

HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

24th January, 1929.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (SIR CECIL CLEMENTI, K.C.M.G.).

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS (MAJOR GENERAL C. C. LUARD, C.B., C.M.G.).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN, C.M.G.).

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. SIR JOSEPH KEMP, KT, K.C., C.B.E.).

THE SECRETARY FOR CHINESE AFFAIRS (HON. MR. R. A. C. NORTH.)

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

HON. MR. H. T. CREASY, C.B.E. (Director of Public Works).

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

HON. COMMANDER G. F. HOLE, R.N. (Retired) (Harbour Master).

HON. DR. W. B. A. MOORE (Acting Director of Medical and Sanitary Services).

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK, KT, K.C.

HON. SIR SHOU-SON CHOW, KT.

HON. MR. R. H. KOTEWALL, C.M.G., LL.D.

HON. MR. A. C. HYNES.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.

HON. MR. W. E. L. SHENTON.

HON. MR. J. P. BRAGA.

HON. MR. S. W. TS'O, O.B.E., LL.D.

MR. H. R. BUTTERS, (Deputy Clerk of Councils).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council were confirmed.

NEW MEMBERS.

THE Harbour Master, (Hon. Commander G. F. Hole, R.N.), the Acting Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, (Hon. Dr. W. B. A. Moore), and the Hon. Mr. J. P. Braga took the oath of allegiance and the Hon. Mr. S. W. Ts'o made affirmation of allegiance on taking their seats as members of the Council.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—Honourable Members of the Legislative Council: It is a very real pleasure to me to find myself among you again. My experience of this Council has been a long one. I first sat here as Clerk of the Council on 10th December, 1900, and of those who then sat in this Chamber with me not one is here to-day. "All, all are gone, the old familiar faces." But, although the membership of the Council has repeatedly changed, the mind of the Council, if I may so phrase it, has undergone no change whatever since first I knew it 28 years ago. It has at all times been the aim of all members of this Council, both official and unofficial, to do everything that in them lay for the welfare of Hong Kong. That is why work in this Council is so pleasant; and that is why, even when matters of grave importance have to be considered, our debates are as a rule commendably brief. We all of us at all times have the same end in view and, therefore, we almost always see eye to eye.

Our first thought on entering the Council Chamber to-day must have been a feeling of gratitude to the Honourable the Director of Public Works and his staff for the improvements they have effected in this building. An additional storey has been successfully constructed. The work has been well done. It has been expeditiously done, and it will much facilitate the executive and legislative administration of this Colony. I am sure that all members will wish me to take this opportunity of conveying our thanks to the Public Works Department. (Applause.)

My next duty, and a very pleasant one, is to welcome to this Council four additional members appointed under the change just made in its constitution. The harbour of Hong Kong is the *raison d'être* of this Colony and its most valuable asset. It is, therefore, right and proper that the Harbour Master, who is the officer especially charged with the maintenance and development of Hong Kong harbour, should have a seat in this Council. But, although the harbour may in a sense be described to be the life of the Colony, we, its colonists, could not live here as happily and contentedly as we do, if scrupulous attention were not paid to health conditions, both on the island and on the mainland. I feel certain, therefore, that the Council will welcome the appointment of the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services to a seat in this Chamber. The Harbour Master and the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services may also be said to represent two important elements in the population of this Colony, namely, its seamen and its medical men, who have hitherto seldom been associated with us in our deliberations. From this point of view also the new appointments should be a source of strength to us. In the Honourable Mr. Braga I welcome the first representative of the Portuguese community to sit in this Council. (Applause.) We all of us appreciate the value of the Portuguese community here resident, and it is a pleasure to us that Mr. Braga, who in a
v e r y l i t e r a l

sense is a son of Hong Kong, should inaugurate the representation of that community in the Legislative Council. Moreover, the time has now come when the growth of this Colony warrants the addition of a third representative of the Chinese community; and I know that Sir Shou-son Chow and Dr. Kotewall, who so ably and worthily represent all Chinese interests in this Council, are glad to have the assistance of Dr. Ts'o Shin-wan. For my own part I am very glad to welcome Dr. Ts'o, not only as a representative Chinese, but as an old and valued friend. Both Mr. Braga and Dr. Ts'o are resident in Kowloon, and they will, therefore, be able to speak with special knowledge concerning the needs of the inhabitants of the mainland who now form an exceedingly important part of the population of this Colony.

Before taking up the business of 1929, I avail myself of this opportunity to inform the Council concerning the financial working of 1928. The figures for last year are still subject to revision and adjustment, but no appreciable change in them is expected. On 1st January, 1928, the balance at credit of the Colony's Surplus and Deficit Account was \$3,985,761. The expenditure for last year was estimated to be \$22,183,045, but in point of fact we only spent \$21,042,765. We budgeted last year for a revenue of \$20,103,390, but we actually collected a revenue of \$22,898,617. The sum of \$1,963,359 was repaid last year to revenue from loan funds on account of previous expenditure on loan works. We, therefore, began this year with a balance at credit of the Colony's Surplus and Deficit Account amounting to \$7,804,972, an increase of \$3,819,211 over the figures of twelve months ago. (Applause.) I think the Council will regard this result as extremely satisfactory. We may enter on our work with good hope; and I wish you, and through you the whole Colony, every prosperity and happiness in the New Year. (Applause.)

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK—Sir, As Senior Unofficial member of this Council who first took his seat here as far back as the year 1896, I should like, if I may be permitted to do so, to support the words of welcome which your Excellency has extended to the new official and unofficial members of this Council. A wise man of old said, "In the multitude of councillors, there is wisdom," and I feel confident that that will prove to be so in the present instance. I beg leave on behalf of the Colony to thank your Excellency for having employed part of your leave in persuading the Home authorities to increase the membership of this Council. (Applause.)

STANDING LAW COMMITTEE.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—As this is the first meeting of the Council this year, it is necessary to appoint the Standing Law Committee. I propose to appoint the following members, who have agreed to serve: The Hon. Attorney General (Chairman), the Hon. Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. Sir Henry Pollock, the Hon. Dr. R. H. Kotewall and the Hon. Mr. W. E. L. Shenton.

PAPERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. The Governor, laid on the table the following papers:—

Approval and appointment under section 36 of the Liquors Consolidation Ordinance, 1911, on 24th December, 1928.

Regulations under section 95 of the Liquors Consolidation Ordinance, 1911, on 24th December, 1928.

Order under section 92 (8) of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903, on 21st December, 1928.

The Merchant Shipping (Convention) Act, 1914.

Regulation under section 37 (2) of the Merchant Shipping Ordinance, 1899, on 7th January, 1929.

Regulation under section 3 of the Vehicles and Traffic Regulations Ordinance, 1912, on 17th January, 1929.

TRAMWAY EXTENSIONS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved the following resolution:—

"That Whereas by the provisions of section 7 of the Tramway Ordinance, 1902, it is provided that subject to the approval of the Governor in Council after timely and adequate notification by public advertisement or otherwise of the intention of the company referred to in the said Ordinance to apply for such approval, and after such approval has been confirmed by a resolution of the Legislative Council, the company may construct and maintain, subject to the provisions of the said Ordinance, and in accordance with plans previously deposited in the office of the Director of Public Works, all such lines, crossings, passing places, sidings, junctions, turn-tables and other works in addition to or as extensions of those particularly specified in and authorised by the said Ordinance as may be approved of by the Governor in Council, and may work and use the same:

"And Whereas after timely and adequate notification by public advertisement of the intention of the company to apply for the approval of the Governor in Council to the construction and maintenance, in accordance with plans previously deposited in the office of the Director of Public Works, of a single track tramway approximately 350 yards in length connecting the present Shaukiwan Terminus with Shaukiwan Village, and of three additional loops or passing places in Shaukiwan Road, between North Point and Quarry Bay, the company duly applied for the approval of the Governor in Council to the construction and maintenance of the said single track tramway and loops or passing places:

"And whereas the Governor in Council did on the 9th day of January, 1929, approve of the construction and maintenance of the said single track tramway and loops or passing places, subject to the provisions of the said Ordinance and in accordance with the said plans:

"Now it is hereby resolved that the approval of the Governor in Council so given as aforesaid is hereby confirmed."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said: The Tramway Company desires to make certain changes and extensions in the tramway track and these alterations have already received the approval of the Governor in Council. It is necessary under the law that these should also be approved by the Legislative Council. Members who have read the motion will be aware of the alterations referred to, and they have already received the full approval of the Government. I therefore move the resolution standing in my name.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL seconded and the resolution was carried unanimously.

THE WATER SUPPLY.

HON SIR HENRY POLLOCK moved the following resolution:—

"That in view of the present precarious condition of the water supply, which threatens to become even more serious in the year 1930, it is the unanimous opinion of this Council that it is imperative that the following works be constructed and completed at the earliest possible date apart from any other schemes in contemplation:

1. The joining up of the Shing Mun Water System of the Island of Hong Kong by means of a pipe line laid on the surface of the bed of the harbour capable of being completed in the course of this year.
2. The construction of the bye-wash reservoir below the present Kowloon Reservoir."

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK said: Sir,—In making the motion which stands in my name it is quite unnecessary for me to lay emphasis upon the serious and great inconvenience which is being occasioned to the community, and in particular to the poorer sections of the Chinese community in the ridermain districts, by the present shortage of water, for the position is sufficiently well-known to all members of this Council.

It is also patent that, apart from extraordinary good luck in the matter of rainfall during the summer of this year, the position as regards water shortage will be far worse this time next year than it is at present.

In these circumstances, the official members of this Council, no less than the unofficial members, are vitally concerned, as custodians of the public interests, in respectfully urging upon the Home authorities the imperative necessity for measures being

forthwith taken for the purpose of remedying the water shortage as soon as possible. Hence the words in the motion "constructed and completed at the earliest possible date."

The first part of the motion deals with the imperative necessity for the Shing Mun Water scheme being joined up with the water system of the Island of Hong Kong by means of a pipe laid across the bed of the Harbour.

This is obviously a desirable measure, seeing that the Kowloon side has water to spare over and above its present requirements, and, as the matter of water relief is so urgent, this motion emphasizes specially that such pipe-line must be of such a character and construction as to be "capable of being completed in the course of this year."

This naturally rules out an alternative scheme which has been suggested for embedding a pipe-line in concrete and carrying it under the surface of the bed of the harbour, because such alternative scheme, apart from its being many times more expensive than the scheme mentioned in this motion, would take so long a time to complete as to render relief in the near future impossible.

The second part of this motion relates to the construction of the bye-wash reservoir below the present Kowloon Reservoir, which, we understand, will have a storage capacity of some 200 million gallons and can in all probability be completed by the end of next year.

The carrying out of the above two measures at the earliest possible date will, it is hoped, meet with the unanimous support of Your Excellency and the members of this Council, and I beg leave to move accordingly.

HON. SIR SHOU-SON CHOW—Sir, I beg to second the motion.

HON. MR. J. P. BRAGA—Your Excellency,—Like the poor the water question is always with us. About a year ago it figured prominently in a discussion before the Sanitary Board. Ever since considerable space has been devoted to it in the columns of the public Press.

I am conscious of the fact that one of the first matters to engage Your Excellency's serious attention since you assumed the government of the Colony has been this one of the water supply, and it remains to this day one for anxious thought.

The resolutions moved by the senior unofficial member and seconded by the senior Chinese member bespeak the imperative necessity for an immediate provision of an adequate supply to prevent a recurrence of a water famine next year. The precarious condition of the water supply in the Island, if allowed to continue, will inflict serious hardship on the people and, even in a more marked degree, on those least capable to bear it. Twenty or thirty

cents a day, as the price of a single bucketload of the precious fluid, means the deprivation of some necessary item of comfort in the homes of the labouring and working classes. Their hardship is great. And the duty is imposed on this Council to obtain relief for them. In our endeavour, I am happy in the assurance that the Government is entirely with the unofficial members. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I speak in support of the two motions before the Council.

Residents of Kowloon have had the benefit of observing the commendable expedition and workman-like manner in which the large mains have been laid down in the trunk road on the mainland in anticipation of the commencement of the cross-harbour pipe-line to Hong Kong. The work is being carried on in a way to cause the least inconvenience to traffic and has elicited favourable comments from Kowloon residents. There is every reason, therefore, to expect that the hope of the trans-harbour line being completed and in operation by the end of the year, will not be falsified.

With the experience of the past before us and at the present rate of Kowloon's expansion, no scheme of water supply can be considered too large or any section of it unnecessary. It was after prolonged deliberation that the unofficial members of this Council urge the immediate commencement of the works specified in both the resolutions "apart from any other scheme in contemplation." Permit me, Sir, to emphasize the last phrase in the preamble to the resolutions. It was added on advisedly so that there may be some elasticity in undertaking works not specifically provided for in both resolutions.

Intimately bound up with the larger question of the water supply to the Colony generally is that of the Kowloon Tong supply. On the representations of residents of this Garden City, I have been asked to submit their case for urgent and sympathetic consideration at Your Excellency's hands. There is an independent supply for flushing and gardening purposes over which the Government has no control. In practice the arrangement, which promised "a constant supply of water even in the driest season," has been found to be far from satisfactory. For some time past no water has been available to residents on the first floor of houses within the Kowloon Tong area. When water did come, it only came in dribbles. Subscribers to the Kowloon Tong scheme have been clamouring for "Water, water, and yet more water" in a dry district of the Colony not by virtue of a prohibition law but by reason of an arrangement which does not function to entire satisfaction. This is a matter of such great importance to public health that I feel that all that is needed for my "constituents" at Kowloon Tong is to bring it to the notice of Your Excellency in order to claim prompt attention from the Government. I beg to support the resolutions before the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—The Government welcomes the motion which has been proposed by the honourable the senior Unofficial member and I am authorised to say that the motion has the fullest support from the Government. As honourable members are aware, the seriousness of the situation as regards the water supply of the Colony is well known to the Government and the matter has received constant consideration throughout the whole of the past year. Honourable members are also not unaware that Your Excellency has been dealing with this subject yourself while you have been in London and it is a matter of great satisfaction that it has become possible, at this first meeting of Council after Your Excellency's return, to announce a definite step forward towards that improvement of the Colony's water supply which is so urgently needed. (Applause.)

The linking up of the water supply on the mainland with the Island of Hong Kong has already been authorised and work on the mainland, as the Hon. Mr. Braga has pointed out, is already in progress to effect the joining up of the Shing Mun scheme with the water system in the City of Victoria.

But the actual method of laying the pipe under the harbour has been a matter of considerable discussion. The Director of Public Works has recently submitted to Government a very full report by the Water Engineer on the latter's proposal to lay the pipe along the bed of the harbour at a cost of some \$300,000, and this proposal has received Your Excellency's approval. It is now proposed to send the Water Engineer to England to explain his proposals in detail, and after obtaining the concurrence of the Secretary of State to order the materials and return to Hong Kong in the shortest possible time. If the Secretary of State's approval is obtained it is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of the present year and that before January next the water from Shing Mun will be delivered to consumers in Hong Kong.

We must not disguise from ourselves the fact that the water supply available from Shing Mun cannot, without extension of the Shing Mun Works, suffice for both Kowloon and Hong Kong. Investigations are already in progress as to the possible extensions of the Shing Mun scheme by means of storage reservoirs. This investigation will take a considerable time but there is one reservoir with which it is possible to proceed at once, and that is the so-called Byewash reservoir, below the present Kowloon reservoir, to which the honourable member has referred in the second part of his motion.

This reservoir did not form part of the original Shing Mun proposals but is intimately connected with them and its construction is of so comparatively simple a nature, and its utility is so obvious, that I am authorised to say that Your Excellency fully approves of the construction of this reservoir, and in view of the urgency for increasing the storage on the mainland has given instructions for work on the Byewash reservoir to be commenced forthwith. The cost is estimated at \$600,000 and the storage capacity at 200 million gallons.

With regard to the Hon. Mr. Braga's remarks on the water supply at Kowloon Tong, the matter is hardly in a position to be discussed by this Council, but I am authorised to say that Your Excellency will be happy to meet a representative of the residents of Kowloon Tong, together with the Director of Public Works, with a view to ascertaining what steps are possible to improve any defects which may exist in the system.

The Government will welcome the unanimous support of the unofficial members to the proposals set out by the honourable the senior unofficial member, and members may rest assured that the works will be carried to completion with the least possible delay. (Applause).

The motion was carried unanimously.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR.—It is a great satisfaction to me that this motion has been passed unanimously.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Following the Council, a meeting of the Finance Committee was held, the Colonial Secretary presiding.

Votes totalling \$92,887, contained in Message No. 1 from H.E. The Governor, were considered.

All the votes were passed.

