

20th October, 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. A. L. SHIELDS.

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

Votes totalling \$799,098, contained in Message No. 9 from H.E. The Governor, were considered.

Item 183.—22, Medical Department:—28, Washing, \$4,500.

HON. DR. LI.—Is this vote for the washing of patients or laundry? (Laughter).

THE CHAIRMAN.—For laundry.

Item 188.—27, Defence, A.—Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps:—10, Equipment, Air Arm, \$55.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—What has happened to the Bren Light Machine Guns, on which a saving is to be made so that we can buy 10 buzzers?

THE CHAIRMAN.—I presume they have not been delivered.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—The way the world is to-day, I think I would rather have two Bren Light Machine Guns than ten buzzers.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—We have not decided to do without them.

Item 189.—27, Defence, A.—Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps:—20, Uniform, including Boots, \$6,406.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—What is the Lyon Light Section?

THE CHAIRMAN.—It is new a section, a sort of minor searchlight unit. Lyon Light Section is merely its name. I will furnish the Council later with a description of the Lyon Light. I will also enquire why there is a saving on Bren Light Machine Guns and let you know.

Item 192.—27, Defence, D.—Air Raid Precautions, \$69,750.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I suppose this has been recommended by the A. R. P. Officer?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Yes. We will need a lot more than this. This is a modified vote.

Item 199.—33, Public Works Recurrent:—Hong Kong. 6, Water Works. Item 1, Maintenance of City and Hill District, \$85,000.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—Is Government satisfied that the pumping is being done economically?

THE CHAIRMAN.—I think it is or it would not be passed. In what way do you mean?

HON. MR. PATERSON.—I was thinking of fuel.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Whether it could be done cheaper?

HON. MR. PATERSON.—Whether it is being burned in the cheapest way.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—There has been no change in the nature of the fuel. Pumping has been done with coal for the last 20 years. Three years ago, the last time we went into the question of using oil fuel, it was still found cheaper to use coal.

HON. MR. PATERSON.—Is the coal burned the cheapest possible way? Is it the best kind of coal?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—The coal is to specification and is paid for on results of analysis.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I think what Mr. Paterson means is, is the coal good for the purpose it is used?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—It is chosen by our experts. There is much difficulty in getting coal.

HON. MR. DODWELL.—Is it Taiping coal?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—I cannot tell you.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—It is Borneo coal they are using now. Different coals are used for different purposes. We do not provide the same coal for all Government work.

Item 201.—34, Public Works Extraordinary:—Hong Kong. Buildings:—Refugee Camp, North Point, \$163,000.

Item 202.—34, Public Works Extraordinary:—Kowloon. Buildings:—Refugee Camp in Kowloon, \$253,400.

Item 203: 34, Public Works Extraordinary:—Kowloon. Buildings:—Refugee Camp at King's Park, \$128,500.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I understand the contracts have already been made for these camps?

THE CHAIRMAN.—That is so.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—Considerable progress has already been made, on the camps at North Point and King's Park.

HON. MR. LO.—The Colonial Secretary made a statement in full Council while you were away, Sir Henry.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Yes, a statement was made and figures were given in full Council.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.—I think it will be found that these figures are very close to the approximate estimates.

HON. MR. LO.—Council has approved this and I do not think we are in a position to query it now.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I see that Item 201 had a total of thirteen different tenders.

HON. SIR HENRY POLLOCK.—I do not think the lowest tender is necessarily the best one. I suppose all quantities have been worked out?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.—All the tenders were considered by the Tender Board when all particulars were before them.

All the votes were approved.