

***17th June, 1936.***

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**FINANCE COMMITTEE.**

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. R. A. C. North, *Acting*) presiding.

**ALSO PRESENT:—**

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (HON. MR. E. TAYLOR).

HON. MR. A. G. W. TICKLE (Director of Public Works, *Acting*).

HON. MR. J. J. PATERSON.

HON. MR. W. H. BELL.

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

HON. MR. T. N. CHAU.

HON. MR. M. K. LO.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL.

HON. MR. A. F. B. SILVA-NETTO.

Mr. D. M. MACDOUGALL (Deputy Clerk of Councils).

**ABSENT:—**

HON. MR. M. T. JOHNSON.

Votes totalling \$310,128, being \$298,234 under Estimates 1935 and \$11,894 under Estimates 1936, contained in Message No. 5 from H.E. The Governor were considered.

Item 18.—26, Kowloon Canton Railway:—Special Expenditure. 36, Re-railing Beacon Hill Tunnel \$6,000.00.

HON. MR. SILVA-NETTO.—I would like to ask what will be done with the old rails or with the proceeds of sale of the old rails?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER.—The proceeds of the sale of all old rails are always credited to Revenue, they are not allowed to be set off against Expenditure.

Item 21.—10, (B) Air Services:—4, Incidental Expenses \$3,864.00.

HON. MR. LO.—I would like some information on this item. I do not know under what authority these expenses were incurred, but it seems to me to be a very large sum—£249 13s. 2d., nearly \$4,000. I would like to know what rate was paid and how it was paid assuming that it is correct and properly sanctioned.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Moss was encouraged while on leave to visit aerodromes in various parts of England. Great advances have been made in aviation in England, and it was thought advisable that he should see what was being done at Home and familiarise himself with improvements. This sum of money is made up partly of his travelling expenses, but mainly of his subsistence allowance. When an officer is travelling on duty in England and has to stay away from his headquarters, that is, at a hotel on daily rates he gets the allowance. This special rate applies to everybody. In this case, a claim was made to the Colonial Office and paid.

HON. MR. LO.—I would like to have particulars showing how the total was made up—how much for hotel expenses, how much for other expenses and personal emolument.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The sum of £32 10s. is fees for instruction at Air Ministry Establishments. Of the balance, £196 is for subsistence allowance,—that means 196 days of his leave were spent travelling about. The rest is for railway fares and so on.

HON. MR. LO.—I do not know whether it is in order to ask, but I hope in future, before an expense of this magnitude is incurred, the Finance Committee should be asked for their opinion whether it is worth-while. I doubt whether it was really worth \$4,000.

THE CHAIRMAN.—We did not realise when the leave was granted that the expenses would be so high. These aerodromes are mostly near London and could be visited from some central place, but in this case it was necessary for him to be at the place where the aerodromes are situated. These sums have already been accepted as correct by the Colonial Office and it is not easy to query them now.

HON. MR. LO.—I am not querying them. I only express the hope that in future if any leave payments such as this are to be incurred the Finance Committee be consulted first. We are really being asked to pass something of which we have no honourable alternative but to approve. It was sanctioned, passed and paid and now we have to sanction it. We should have been consulted.

HON. MR. DODWELL.—Is this regular subsistence pay? Did he have an extension of leave while he was visiting the aerodromes.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I think not. Most of his leave was spent on this work. If we had known the expenses would be so high we should certainly not have sanctioned them without consulting the Finance Committee.

HON. MR. LO.—That is all I wanted to know.

All the votes were approved.

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