

No. 29.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Letter from the Superintendent of the Hongkong Fire Brigade is published for general information.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 16th March, 1869.

No. 1.

VICTORIA, HONGKONG, 16th March, 1869.

SIR,—I have the honor to report that on the 13th March, instant, at 5 P.M., an inspection of the Fire Brigade took place. The following force of the Brigade assembled at the "Cross Roads" Station, at 5 P.M.:—

1 Superintendent,	} Europeans.
1 Assistant Superintendent,	
2 Foremen,	
4 Assistant Foremen,	
14 Firemen,	} Chinese.
40 Firemen,	

and about 100 Chinese Volunteers, with three hand Engines, two supply Carts, Ladders, &c.

Also (from pre-arrangement) the Steam Fire Engine of the Hongkong Insurance Company.

The whole "Force" then proceeded to the centre of the Taipingshan District, and the Engines were got into work within fifteen minutes from the departure from the Cross Roads Station. The hose and equipment were found in good order, and the practice was altogether satisfactory.

On the 15th March, instant, at 5 P.M., the Three Chinese Volunteer Companies respectively known as the "Nam-pak Hong," "Silk Mercers," and "Pawnbrokers," were also inspected at the Cross Roads, the number of Men attached to each Engine were as follows:—

Nam-pak Hong Engine,	80 men.
Silk Mercers "	56 "
Pawnbrokers "	32 "

The Engines (by order) proceeded to the Praya near the Canton Steamer Wharf, and were all brought into play within eight minutes from leaving the Station, the hose and Engines were in good order and worked satisfactorily.

The subsidiary Fire Stations have been visited several times during the past month, and the Firemen practised in the use of the equipment entrusted to them.

On the 4th March, instant, a case of Fire Brigade Stores (as follows) was landed from the "Achilles," in compliance with Requisition dated the 23rd June, 1868. The articles were examined and found to be in good order.

- 3, 6 feet lengths Suction Hose, 2 inch.
- 4, 40 feet lengths Delivery Pipes.
- 20, Gallons Neat's foot Oil.
- 4, 6 feet lengths Suction Pipe, 3 inch.
- 4, 40 feet lengths Delivery Hose, 3 inch.
- 10, 20 feet lengths of strong Log Lines.
- 4, lengths of strong Rope, 4 inch.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

C. MAY,

Superintendent Fire Brigade.

The Honorable J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Colonial Secretary.

No. 30.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Circular, of the 9th January, 1869, from The Right Honorable Earl GRANVILLE, K.G., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, is published for general information.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 16th March, 1869.

Circular.

DOWNING STREET, 9th January, 1869.

SIR,—I transmit herewith a copy of a Letter from the Secretary to the Treasury with a copy of a Treasury Minute on the subject of cases of Bankruptcy and Insolvency on the part of persons holding Offices in the Public Service.

I think it very desirable that the principles laid down in this Minute should be applied to the Colonies; and I wish you to intimate to the Members of the Civil Service of your Government, that the Rules laid down by the Treasury in such cases for the Civil Service in the United Kingdom will be acted on in the Colony under your Government.—I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant,

GRANVILLE.

Mr. Hamilton to Sir F. Rogers.

TREASURY CHAMBERS, 15th December, 1868.

SIR,—I am desired by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to request that in laying before the Secretary of State for the Colonies the enclosed copy of their Minute of the 30th ultimo, on the subject of cases of Bankruptcy or Insolvency, on the part of Members of the Civil Service, you will state that my Lords invite his co-operation in giving effect to the views therein expressed.

I am to observe, that in their Lordships' opinion it would be for the interest of the Civil Service that the regulations which they have proposed should be adopted as a general system.—I am, &c.,

(Signed) G. A. HAMILTON.

Treasury Minute, dated November 30, 1868.

The attention of this Board has been frequently given to cases of bankruptcy and insolvency on the part of persons holding offices in the public service, and likewise to a practice which has been found to prevail, to some extent, amongst Clerks and others, of putting their names on what are called accommodation bills, and thus getting themselves involved in the pecuniary difficulties of others.

My Lords have reason to believe that there are persons, discounters of bills, who, taking advantage of the inexperience of young men usually when they first enter into the public service, and inducing them to put their names on bills, supply them with money at exorbitant rates of interest, in the expectation that by threats of the exposure and consequent dismissal of these young men, their parents or other relatives may be induced to discharge these exorbitant demands.

It has been the anxious desire of every Department in the State of late years, and Parliament has liberally co-operated, to raise the Civil Servants of the Crown in efficiency and general estimation; but it is obvious that all efforts on the part of Government or the Heads of Departments to raise the standard of the Civil Service, must be to a great extent unsuccessful so long as members of the Service thus allow themselves to be involved in pecuniary difficulties, and to become the victims of usurious money lenders.

It is unnecessary for my Lords to point out that this pernicious practice must be destructive of those feelings of honour and independence which my Lords are happy to state are, and their Lordships trust will be always, characteristic of all classes of Her Majesty's Civil Servants. The young man who puts his name upon a bill for a sum of money, suffering a discount which sometimes amounts, as my Lords are informed, to 50 or even 60 per cent., must necessarily lose all feelings of independence and self-respect; he becomes the miserable dependant of the usurer who has ministered to his extravagance; his course must be downwards, and he too frequently resorts to the meanness of an untruth, in the hope of concealing his indiscretion or extravagance.

Very painful instances have occurred, in which, from these causes, my Lords have been obliged to dismiss from the Civil Service of Her Majesty, gentlemen whose abilities and attainments might have raised them to high positions.

But the practices referred to lead to further and serious public inconvenience; not only does the general character of the Service suffer materially, but the value of the individual officer is necessarily deteriorated by the position in which he is placed in consequence of such improvident habits. As observed in a Minute of the Board of Stamps and Taxes, dated the 23rd of June, 1862, "an efficient performance of his official duty is not to be expected from any person involved in pecuniary difficulties, as the time and thoughts of such a person, instead of being engaged in his official business, must necessarily be occupied in constant efforts to meet the exigencies of the day: and further, it is highly inexpedient that any officer in such circumstances should be placed in a position of trust."

Not unfrequently the pecuniary embarrassment of an employé in the public service is the cause of absence from his duties, either with the view of avoiding the importunity of his creditors or of obtaining protection under the Bankruptcy Act. And where such protection is accorded, independently of the inconvenience and discredit to the service, as is well observed in a Minute of the Board of Customs of 9th April, 1866, "the officer is placed by this course in a very difficult position, as it generally happens that upon the final discharge of the party, the Court orders a portion of his salary to be appropriated to the liquidation of his debts, varying in amount according to the circumstances of each case. By this course the public service is damaged. The officer upon his return to duty is called upon to act, very probably in a responsible situation, with diminished salary, disproportionate to the value of the service required of him, and with a character in some manner impaired."

It is the firm determination of the Board of Treasury to adopt every means within their Lordships' power for correcting such evils as these in the public service, and with this object my Lords have caused to be prepared, for the guidance of the Departments subordinate to this Board, the accompanying Rules, founded upon those which have been long in existence in the Revenue Establishments and in the Audit Departments. Their Lordships desire that these Rules may be transmitted to all public Departments, in the hope that, by an uniform course of action in such cases by the Heads of Offices, an effectual check may be placed upon the practices referred to.

My Lords, however, appeal with confidence not only to the Heads of Departments and gentlemen of experience and position in the Civil Service, but to the junior members of the Service themselves, to co-operate with them in repressing the evils to which they have referred.

Appointments in the Civil Service, at the very outset, are now made the reward of merit. Promotion by merit is the established rule in the Service, and to every young man who becomes the servant of the Crown in the Civil Service, a way is open to independence and even eminence.

But my Lords are desirous of impressing upon the members of the Civil Service that, in proportion as these advantages are increased, in the same degree does it become imperative as a duty, and one which my Lords on their part are, to the utmost of their power, resolved to discharge, to maintain rigidly the moral standard of the Service and the independent position of its members.

My Lords are fully aware that there are cases in which pecuniary embarrassments are the result of causes beyond control. A gentleman in the Civil Service with a small salary may unavoidably fall into difficulties from sickness in his family, or from other similar causes; there can be no discredit in such cases, and there will be found no indisposition to treat them with the consideration they deserve.

The Rules which my Lords would enforce and recommend for general observance are as follows:—

1. That it is to be understood that serious pecuniary embarrassment, from whatever cause, must be regarded as a circumstance which necessarily has the effect of impairing the efficiency of a public servant, and of rendering him less valuable than he would otherwise be.

2. That such embarrassment, if occasioned by imprudence or other reprehensible cause, will be held to be an offence, as affecting the respectability of the Service, and the trustworthiness of the individual; any person who has so conducted himself will be considered to have forfeited that honourable position in the Service which is necessary to give him a claim to promotion or increase of salary from length of service; and these benefits will not be permitted to accrue to him again until he shall have relieved himself from the discredit of such a position. Aggravated cases of this description will be noticed whenever they become known; and such measures will be taken either in the manner above adverted to, or in a manner more summary and severe, as the circumstances may appear to deserve.

3. That the mere fact, under whatever plea, of becoming a party to accommodation bills, whether for his own purposes, or for another person, and whether resulting in pecuniary embarrassment or not, will subject a Civil Servant to the consequences described in the preceding paragraph.

4. That in the event of any Civil Servant being arrested, or being adjudicated a bankrupt, or entering into a composition with his creditors under the Bankruptcy Act, he will, on the fact being known, be suspended from duty and salary, and will not be reinstated unless, after examination of the facts and of the schedule prepared by the Court, it shall appear that his difficulties have been occasioned by unavoidable misfortune, and not by extravagance or culpable improvidence, or unless the case shall be characterized by previous circumstances of extenuation.

5. That any person who shall not immediately, on his being arrested, or proceedings being taken with a view to bankruptcy, inform the Head of his Department of the fact, shall, upon its becoming known, be removed from the Service without any expectation of being reinstated.

No. 31.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.

The following Report of the Harbor Master, with Returns annexed for the Year 1868, is published for general information.

By Command,

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 18th March, 1869.

No. 18.

HARBOR MASTER'S DEPARTMENT,
VICTORIA, HONGKONG, 25th February, 1869.

SIR,

1. I have the honor to enclose the undermentioned Annual Returns of the Shipping and other matters connected with the Marine Department of this Colony, for the year 1868.

- I. Number, Tonnage and Crews of Vessels *entered*.
- II. Number, Tonnage and Crews of Vessels *cleared*.
- III. Number, Tonnage and Crews of Vessels of each Nation *entered*.
- IV. Number, Tonnage and Crews of Vessels of each Nation *cleared*.
- V. Total Number, Tonnage and Crews of Vessels *entered* at each Port.
- VI. Total Number, Tonnage and Crews of Vessels *cleared* at each Port.
- VII. Return of Junks *entered* at each Port from Macao.
- VIII. Return of Junks *cleared* at each Port for Macao.
- IX. Return of Junks *entered* at each Port from Coast of China and Formosa.
- X. Return of Junks *cleared* at each Port for Coast of China and Formosa.
- XI. Gross Total Number of Junks *entered* at each Port.
- XII. Gross Total Number of Junks *cleared* at each Port.
- XIII. Return of Junks (Local Trade) *entered*.
- XIV. Return of Junks (Local Trade) *cleared*.
- XV. Summary of Arrivals and Departures of all Vessels, and of all Chinese Passengers.
- XVI. Return of Vessels Registered.
- XVII. Return of Vessels Registered and Struck off.
- XVIII. Return of Emigrant Ships cleared by the Emigration Officer.
- XIX. Return of Vessels bringing Chinese Passengers to Hongkong from places out of China.
- XX. Amount of Fees received under Ordinance No. 10 of 1860.
- XXI. Return of Marine Cases tried.

SHIPPING.

2. The Returns for the year under this head will enable the Government to arrive at a better conclusion as to the increase or decrease of the trade of Hongkong than has hitherto been the case. The Registry of trade in European bottoms is still kept separated from that in Chinese craft, each being under different legislation. But in the ordinary Board of Trade Returns, Nos. I. to VI. inclusive, the native trade is exhibited under the common term "Foreign."

3. In former Reports Macao has been included under "Coast of China and Formosa." In the present instance I have treated it as an independent Colony and under this head it will appear for the future. This trade is of course, with the exception of the daily steamer, wholly in junks. Occasional vessels enter and clear in connection with Macao, but they either come here to load for Ports to the North, or to refit prior to making their voyages from Macao with Coolies.

4. In British Shipping there is exhibited a decrease on the year 1867 of Arrivals of 117 vessels with cargoes and 11 in ballast having a gross tonnage of 130,133 tons. This is of course composed of vessels of various dimensions. Of the smaller class, the Hongkong and Canton Steam Boat Company pay a large sum annually to Mr. Kwok Acheong as an inducement to withdraw his vessels from the Canton River. This enterprising Chinese ran his steamers nightly (Sundays not excepted.) He naturally received large support from his countrymen, and his carrying capacity, whether for passengers or cargoes, was generally fully engaged. The withdrawal of these boats accounts for a portion of the reduction alluded to. Of the larger ships, those trading between British India and Hongkong form the principal. In this trade alone there is a loss of 17 vessels and 29,176 tons, shewing that the competition, at one time in action against the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the Messageries Imperiales and the steamers owned by Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Company, could not be successfully sustained.

5. The Foreign Arrivals shew a large excess, but is entirely due to the increased activity of the junk trade (treated separately), the foreign trade having diminished by 215 vessels and 73,576 tons.

6. The Grand Total of all Foreign and Native Arrivals shews itself in a singular manner. There is an increase of 4,267 vessels, but a decrease of 60,713 tons, caused by the addition of a large number of native junks visiting the Colony and the subtraction of European vessels of larger tonnage.

7. It is evident from these comparisons that, although there is an increase of 29 British ships and 17,477 tons of cargoes from Great Britain, trade under the British flag would appear on the whole to have diminished.