

HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

2nd February, 1938.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. N. L. Smith, C.M.G.) presiding.

ALSO PRESENT:—

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. S. CAINE).

HON. MR. R. M. HENDERSON, (Director of Public Works).

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK, Kt., K.C., LL.D.

HON. MR. J. J. PATERSON.

HON. MR. CHAU TSUN-NIN, C.B.E.

HON. MR. LO MAN-KAM.

HON. MR. S. H. DODWELL.

HON. MR. LEO D'ALMADA E CASTRO, JNR.

HON. DR. LI SHU-FAN.

HON. MR. M. T. JOHNSON.

MR. B. C. K. HAWKINS (Deputy Clerk of Councils).

Votes totalling \$164,018, being \$88,775 under Estimates 1937 and \$75,243 under Estimates 1938, contained in Message No. 1 from His Excellency the Governor, were considered.

Item 185.—26, Kowloon-Canton Railway:—Special Expenditure. Typhoon Damage (2.9.37), \$81,200.

HON. MR. JOHNSON.—This seems to be rather a large sum. Could details be given of the typhoon damage to railway property? The railway seems to have suffered more than other shore property.

THE CHAIRMAN.—It was very serious damage, of course. The whole embarkment was washed away at one spot and the rails were hanging over the sea at one point. It was due more to the tidal wave than the wind.

HON. MR. JOHNSON.—I see the permanent way was damaged.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—Some of the track is being fixed with concrete to make it more permanent.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The original estimate was \$80,000. This is the actual cost.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—Is this the only vote we have taken for repairs to the railway for typhoon damage?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Yes. We could get more details and circulate them to the Finance Committee.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I would like to have more details.

Item 1.—10, B.—Air Services:—Special Expenditure. Control Launch for Kai Tak Air Port, \$3,500.

HON. MR. JOHNSON.—It seems odd, Sir, that after all the experience which has already been gained with high speed launches it should be necessary to spend \$3,500 on testing the design.

THE CHAIRMAN.—This was debated for a long time in Committee, and gone into very fully. If we were ordering a launch from Home we could quite easily specify a certain scheme, but the idea is to build one locally and we have not the necessary information in Hong Kong without these experiments.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—But is it a special patented design?

HON. MR. PATERSON.—No, you send your design to the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, and they tell you what is wrong with it. They are marvellous people and they do a lot of extremely technical work for very little, I think. They do a lot of work for my firm.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—In Mr. Paterson's opinion is it worth the money?

HON. MR. PATERSON.—Yes.

HON. MR. JOHNSON.—So it is really a saving?

HON. MR. PATERSON.—Yes, it prevents one getting mis-fits—a sort of Kau Sing in miniature.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—What is the estimated cost of this super launch?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—The cost with the present design is estimated at \$65,000, and it is estimated that there will be a saving of about \$20,000 by having it built here rather than in England. This \$3,500 is necessary to obtain information on which local construction could be made and it is, therefore, expected to be an economy.

Item 2.—10, B.—Air Service:—Special Expenditure. Construction of Marine Terminal, \$9,000.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—What is the estimated cost of a permanent building? Why cannot we get it done now instead of having a temporary building?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—It was a temporary building before. The estimated cost of a permanent building was mentioned in the files.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—The temporary building will last five or six years. I don't think your Department is prepared to go beyond that.

THE CHAIRMAN.—A big administration building is not contemplated for a considerable time.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—That would cost several lakhs.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—Ideas are spreading so far as airports are concerned and it might easily cost several lakhs.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—It might be better to get it built as soon as possible.

HON. MR. JOHNSON.—Do the air companies pay for the use of the port?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Yes.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—What sort of functions does this temporary building perform?

THE CHAIRMAN.—It is for luggage, mails, tickets, etc. It is like a railway station for the air.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—There were several rooms on either side of the hangar that were intended for that use, but they were taken over very quickly as offices in connection with the hangar.

Item 7.—10, A.—Harbour Department:—Special Expenditure: Hire of Tugs for Lighthouse Reliefs, \$35,000.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—The cost of \$1,000 for each round trip is very big. Is there any explanation?

THE CHAIRMAN.—I cannot say off-hand. We started by hiring naval tugs, which were considerably more, and now we have got a contract for \$1,000 per round trip to Gap Rock.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—I believe it is actually cheaper than the Kau Sing used to be.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—The Kau Sing was notoriously expensive.

HON. MR. LO.—Have not the Police got a special sea-going launch?

THE CHAIRMAN.—There is one big one, but I don't know whether it could go to Gap Rock.

HON. MR. LO.—I believe there is one that is ocean-going and it might be possible to utilise it. Once a month.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—The Police might object as they want it at their disposal.

HON. MR. DODWELL.—Is the Kau Sing going to be repaired.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—It has been got off the rocks and is now at the Kowloon Docks.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The whole question of the Kau Sing was discussed with the Harbour Advisory Board about a month ago. Tenders were submitted and we decided it should be salvaged and put into dock at Government expense rather than sell her as she was. The final fate of the Kau Sing has not been decided.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—If Hong Kong ever has a City Hall and a Museum, I will propose that the Kau Sing might be stuffed and put in the museum. (Laughter).

All the votes were approved.
