

28TH DECEMBER, 1926.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. W. T. SOUTHORN), presiding.

PRESENT:—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN).

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (HON. MR. C. MCL. MESSER, O.B.E.).

HON. MR. H. T. CREASY (Director of Public Works).

HON. MR. A. O. LANG.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD.

HON. DR. R. H. KOTEWALL, LL.D.

HON. MR. D. G. M. BERNARD.

Supplementary Expenditure

H.E. The Governor presented for the consideration of the Committee items of Supplementary Expenditure Nos. 248 to 256 of 1926. These totalled \$21,595 and were all approved.

ITEM NO. 250

Royal Observatory, Magnetic	
Instruments.....	\$9,700

THE CHAIRMAN—It was explained that the instruments were ordered in January 1925, on the recommendation of the Astronomer Royal, and the sum of \$8,000 was placed on the estimates for 1925 to meet the cost. This was found insufficient, however, and the sum of \$3,000 was placed on the estimates for 1926 to meet the cost of that portion of the indent which was not due for delivery in 1925. On the recommendation of the Director of Scientific

Research, Admiralty, certain modifications to the instruments were made at a cost of £110 which brought the total cost of the indent up to \$12,700. As none of the instruments were delivered in 1925 the whole of the cost of the indent would be brought to account in 1926.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD—If the order was placed in 1925 are the suppliers entitled to be paid for the instruments at the rate of exchange then ruling?

THE CHAIRMAN—The instrument have been paid for long ago by the Crown Agents. We get a debit for them later on in the year when the accounts are forwarded.

ITEM NO. 251

Repairs to Police cars and cycles..... \$1,200

THE CHAIRMAN—A sum of \$4,000 was provided in the 1926 estimates of which \$3,867.08 had been expended up to September 30th leaving a balance of \$132.92. The average monthly expenditure on this vote was \$450 and a sum of \$1,200 was, therefore, required to supplement the vote to the end of the year. The number of machines in use in 1926 was 43 as against 38 in actual use in 1925. The two additional A.J.S. Combinations added this year were second hand which required new tyres and certain spare parts. The main increase under this item has been cost of tyres due to the fact that the present tyres supplied do an average of 2,500 miles only whereas the normal average should be between 6,000/8,000 miles. The private garage account includes a sum of \$250 for the painting and overhaul of the C.S.P.'s car which was an extra item.

HON. MR. D. G. M. BERNARD — Is there any explanation why the tyres do an average of 2,500 miles only?

THE CHAIRMAN—The Captain Superintendent of Police thinks it is because they are Dunlop tyres made in Japan, but whether that is the true reason or

not I cannot say. Arrangements are being made to but in future British made Dunlop tyres.

ITEM NO. 254

Rations for Indian Police \$7,300

THE CHAIRMAN—The Weihaiwei Police are being replaced by Indian police. As and when the Weihaiwei agreements expire the men are allowed to go back to their country.

Widows and Orphans Pensions

THE CHAIRMAN—There are two votes which it was impossible to include in His Excellency's message. One is for a sum of \$250. The Widows and Orphans pensions are all being re-calculated in the Treasury here. It has involved a great deal of overtime work and there are four Treasury clerks for whom the Colonial Treasurer has recommended bonuses for the work they have done. This is a matter on which we wished to have the Committee's authority. The Treasurer recommends a sum of \$250 to be divided among four clerks, \$100 for the senior and \$50 for each of the others.

The vote was agreed to.

New Pumps

THE CHAIRMAN—A thousand dollars is required by the Public Works Department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The excess is on a contract for two new pumps. There were one or two extra items. Steps had to be made to the engine house and these were not shown on the drawings.

THE CHAIRMAN—What caused the excess?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—These particular steps were one of the items. They were not shown on the drawings but they were necessary. It was a rather intricate piece of work. It means extending the engine house and all the suction mains had to be altered. It was a job on which one could not see one's way very clearly when the contract was first entered into.

The vote was agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN—These votes will, it is hoped, provide for all the excess on local expenditure up to December 31st. There may be one or two excesses which we could not foresee but we have made every effort to put before you all the excess on votes which is likely to occur before the end of the year.