointed out that as far as I know the present station would become available for commercial messages in the chain of high power stations already in existence.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—It is a common practice when machinery, even recently installed machinery, is superseded by a newer form which can be worked either more cheaply or more expeditiously, for the old style to be immediately scrapped. I would suggest that it might be expedient, in view of the fact that the station established here, which I learn for the first time, as far as I know, was really intended for commercial purposes, will only communicate direct with Singapore so that the cables have to be relayed

for Calcutta and Home while competing stations communicate with Honolulu and America and give daily quotations at Manila, that the station should be superseded. This is the point I wish to bring home. If a thing is out of date—and it may easily be if it was installed before the war—it is better to accept the fact, reinstall something superior and get the benefit for the nation. I therefore regret that I must press the motion.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—I am afraid I cannot accept the motion as it stands at present containing, as it does, the words "at once." Before we go further it might be possible to ask the experts if the present station which has been established in the most favourable spot in the Colony for such a station could be made more powerful than it is. With the information we have and the advice we have it is impossible to accept the motion in its present form.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—How soon will it be possible for the experts to report?

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—I cannot say. It might be possible to get a report at once.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—Is there anyone in the Colony capable of giving an opinion?

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—I think so.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—If your Excellency will give us the assurance that we shall have the reply within the next week.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—I can ask at once, I cannot guarantee a reply at once. I do not know what technical examination may be necessary.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—With that assurance I will withdraw the motion and on the understanding that the matter will be brought up again.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—I will send to the Secretary of State a report of these proceedings.

The motion was then withdrawn.

Questions by Hon. Mr. Alabaster

The following questions were asked by the Hon. Mr. Alabaster, the answers being read by

the Colonial Secretary:—

Q.—As the introduction and increased use of rickshas on the Peak footpaths has created a new danger to child-life, will the Government hasten the conversion of the corner of waste ground between the Government villas and Mount Kellet Road into a suitable playground?

A.—The work of conversion was put in hand on the 28th March.

Q.—Will the Government construct on the unused lot on the north side of the Royal Courts of Justice a pavilion which can be used as a bandstand in the evenings and in the daytime as a sun and rain shelter for the amahs and children who now haunt the Cricket Ground and Court verandahs?

A.—The Government is unable to erect a bandstand at this spot. The provision of a shelter will be considered.

Q.—What steps is the Government taking before the rainy season commences to save the hill and roadway below the London Mission House at Cheung Chau from being washed away?

A.—The pathway where damaged will be repaired by forming a turfed bank below it. Water will be diverted from this section of the pathway by forming a turfed bund above it. The water will be discharged under the pathway in a properly-constructed drain. It is anticipated that these measures will be a sufficient safeguard.

Q.—What progress has been made in the work of connecting all Police Stations by telephone?

A. — Cheung Chau Police Station was connected on the 1st April. It is anticipated that Tai O and Tung Chung Police Stations will be connected by the 30th April. The permanent cables for these lines have not yet arrived, and the cables laid have been loaned temporarily by the Military Authorities.

The lines to Lamma and Kat O will be commenced as soon as the lines to Lantao are completed. Owing to depletion of staff the lines cannot all be constructed simultaneously.

When this work is finished, all Police Stations will be connected by telephone.

Q.—Why has the First Police Magistrate and Coroner been appointed to act as Director of Education in addition to his other duties when there are in the Colony two or three educationalists with previous experience of the office?

A.—It was considered to be the most suitable appointment. Owing to the war the Government's staff is much depleted, but it is anticipated that it will be possible shortly to make other arrangements for filling the post of First Magistrate.

Q.—Has the Government made any protest against the arbitrary cancellation, without notice, of homeward bookings by the *Empresses of Russia, Asia, and Japan* and the *Monteagle*?

A.—Yes; telegrams were addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 31st March and the 1st April.

Q.—Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the serious lack of sufficient hotel accommodation in the Colony? If so, has the Government done anything to assist visitors to obtain shelter?

A.—The Government is aware that the hotel accommodation has recently been overtaxed, owing partly to the unexpected arrival of a Military Mission. It has received no application for assistance in obtaining shelter.

Q.—Why have there been no Legislative Council Meetings for about a month?

A.—It was considered that the business which was ready for transaction was not sufficient in amount, urgency, or importance to justify the summoning of Council.

Questions by Hon. Mr. Holyoak

The following questions were asked by the Hon. Mr. Holyoak, the answers being read by the Colonial Secretary:—

Q. — Will the Government appoint a committee of experts to inquire into and report upon:—

- (a) The condition of the channel by which vessels enter the Harbour in order to proceed to their buoys or to the existing wharves.
- (b) The efficiency, or otherwise, of the present Government dredger, the *St. Enoch*.
- (c) The necessity, or otherwise, of at once ordering a modern dredging plant for

constant use in this Harbour.

A.—The Government, as at present advised, sees no necessity for such a Committee. If persons who are qualified to express an opinion will give particulars of any dredging which they deem to be required in the interests of the port, the matter will at once be investigated.

Q.—Has the report and finding of the "Civil Service Salaries Commission" been sent in to the Government yet and, if so, will the Government lay it upon the table for the consideration of the Council?

A.—The report has been received and has been sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his consideration. It is not possible to make the contents public.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—With regard to the answer to my second question I wish to give notice of motion that the report shall be laid upon the table.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—You have not seen my letter to the Chief Justice.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—No.

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—When you have seen that perhaps you will consider whether you will propose the motion.

British Traders Insurance Co., Ltd. (Capital Conversion Ordinance, 1919)

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK moved the first reading of a Bill intituled, "An Ordinance to authorise the British Traders Insurance Company, Limited to convert its silver capital into gold."

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL seconded and the Bill was read a first time.

The Objects and Reasons state:—The object of this Bill is to enable The British Traders Insurance Company, Limited to convert its capital from silver into gold by a special resolution to that effect to be passed by the shareholders. The directors consider this desirable because the great bulk of the Company's business is carried out in countries where a gold currency prevails.

The fact that the Company does not carry on any life insurance business seems to make it unnecessary to provide for any special notice to policy holders.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK moved that the Bill should be passed through all its stages at that meeting.

HON. MR. DODWELL seconded and this was agreed to.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK then moved the second reading of the Bill. In doing so he said—A similar Ordinance was passed recently in connection with the Union Insurance Society of Canton, Ltd. The present Ordinance is desirable, not only for the reason that the greater bulk of the Company's business is carried on in countries where there is a gold standard, but also because the Company is amalgamated with the Union Insurance Society of Canton, Ltd.

HON. MR. DODWELL seconded and the Bill was read a second time.

Council went into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause. The Bill passed through Committee without amendment and, upon Council resuming,

HON. MR. HOLYOAK moved the third reading of the Bill.

HON. MR. DODWELL seconded and the Bill was read a third time and passed.

The Government and the Press

H.E. THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT—With regard to the seventh question asked by the hon. member who represents the Justices of the Peace, why no Council meeting has been held, I would like to point out that there was a motion put down for to-day by the hon. member who represents the Chamber of Commerce, but even if that had not been so we should still have had a meeting of the Council to carry out the pledge that any questions asked should be answered at an early date. That is all very well, but if there is no business before the Council except such questions and perhaps some Finance Minutes which could easily wait, it seems to be unnecessary to ask hon. unofficial members, who have plenty of work to do, to come here and sit in Council. I would propose that the course adopted at Home, where the questions have become very numerous, of answering certain questions in writing and publishing the replies, be adopted. If hon. members agree to this course the questions can be published at once and the answers published at the earliest opportunity, without having a meeting of the Council. In

connection with that I should like to say that many statements, articles and so on have appeared in the public Press in this Colony recently which would not have been published if certain simple measures had been taken to obtain information. I have repeatedly asked those who are responsible for the newspapers in the Colony to come and ask for any information they want and I think it would very rarely be with-held. It might be the fact that information would be given which could not for obvious reasons be published, but at any rate the fact that certain knowledge would be possessed by those responsible for the newspapers would prevent statements appearing, sometimes at considerable length, which do not represent the facts. I am sure that it is the one desire of the Press to represent facts accurately to their readers and, therefore, I again publicly say that if the editors or managers of the newspapers require any information of the Government's intentions on any subject they only have to ask for it. It would hardly do for us to supply a daily bulletin of our doings, and we have little time to do that, but if any information is required we shall be very glad to give it unless we are debarred, which is not often the case. I shall be in my office until one o'clock this morning to give any information required by those in charge of newspapers in this Colony. Many things are written, perhaps sometimes in a hurry, which in calmer moments might not be written. I am not complaining of them and, perhaps sometimes they may be corrected. I refer especially to something which appeared in one of the morning papers to-day.

HIS EXCELLENCY then asked the hon. members if they agreed to the course proposed with regard to answering questions.

The members signified their agreement and the Council adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee followed, the Colonial Secretary presiding:—

Police Reserve Office

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two hundred and forty-five dollars in aid of the vote Police and Prison Departments, —A. Police, Other Charges, Rent of Office for Deputy Superintendent of Police (Reserve).

THE CHAIRMAN—This is a small addition in respect of Mr. Jenkin's office which is now used by the Police Reserve. Formerly it was paid by Mr. Jenkin.

HON. MR. ALABASTER—Is it a year's rent?

THE CHAIRMAN—Seven months.

The vote was agreed to.

Attorney-General's Salary

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of nine thousand seven hundred and ninety-four dollars in aid of the vote Attorney-General's Department, Personal Emoluments.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is in respect of salary paid to the acting Attorney-General during Mr. Kemp's leave. Probably it will not come to so much because Mr. Kemp, on leave, does not draw the present rate of exchange. This is the maximum amount.

The vote was agreed to.

Charitable Services

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of one thousand dollars in aid of the vote Charitable Services, Other Charitable Allowances.

THE CHAIRMAN—The annual vote is \$1,000 and it has been exhausted.

The vote was agreed to.

Beaconsfield Arcade

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903, (25) Compensation and Resumptions.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is the price paid for the Beaconsfield Arcade property. Unofficial members have already had this matter before them.

The vote was agreed to.

Increased Moorings in the Harbour

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of twenty-three thousand dollars in aid of the vote Harbour Master's Department, A. — Harbour Office, Special Expenditure, Acquisition and re-arrangement of Moorings in Victoria Harbour.

THE CHAIRMAN—I am glad to say that this is in respect of increased moorings. The shipping is coming back and we want two new B class moorings and three of C class.

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 four hundred dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, Hongkong, Miscellaneous, Erection of a Car Shelter at Deep Water Bay.

THE CHAIRMAN—This is a re-vote. The vote was not expended last year. It includes a sum of money spent on level-ling and extending the golf course. The two amounts ought really not to be under one heading, but the work was done by one contractor.

The vote was agreed to.

Housing Schemes

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of twenty-five thousand dollars in aid of the vote Public Works, Extraordinary, New Territories, Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903, (48) Compensation and Resumptions.

THE CHAIRMAN — This is largely in connection with the housing scheme at Sham Sui Po. A good deal of land is being resumed there in order as far as possible to persuade people to put up buildings there and so get the population extended in that direction.

The vote was agreed to.

Peace Celebrations

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of thirty thousand dollars in aid of the vote Miscellaneous Services, Peace Celebration.

THE CHAIRMAN—The Peace Celebrations Committee have fixed the public cost of decorations and fire-works at \$60,000 of which the Government have agreed to pay half.

The vote was agreed to.

QUESTIONS

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 18 of the 25th April, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. C. G. ALABASTER, O.B.E., gave notice, on the 15th April, 1919, of the following question:—

Will the Government repair and restore the old footpath leading from Broadwood Road to the Victoria School and French Convent School so that children living in Wong Nei Chung Road and Broadwood Road can go to and return from school without using the main motor road?

The reply thereto is as follows:—

The Government had its attention drawn to the matter in February. The work was put in hand on the 15th March, and it will be completed by Monday, the 28th April.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
24th April, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 21 of the 9th May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. C. G. ALABASTER, O.B.E., gave notice, on the 26th April, 1919, of the following questions:—

1. Will the Colonial Secretary lay on the table a return showing how many juvenile offenders under the age of 16 are at the date of the return confined in Victoria Gaol, with the age, date of conviction, term of imprisonment, and offence of each prisoner?
2. What provision is made in the Gaol for keeping juvenile offenders apart from adult prisoners in accordance with Prison Regulation No. 210?

3. Are juvenile offenders—

- (a) allowed special library books and books of instruction throughout their sentence,
- (b) employed with other juvenile offenders in workshops,
- (c) instructed in a trade, and
- (d) exercised twice daily with a view to their physical development, in accordance with Regulation 211?

The replies thereto are as follows:—

1. The return is as follows:—

Juveniles in Victoria Gaol on 30th April, 1919.

Regd. No.	Name.	Age.	Crime.	Date of sentence.	Months.	Days.
2102	Mak Fat	14	Stealing from person ..	7.4.19	...	42
2052	Cheng Kau <i>alias</i> Ho Yan-tsoi	14	Do.	2.4.19	...	42
1894	Fung Sam	13	Do.	22.3.19
2185	She Po	1	Do.	12.4.19	...	42
1551	Chan Ying	15	Do.	22.2.19	6	...
2355	Li Fuk	14	Do.	24.4.19	...	42
2318	Ho Chun	12	Opium Ordinance	23.4.19	{ \$10,000 or } { 12 months }	...
2384	Chan Yan	15	Stealing	26.4.19	1	...
2412	Tse Chung	15	Unlicensed hawking ...	28.4.19	...	14

2. Juvenile offenders work in their cells and are exercised separately.

3. — (a) The reply is in the negative.
 (b) Juvenile offenders are not employed in the workshops.
 (c) The reply is in the negative.
 (d) The reply is in the affirmative.

The number of juvenile offenders in gaol at the present time is unusually high. In the ordinary course only one or two such offenders are in gaol at any one time.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
 8th May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 22 of the 16th May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. HO FOOK gave notice, on the 2nd May, 1919, of the following questions:

Will the Government state

- (a) Whether the terms and conditions attached to the letting of the piece of Crown land north of the Central

Market have been varied or modified since the highest tender was accepted? And, if so, what are the variations or modifications and the reasons therefor?

- (b) What was the amount of the second highest tender?

The replies thereto are as follows:—

- (a) A disagreement occurred between the Government and the lessee regarding the proper interpretation of one of the conditions of the lease, and the lessee refused to sign the lease agreement.

The Government was advised that the lessee was bound by his contract, but the condition in question was admittedly worded in an unsatisfactory manner, and it was considered advisable to settle the matter by negotiation rather than to bring it before the Courts. The lessee was very willing to meet the Government in the matter and terms were forth with arranged, to the effect that the monthly rent should be reduced from \$2,520 to \$2,100 and that the lessee should have an option to continue the lease, which was due to expire on the 28th January, 1920, until the 31st December, 1921, subject to one month's notice if at any time after the 28th January, 1920, the Government should require the site for its own use.

In making this compromise the Government was guided by the following considerations. A dispute had occurred between the outgoing and the incoming lessee, with the result that the former had removed all the buildings that were on the site. It would take time and money to erect new buildings and the Government was not prepared to grant a long lease, as it would soon require the land for its own purposes. It seemed probable in the circumstances that, if the site was put up to tender again, the rental would be much reduced, and at the same time it was desired to avoid the expensive legal proceedings of uncertain result which would be necessary in order to enforce the contract which had been made.

- (b) The amount of the second highest tender was \$2,370 a month.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
10th May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 22 of the 16th May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. HO FOOK gave notice, on the 2nd April, 1919, of the following questions:—

Will the Government state

- (a) Whether the terms and conditions attached to the Kowloon Ferry Service have been varied or modified since the highest tender was accepted? And, if so, what are the variations or modifications and the reasons therefor?
- (b) What was the amount of the second highest tender?

The replies thereto are as follows:—

- (a) The Government is negotiating with the Ferry Company with regard to substantial modifications in the terms and conditions attached to the Yaumati and Shamshuipo Ferry Service.

It is considered to be in the public

interest that all possible facilities should be given to the Chinese population in order to induce them to live on the north side of the harbour and so to relieve the congestion in Victoria; and to this end a cheap ferry service is essential. The Government does not wish to make a profit out of the service and it has suggested to the Company that it should reduce the fares which it is entitled under its lease to charge, on condition that a reduction is made in the monthly payment of \$9,900 due to the Government. An agreement has not yet been reached.

- (b) The amount of the second highest tender was \$6,000 a month.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
15th May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 23 of the 23rd May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. LAU CHÜ-PAK gave notice, on the 8th May, 1919, of the following question:—

In view of the fact that armed robberies have been so frequent of late, will the Government arrange with the Military Authorities to have a sufficient number of soldiers seconded for regular police duties, until the present wave of crime has subsided, or the regular Police Force has been adequately strengthened?

The reply thereto is as follows:—

Men seconded from the garrison have been employed as policemen since 18th March, 1918. At the present time twenty-three men from the Manchester Regiment and twenty-

five from the 74th Punjab Regiment are doing regular police duties. The Police Force has recently been strengthened by the addition of eighteen Chinese constables; eight men have recently arrived from India and a further draft of eleven men is due very shortly; twenty European constables have been demobilized and some of them are *en route* for Hongkong.

It is considered that these arrangements are sufficient.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Council

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
17th May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 23 of the 23rd May, 1919.)

The HON. MR. HO FOOK gave notice, on the 8th May, 1919, of the following questions:—

1. With reference to the Honourable Colonial Secretary's letter of 6th November, 1918, addressed to me as a result of my remarks at a meeting of the Legislative Council on the subject of the suppression of serious crime, and subsequently published in the local Press, will the Government state

(a) What is the number of armed robberies that have taken place since my remarks were made in the Legislative Council on the 17th October, 1918?

(b) What kind or kinds of deadly weapons were used in such cases, as far as is known to the police; and how many (if any) toy pistols are known to the Police as having been used in such cases, in view of the statement made in the above mentioned letter that "Robbers have recently used toy pistols"?

2. Will the Government have enquiries made through the proper channel as to the number of armed robberies that have taken place in Canton since the 17th October, 1918?

3. In view of the large number of armed robberies that have recently taken place in the Colony, what steps have been and will be taken by the Government for their suppression?

4. Will the Government take early action to have the regular Police Force brought up to its pre-war strength?

The replies thereto are as follows:—

1.—(a) The number of armed robberies between the 17th October, 1918, and the 22nd May, 1919, is seventy-seven, and there have also been nine attempted

armed robberies in the same period.

(b) The revolver is the weapon most commonly used. Knives, daggers, choppers, and chisels have also been carried. On the 18th May, 1918, an armed robbery was committed by a gang of five men, four of whom were armed with toy pistols. It is not known whether toy pistols were used in any of the armed robberies during the period under review, but various seizures of toy pistols in the possession of known bad characters have been made.

2. The Government does not consider that it will serve any useful purpose to make such enquiry.

3. The reply to Mr. Lau Chü-pak's question, printed above, details the steps which have been taken to augment the Police Force, and the Government has made such use as it has found possible of the Police Reserve. It is not considered to be in the public interest to give particulars of the steps that have been taken or will be taken for the suppression of armed robberies, but if the Honourable Member cares to call upon the Captain Superintendent of Police he will be fully informed upon the subject.

4. The Government has taken and is taking all possible steps to this end.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
22nd May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 24 of the 30th May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. C. G. ALABASTER, O.B.E., gave notice, on the 27th May, 1919, of the following questions:—

Will the Government take over the private pumping station, which now supplies Broadwood Road with water, or make other provision for the water supply of this district, so that the residents may get their water on the same terms as prevail in other parts of the Colony?

The reply thereto is as follows:—

The Government is not prepared to take over the private pumping station, the gravitation tanks of which are situated in a private house.

It is the intention to build filter beds in the neighbourhood of the eastern end of Bowen Road, and a sum of \$40,000 is

provided in the present year's estimates for commencing the work. Broadwood Ridge will be supplied from these beds, when they are completed.

The purchasers of lots in this neighbourhood accepted the following condition of sale:—

"The Government is unable to ensure a supply of water to the lot, but will, at the expense of the purchaser, lay a service to the nearest point at which a supply by gravitation can be obtained from the existing water works system."

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
28th May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 24 of the 30th May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. LAU CHÜ-PAK gave notice, on the 8th May, 1919, of the following question:—

In view of the stringent and drastic measures that have been and are being taken by the Chinese Authorities in Kwongtung to root out bad characters in the districts adjacent to this Colony, what steps have the Government taken or propose to take to prevent such people from using this Colony as a field for their activities?

The reply thereto is as follows:—

The Government has no information regarding the measures referred to. It is thought inadvisable to make public the methods which are adopted for dealing with undesirable characters.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
30th May, 1919.

(Extract from the Hongkong Government Gazette No. 24 of the 30th May, 1919.)

THE HON. MR. C. G. ALABASTER, O.B.E., gave notice, on the 16th May, 1919, of the following question:—

Will the Government take steps to provide juvenile offenders in Gaol with employment and elementary instruction during part of each day outside their cells, instead of keeping them in cells for 22 or 23 hours out of every 24, a confinement which must be injurious to them physically, mentally, and morally?

The reply thereto is as follows:—

Arrangements have been made for juvenile offenders to work in association

in the gallery of F. Hall daily from 6.30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday afternoons and Sundays excepted.

Their work will generally consist of oakum picking, envelope making, or light tailoring.

In 1918 the daily average of juvenile offenders in the Gaol was two, and the length of sentence was in most cases very short.

A. D. BALL,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
30th May, 1919.