

13th February, 1930.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. E. R. Hallifax, C.M.G., C.B.E.) presiding.

Votes totalling \$2,050 (1929 Estimates) and \$116,067 (1930 Estimates) contained in Message No. 2 from H.E. The Officer Administering the Government, were considered.

Item No. 2: Harbour Department:—Repairs to R. T. Kau Sing, \$17,190, cost of repairing damage caused through an accident on 27th November, 1929, when she grounded off Cape Collinson.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I should like to ask whether an inquiry was held concerning the stranding of the Kau Sing?

THE HARBOUR MASTER (HON. COMMANDER G. F. HOLE).—Yes, an inquiry was held and the Master of the Kau Sing was found to be at fault and was suitably punished by His Excellency the Governor.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—What do you mean by "suitably punished?"

THE HARBOUR MASTER.—I have not permission from the Colonial Secretary to answer that question. I should require his permission first, it being a question of internal administration.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I see no reason to suppress it.

THE HARBOUR MASTER.—The increment on his salary was deferred for one year. That means that for the next nine years of his service he will be one increment behind the whole time.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—What is the value of the increment?

THE HARBOUR MASTER.—£10. He will lose roughly £90 on it, plus interest.

Item No. 5: Miscellaneous Services, Certificates of Honour, \$1,063.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—Is this something special for this Colony or does it apply to all Crown Colonies?

THE CHAIRMAN.—All Crown Colonies are having similar certificates as far as we know.

HON. MR. J. P. BRAGA.—Sir, Can you tell us what is the origin of the suggestion for the institution of this Certificate of Honour so far as it applies to Hong Kong?

THE CHAIRMAN.—If I remember the history of it correctly, it originated in the Federated Malay States, where the desirability of some certificate for special recognition of local services was found necessary. The idea was adopted by the Colonial Office and made practically universal for all the colonies.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—Do I understand, Sir, that this is really a sort of recognition, say below a recognition of M.B.E., for example?

THE CHAIRMAN.—You may take it so.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—Is it absolutely necessary that we should incur this expenditure as another form of recognition when we have already in the Colony so many forms from knighthood down to M.B.E., besides the recognition provided by funds that have been donated by private individuals and residents, who are not now any longer with us, as, for instance, for life-saving and one thing and another? Do we really require the institution of a new form of recognition, because I am very much afraid there will be no end to the line of distinction that will be created by these various forms of recognition?

THE CHAIRMAN.—The matter has been very carefully considered and you will note in the last sentence of the explanation that the Secretary of State has signified His Majesty's approval.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—That does not follow from the point of view of the members of this Council, because we are in a position to know local conditions a great deal better than the Secretary of State for the Colonies. To my mind it is a superfluous expenditure, even though it is a small one of a thousand dollars. I hate to think we are going to create these various forms of distinction as to meritorious service in the Colony. To my mind a great deal of service is rendered to the Colony unostentatiously which can be unrecognised and even unsolicited. I cannot agree to creating a new form of recognition that is practically of no value.

THE CHAIRMAN.—This is not practically of no value. It is of value. Your theory is we shall go on making new grades of certificates of recognition beyond this?

HON. MR. BRAGA.—I think we ought to draw the line somewhere.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I think we should draw the line here.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I rather sympathise with Mr. Braga's remarks. When I saw this I thought to myself: is this necessary; and it seemed to me it was not really necessary at all.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—We are throwing away good money.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—It is not so much a question of money, but I deprecate making a comparatively trifling new form of recognition.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—For what services will the certificate be granted?

HON. MR. A. C. HYNES.—I take it there will be no grades, but only one grade?

THE CHAIRMAN.—This matter first came up for consideration in the time of Sir Edward Stubbs and we were informed that the Straits had accepted the suggestion and it was recommended that we also should accept it here. We are now prepared to accept it and have put this vote before you, after, of course, the approval of the Secretary of State and His Majesty the King. There is no fear that this certificate will go into further grades as you suggested, Mr. Braga.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—My point is that the more of these things you create and institute the more likely it is that invidious distinction will be felt, and I think the time has arrived when we should avoid this, and this, to my mind, although a very small item of expenditure, is an avoidable one which I personally would vote against. I think it is entirely unnecessary.

HON. MR. R. H. KOTEWALL.—As far as my memory serves, this matter was referred to the Chinese members of the Council for their opinion three years ago. We gave it our very careful consideration. I think the certificate was first instituted in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, and the Government of the Straits Settlements expressed the view that the proposal was very well received by the natives for whom this was principally instituted. Of course there are distinctions such as M.B.E., O.B.E., and C.M.G. and so on, but it was considered that a new form of recognition, which is not imperial but local, might be created which would serve as an incentive and encouragement to the Chinese in Hong Kong to render services to the public. We have given this matter very careful consideration and consulted many Chinese and we were informed, and we also hold the opinion, that this certificate would serve a useful purpose and therefore, Sir, I am prepared to support it. I know Sir Shou-son Chow was in favour of it at the time and he tells me now that he still is. As regards opening another door to invidious distinctions, so long as we have distinctions already, I think the objection is not very strong. I am sure that the Government

of Hong Kong could be trusted to exercise discretion in giving certificates of this nature. Therefore, Sir, I support the suggestion which has received, as you have pointed out, the approval of His Majesty the King.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—I should like to reply to the junior Chinese member. His explanation, instead of convincing me or rather winning me over to the side of voting for the Certificate of Honour, rather emphasises my objection to the institution of this certificate because if it is, as I understand from him, principally for the Chinese—

THE CHAIRMAN.—Non-European residents.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—He said the Chinese members had been consulted and in the F.M.S. it was principally intended for Chinese.

HON. MR. KOTEWALL.—I said natives.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—Well, we have no such individual in Hong Kong as a native, perhaps with the exception of half a dozen people.

THE CHAIRMAN.—It is non-European.

HON. MR. BRAGA.—I am replying to the junior Chinese member's remarks. If that be so, I think the argument is all the stronger against the institution of any particular class of distinction for any one section of the community. I yield to nobody, as the junior Chinese member knows, in my admiration for the Chinese community. I am all with them when it is a question that they deserve support of the Unofficial members of this Council, but when it is a question of creating special distinctions as in this case which appeal particularly to the Chinese, I say as a member of this Committee as being responsible individually as regards the expenditure of public money, I think this money is wasted.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—May I repeat my question? Can you give us a better idea of the services which call for the receipt of this decoration? Is it a matter of life-saving or public service?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Public service.

HON. SIR SHOU-SON CHOW.—With reference to this particular matter I should like to say that I was consulted and the District Watch Committee was consulted. Our object chiefly was to encourage the loyalty of the Chinese who had done public service for the Colony. The ordinary honour given to Chinese here is J.P., and we thought that this honour, which is given in other colonies, should apply to the Chinese in Hong Kong who have done public service and helped the Government in time of trouble. I cannot agree with Mr. Braga that this money will be wasted because people who have done public

service deserve a certain amount of honour. You give knighthoods, O.B.E.'s and C.M.G.'s for certain kinds of public service. There are some who may not perhaps be entitled to these high honours, and I think we ought to provide some sort of recognition for them.

HON. MR. KOTEWALL.—The District Watch Committee was not consulted. We consulted certain Chinese.

HON. MR. W. E. L. SHENTON.—Is this only to be confined to Chinese?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Non-European.

HON. MR. S. W. TS'O.—If it is a reward for public service, I must say that I think the money will be well spent. It will have the effect of encouraging the people to come forward and do public work. It is not every man who has done public work whose name has been brought to the notice of His Majesty the King. Some people do public work quietly and it is only the Secretary for Chinese Affairs and the Departmental heads who know what they are worth. This certificate will be an encouragement and will be worth all the money we spend. It is a small amount, but it is worth while spending in order to secure the loyal support of the people.

HON. MR. SHENTON.—The first I heard anything about this matter was when I saw it in the minute. As this appears to be a recognition to non-Europeans and as it is so strongly supported by the leaders of the Chinese community to whom it particularly appertains, I should like to support it myself.

HON. MR. J. OWEN-HUGHES.—I should like to support it in view of the explanations given to this meeting.

HON. MR. HYNES.—I should like to support it, too.

THE CHAIRMAN (to Hon. Mr. Braga).—Do you wish to be noted as a dissentient, Mr. Braga?

HON. MR. BRAGA.—I do, Sir.

The vote was approved, the Hon. Mr. Braga dissenting.

Item No. 8: Public Works, Extraordinary:—Hong Kong, Communications. Widening Garden Road at junction with Queen's Road, to complete the work commenced last year, \$6,000.

HON. MR. J. OWEN-HUGHES.—May I ask if it is the intention of the Public Works Department to further improve the entrance to Garden Road by making a curve on the other side? At the present time it is lop-sided.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—That has been considered on many occasions. The expense is the only thing that has stood in the way. It means the removal of a latrine, for which it would be difficult to find another suitable site.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—I submit it is advisable it should be removed at the earliest possible moment.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Can you make a suggestion as to a new site?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—To find a new site for the latrine will be difficult.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—I cannot imagine it will be very difficult to find a less objectionable spot than this.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Of course the latrine is not required so much now.

HON. MR. SHENTON.—I think it highly desirable that the corner should be widened.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I will take the opinion of the Committee and make a suggestion to the Government and see what can be done.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—Will an estimate be prepared of the cost of bringing that corner into line with the curve on the other side?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Very good, we will see what can be done.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—And also see whether the latrine is necessary.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Yes, the whole matter will be considered.

Item No. 13: Public Works, Extraordinary:—New Kowloon: Buildings, Market at Kowloon Tong, \$10,000.

HON. MR. J. P. BRAGA.—May I know how soon tenders will be called for the Kowloon Tong Market and when the Director of Public Works expects the market to be ready?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—Tenders will be called for almost immediately. We have all the plans ready. The work should be well in hand by the end of the year.

Item No. 15: Miscellaneous Services:—Public Band Concerts, \$1,200.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—Is this a misprint, or is this for Kowloon only? There is no mention made either here, or so far as I can see, in the 1930 Estimates, of band concerts on this side.

THE CHAIRMAN.—This is for Kowloon only.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—Has any vote been made for similar concerts on this side?

THE CHAIRMAN.—No, not yet.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—I should like to enquire whether it is the intention of the Government to do so.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The suggestion has not yet been considered. It was tried on this side last year. If it is suggested it should be tried again, the question can be further considered.

HON. MR. J. OWEN HUGHES.—I should like to see a similar vote for concerts to be held either in the public gardens or the public square.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The matter will be considered.

All the votes were approved.
