

28th March, 1947.

PRESENT: —

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (SIR MARK AITCHISON YOUNG, G.C.M.G.)

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. D. M. MACDOUGALL, C. M. G.)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. MR. J. B. GRIFFIN, K.C.)

THE SECRETARY FOR CHINESE AFFAIRS (HON. MR. R. R. TODD, *Acting*).

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. C. G. S. FOLLOWS, C.M.G., *Acting*).

HON. DR. P. S. SELWYN-CLARKE, C.M.G., M.C. (Director of Medical Services).

HON. MR. T. M. HAZLERIGG, C. B. E., M. C.

HON. MR. T. MEGARRY.

HON. MR. V. KENNIFF (Director of Public Works).

HON. MR. D. F. LANDALE.

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

HON. MR. LO MAN-KAM, C. B. E.

HON. MR. R. D. GILLESPIE.

HON. DR. CHAU SIK-NIN.

HON. MR. M. M. WATSON.

MR. D. R. HOLMES, M.B.E., M.C. (Deputy Clerk of Councils).

ABSENT: —

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING THE TROOPS, (MAJOR-GENERAL G. W. E. J. ERSKINE, C. B., D. S. O.)

HON. MR. LEO D'ALMADA E CASTRO.

PAPERS.

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

Statement on the allocation and rate of release of requisitioned property for the six months September 1946—February 1947.

MOTIONS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY presented the Report of the Select Committee on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1947-48 and on the Appropriation Bill for 1947-48, and moved the following resolution:

“That the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 1947-48, incorporating the amendments proposed by the Select Committee, be approved.”

He said: Sir, the unofficial discussions which took place between the Unofficial Members, my Honourable friend the Financial Secretary and myself in the previous few days have enabled the Select Committee to present their final report this afternoon. I trust that the Committee's recommendations are clearly set out in the report. The net effect of those recommendations is to leave unchanged the Estimates of Revenue and to increase the Estimates of Expenditure by just over \$300,000. This sum is largely taken over into Recurrent Expenditure from the Loan Schedule. Apart from these transfers the only significant alteration is the recommended reduction by half a million dollars of a provision under Head 19 for the Relief of Destitute Persons. This recommendation results from the conviction expressed by several members of the Committee that relief expenditure must somehow be checked and that continued efforts must be made to confine the weight of the Colony's generosity primarily to its own citizens. In this connection, Council will be glad to know that in the past year the number of persons receiving free meals was reduced by a process of scrutiny—I might say, of rigorous scrutiny and inspection—from 25,000 persons to 6,000, and the numbers in relief camps by a similar process of inspection and selection were brought down from 8,500 to 500 at the end of the year. Many of these persons were, of course, Hong Kong people.

During yesterday's debate, a number of other points concerning medical matters were raised by Honourable Members, and no doubt Council will, in due course, welcome further information on these points. I would like to mention here the Committee's unanimous desire to mark the continuation of the friendly relations existing between the Lingnan University in Canton and Hong Kong, and this desire is embodied in the Committee's recommendation to make the University of Lingnan a grant of \$30,000 from the public funds of Hong Kong.

I have said that the Committee recommends no alteration in the Estimates of revenue. Sir, it would be quite wrong of me to convey any impression that at any stage and on any single occasion during our deliberations my Honourable friend the Financial Secretary was accused of over-optimism. Nevertheless, the Committee were content to leave his forecast of revenue unaltered.

Before I resume my seat, I would like to pay a tribute from my Honourable friend the Financial Secretary and myself to the cooperation and the help which we have had from our Unofficial colleagues on Select Committee. I am sure also that for their part my Honourable friends would also wish me to express their appreciation of all the work which the Honourable Financial Secretary and his assistants have been putting into the preparation of this Budget. My Honourable friend has led an exciting life during the last three weeks; the able memorandum which accompanied the draft Appropriation Bill was completed seven and a half minutes before it was due to be laid before this Council. Of course, the Financial Secretary has not always had to work at this high pressure; for example, in the preparation of the printed Estimates, he had a much more comfortable margin of time in hand—on that occasion the last sheet was received from the printers twenty six minutes before it was due to be laid before this Council.

With these remarks I wish to move that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1947-48, incorporating the amendments proposed by the Select Committee, be approved.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY seconded.

HON. MR. D. F. LANDALE: Sir, I speak on behalf of all my Unofficial colleagues present to-day, and we wish to make it clear that by voting for this resolution we are in no way prejudicing our freedom of action to any proposals that may come before this Council in regard to the introduction of a Salaries and Business Tax.

HON. DR. P. S. SELWYN-CLARKE: May I say with what great pleasure I listened to the Budget Speeches of Honourable Unofficial Members of Council yesterday. It is always very gratifying and most encouraging to know that Honourable Members of Your Excellency's Council take so much keen interest in medical and health problems in Hong Kong. It occurs to me that Honourable Members might care to have before them one or two additional facts in relation to the points raised.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Lo, referred to the crowds arriving by the Canton train. My colleagues and I share with him his concern. The main reasons for the inspection of passengers may be summarised as follows:—Firstly, Canton and stations along the line are heavily infected with smallpox (and spotted fever). For the week ending the 23rd of March, 16,121 passengers arrived in Kowloon from Canton and intermediate stations, the vast majority from Canton itself. Secondly, a number of acute cases of smallpox have been detected amongst incoming passengers and have been removed before they could

disperse into the city. Thirdly, there were 1,998 cases of smallpox in Hong Kong in 1946 of whom 1,305 died. I mention this so that the virulence of the local virus, killing nearly two out of every three cases, can be appreciated. Fourthly, the inspection which Mr. Lo has very rightly described as imperfect at least has some influence in persuading intending passengers to be vaccinated before they entrain at Canton. While our best safeguard against this dangerous disease is by persuading the whole community to seek protection by vaccination (and, to this end, over 1½ million vaccinations were performed in 1946) it is, also, I submit, very important to protect the community from close contact with actual cases of the disease arriving from Canton. My colleagues have had valuable help from the Commandos and the Police in trying to control the rush of passengers eager to reach their homes after a tiring journey. But this assistance is limited owing to the multifarious duties of the Police and Military elsewhere in the control of crime, and the prevention of disorder. My Honourable friend may be sure that every effort will be made to improve the admittedly unsatisfactory service. The Honourable Mr. Gillespie referred to the vaccination centre at the Fire Brigade Building. My colleagues and I agree with the Honourable Member's view regarding the congestion at this centre. For some time past it has been our endeavour to recover the former vaccination centre at the Harbour Office. I am glad to be able to give the assurance that the repairs to this second centre in the same locality will be completed by the Public Works Department in a very short time. It might interest Honourable Members to know that vaccination centres were established in other parts of the town and on the Peninsula, but were very little patronised, the Centre at the Fire Brigade Building being very popular.

The Honourable Mr. Gillespie invited the attention of Government, also, to the present Mental Hospital. It is, no doubt, in the memory of several Honourable Members of this Council that the Special Committee appointed by Sir Geoffrey Northcote in 1938 urged, in their report published in 1939, that a new and up-to-date mental hospital should be erected in spacious grounds. This recommendation, *inter alia*, received the general approval of Government and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The war intervened and made progress along these lines impossible. Since Your Excellency resumed the Government of this Colony, a Sub-committee of the Colonial Development and Welfare Committee has considered the question and its views are expressed in the following section of its draft report:

“The Mental Hospital dates back to 1883 and 1890 and has a number of disadvantages associated with buildings constructed in Hong Kong towards the end of the last century. Its main disadvantage lies in the fact that it is situated in a built-up area and that no adequate space for recreation and gardening exists. Removal of this institution to the Leased Territories would enable a new building to be erected embodying the principles of the newer methods of care of mental patients in spacious surroundings with ample scope for occupational therapy.”

In 1946, 386 patients were treated at the Mental Hospital and 224 were discharged. Some of those discharged were cured and the remainder had improved to such an extent that they were neither a danger to themselves nor the community and could stay in their homes and help in domestic duties and the care of their children. They received various forms of treatment while in hospital including hydrotherapy, fixation abscess treatment, prolonged sedation, and so on. It is hoped to introduce electric shock treatment when the apparatus has been obtained. As regards occupational therapy, while this is definitely very limited the following activities may indicate that the picture is not quite so black: —Dress making and repairs to clothes, laundry work, general domestic work and gardening. With more space and additions to staff in the new building visualised, Honourable Members may be sure that this useful form of therapy will be considerably enlarged.

I am grateful to the Honourable Member for his kind reference to the handicaps under which staff are operating at present.

My Honourable colleague and friend, Dr. S. N. Chau expressed very real concern in regard to hospital accommodation. Honourable Members of Council may be interested to learn that this question has received the very careful consideration of two bodies in the past nine years. Firstly, the Special Committee to which I made reference earlier which was appointed by Sir Geoffrey Northcote and, secondly, by the Public Health Subcommittee of the Colonial Development and Welfare Committee. The Public Health Committee of which the Honourable Dr. Chau is a valued and distinguished member has recently issued an interim report to the Main Committee in which it is recommended that some 1,700 hospital beds should be added under a ten year plan to the 2,800 beds already available in Government and assisted hospitals. New hospitals are planned for infectious diseases, general diseases, sick children, mental diseases, tuberculosis and those suffering from leprosy. The shortage of beds to which the Honourable Member has drawn attention will, I hope, be provided for from grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and from revenue.

Once again, may I say how encouraging it is to my colleagues and myself that Honourable Members should show such interest in matters of very real concern to the community.

The amendments proposed by the Select Committee were approved.

APPROPRIATION FOR 1947-1948 BILL, 1947.

On the motion of the FINANCIAL SECRETARY, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Council went into Committee to consider clause by clause a Bill intituled "An Ordinance to apply a sum not exceeding one hundred and nine million four hundred and eighty eight thousand four hundred and thirty three dollars to the Public Service of the financial year ending 31st March, 1948."

Clause 2.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency: I beg to move that in Clause 2 for the words "One hundred and nine million four hundred and eighty eight thousand four hundred and thirty three" there shall be read the words "One hundred and nine million eight hundred and thirty four thousand three hundred and fifty five."

Clause 2, as amended, was passed.

Schedule.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, I beg to move that the Schedule be amended in every detail as recommended in the Report of the Select Committee, so that for the total of "One hundred and nine million four hundred and eighty eight thousand four hundred and thirty three" there shall be read the figures "One hundred and nine million eight hundred and thirty four thousand three hundred and fifty five."

The Schedule, as amended, was passed.

Preamble.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, I beg to move that in the Preamble for the words "One hundred and nine million four hundred and eighty eight thousand four hundred and thirty three" there shall be read the words "One hundred and nine million eight hundred and thirty four thousand three hundred and fifty five."

The Preamble, as amended, was passed,

Enacting Clause and Title.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Your Excellency, I beg to move that in the Enacting Clause and Title for the words "One hundred and nine million four hundred and eighty eight thousand four hundred and thirty three" there shall be read the words "One hundred and nine million eight hundred and thirty four thousand three hundred and fifty five."

The Enacting Clause and Title, as amended, were passed.

Upon Council resuming,

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY reported that the Appropriation for 1947-1948 Bill, 1947, had passed through Committee with minor amendments, and moved that it be read a Third time and passed into law.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was read a Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR: That concludes the business before the Council to-day, and the Council will now adjourn until Thursday, 10th April.