

8TH SEPTEMBER, 1921.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR
REGINALD EDWARD STUBBS, K.C.M.G.

H.E. LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE
MACAULAY KIRKPATRICK, K.C.B., K.C.S.I.
(General Officer Commanding the Troops in
China).

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN, C.M.G.
(Colonial Secretary).

HON. MR. J. H. KEMP, C.B.E., K.C.
(Attorney-General).

HON. MR. C. McI. MESSER, O.B.E.
(Colonial Treasurer).

HON. MR. E. A. IRVING (Director of
Education).

HON. MR. T. L. PERKINS (Director of
Public Works).

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK, K.C.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

HON. MR. P. H. HOLYOAK.

HON. MR. HO FOOK.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD.

HON. MR. A. G. STEPHEN.

MR. S. B. B. McELDERRY (Clerk of
Councils).

ABSENT:—

HON. MR. S. B. C. ROSS, O.B.E. (Secretary
for Chinese Affairs).

Presentation of the M.B.E.

Before the commencement of the proceedings, Mr. S. J. Syrett, Naval Armament Supply Officer, was presented to His Excellency who said by command of His Majesty the King he had the honour of investing Mr. Syrett with the badge of a Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

HIS EXCELLENCY pinned the badge to the recipient's breast, Members of the Council meanwhile standing in their places.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on September 1st were confirmed by the Council and signed by the President.

Papers

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid upon the table the following paper:—Regulation made by the Governor in Council under Section 23 (1) of the Waterworks Ordinance, 1903, Ordinance No. 16 of 1903, on the 1st day of September, 1921.

Finance

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid upon the table Financial Minutes Nos. 82 and 83 and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the Report of the Finance Committee (No. 10), and moved that it be adopted.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The Agenda

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—There are eleven items on the agenda, but two of them we do not propose to proceed with to-day. I do not know how far honourable members desire to go with the business to-day, but I shall be perfectly ready to adjourn at any stage honourable members may choose.

The Legal Practitioners Amendment Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend further the Legal Practitioners Ordinance, 1871, should be discharged.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the Bill was discharged accordingly.

The Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—I beg to move the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to authorize the Appropriation of a Supplementary sum of one million four hundred and fifty-seven thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven dollars and seventy-four cents to defray the charges of the year 1920.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—Sir, in connection with the Draft Appropriation Account for the year 1920, which has been circulated to members of the Council in connection with this Bill, I take leave to point out that the items relating to Public Works Extraordinary, on pages 38 to 47, demonstrate very clearly that this matter of shortage of the building staff is not one which has only come into existence during the past few months. If hon. members will kindly turn to page 39 they will find the following remark: "It was not found possible to proceed with the bulk of the work." That is with reference to the question of officers' quarters, upon which there was a decrease of expenditure—what is euphemistically termed a "saving"—of \$173,677. Two items further down is the remark, "Less work done than was anticipated." The next line is, "It was not found possible to proceed with the work,"—the "work" being a Fire Brigade station. The next item says "ditto,"—a crematorium. Then, again, "not found possible to proceed with the work"; again, "less work done than was anticipated";—that refers to the erection of 12 houses, additional quarters at Happy Valley. "Decided not to proceed with this work"—summer quarters at Gough Hill.

Turning to page 41, "work could not be completed"—that is the road, contouring Mount Gough and forming sites for quarters, now known as Severn Road. I

think members will know that this road took a very long time to build. The next comment is: "Work commenced late in the year"; then, "less work done than anticipated"; then, "ditto"—that refers to a motor road. Then, "this work was not proceeded with." Another work mentioned as "not proceeded with"—about which, I hope, we shall hear something in the estimates for 1922—is \$150,000 for the hill tramway to Waichai Gap.

Turning to page 43, we find "not proceeded with" and "ditto"—various village improvements. The next item, which one would have thought an important matter—re-construction of ferry piers—"work only commenced at the end of the year," with the result that there was a saving of \$53,243 out of \$60,000. "Work only commenced at the end of the year"—Apichau Reclamation. "Unable to complete during the year,"—Government quarters. "Work commenced late in the year"—that has reference to some alterations at the Central Police Station. "Not so much work done as was anticipated"—that relates to a matter considered very important—the survey of the Colony. "Only preliminary work undertaken"—the Eastern District filter beds. Three items further down: "Less work carried out than was anticipated." Then we come to "not begun"—new Police Station at Yaumati. "Not begun"—additional quarters in King's Park, \$100,000. Then, "Less work carried out than anticipated," which shows that of \$150,000 estimated to be spent on main roads in Kowloon, \$68,963 was actually spent. If one may judge from complaints one hears from time to time about the state of roads in Kowloon, not only has "less work been carried out than was anticipated" but less work than was hoped for by residents in Kowloon.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—That item refers to construction, not surfacing of roads.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—The extension of Coronation Road. Then, Sir, there are various other items, referred to on pages 45 and 47, which I need not deal with in detail, but, on page 46, we see that there was a decrease in expenditure, compared with what was anticipated, of \$1,847,716, less an in-

crease of \$429,893, showing a saving on Public Works Extraordinary of \$1,417,822.

I think the figures I have quoted are quite sufficient to make my point—to show that this question of shortage of building staff is not a very recent one. It is a shortage which ought to have been apparent a number of months ago, and steps ought to have been taken with a view to remedying it and, if necessary, of increasing the quarters for the Public Works Department staff much sooner than has actually been done.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—

Might I be allowed to say, with regard to one or two of the items mentioned by the hon. member the fact that they were delayed or not proceeded with was not entirely the fault of the staff. Several schemes had to be put before committees; members were often away and it was difficult to get the committees together. These delays not only hang up work, but rising prices increase its cost. As to the construction of ferry piers, there has been a delay, not entirely due to the shortage of staff—although the staff is very short. We have not had room to turn out the piles, and we have had to lay out large platforms in order to turn out piles 70 feet long. We are now turning out three a day and hope, soon, to turn out four a day. Whilst there is some shortness of staff, there are many other reasons for delay apart from this.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—I think the hon. member has connected with shortness of staff a good deal that is not connected with that at all. Some of the works it was decided not to proceed with. These make up a very large proportion of the 1½ millions put down as savings. In addition to that, there are large items; for instance, \$150,000 for the hill tramway at Wanchai Gap, which was not proceeded with for causes of which he is aware; this may or may not re-appear next year. Then there is the large item of \$100,000 for quarters in King's Park "not begun." That, properly, should have been "decided not to proceed," because circumstances have arisen, since the proposal was made to build quarters there, which made it impossible for the Government to go on with the project. There

are several other items which, for much the same reason, were not proceeded with. There are certain items which, as the Director said, might be attributed to want of staff; for instance, survey work in the Colony. That, of course, was not proceeded with as fast as it should be. The bulk of the projects have been abandoned or circumstances have occurred in which no increase of staff would have led to any acceleration.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I rise to a point of order. The Colonial Secretary said I knew the reason why the hill tramway at Wanchai Gap was not proceeded with. I must say I do not know.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—The proceedings of the Public Works Committee, which took place during the hon. member's absence from the Colony, were brought to his notice on his return.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—That is hardly to say that I knew why it was.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY—That report contained the reasons why the scheme was not proceeded with.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—The hon. member has also omitted to notice that the statement "less work was done than anticipated" is frequently counter-balanced by the statement "more work was done than anticipated." One particular item to which he calls attention,—shortness of expenditure on officers' quarters, \$173,000—was due largely to the fact that it was difficult to carry through negotiations about the Homestead site. This question was mixed up, inextricably, with the Fire Brigade Station which accounts for that delay. Admittedly, we might have done more if we had had a full staff continuously, but I think the hon. member forgets that 1920 was not very long after the conclusion of the war, and many people who had been detained in this Colony during the war were away on leave in 1920. Owing to leave arrangements being interfered with, we have not yet returned to the normal in any department. I have no doubt that the returns for 1921 will show a very different state of affairs. It is possibly mistaken but it appears to be the practice here to include in the estimates not only the things we are certain of dealing with, but also the things

which we have a good chance of carrying out in the year. The result is that there are always a certain number of items not proceeded with. I am afraid we take that practice into consideration, as a rule, when we frame a budget.

The motion was then put and carried, and the Bill was read a second time.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded by the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Bill was referred to the Finance Committee for consideration.

General Loan and Inscribed Stock Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Ordinance, 1913.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded.

The motion was agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL then moved that the Council go into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment and, on the Council resuming, the Bill, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, was read a third time and passed.

Praya East Reclamation Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to provide for the reclamation of the foreshore and sea bed off Praya East, Victoria, in the Colony, of Hongkong.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

HON. MR. BIRD—I regret, sir, that in connection with this Bill no attempt has been made to secure any sort of uniformity of design for the buildings on the sea front. I realise that there are many obvious difficulties to be faced, but I believe they are not insurmountable. The chance we have got is one of a lifetime, and I think if the lot-holders were to collaborate and show a spirit of unselfishness and interest in the common weal,

that a water frontage might be presented which would be a credit to the Colony for many years to come.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The clauses in this Ordinance, which were framed by Mr. Chatham, are more or less the same as are contained in the Ordinance under which the previous big reclamation was carried out. Whilst it may or may not be desirable to have such a clause, I think the buildings which were erected on that Praya, between the Hongkong Club and Pedder Street, are quite a credit to the Colony and I think that in case of the valuable lots which will face the sea on the new Praya the lot-holders are sufficiently alive to their own interests to put up buildings worthy of the position. Further, I may mention that the Buildings Ordinance gives certain powers which we can enforce for arranging that buildings erected shall harmonise with the surrounding ones. Of course, there is the objection that, if the first building is not a good one, it will be of no use to make others harmonise with it. The value of the sites there—and some of them are owned by the Government—is such that I think we may safely say that the buildings erected will be creditable to the Colony.

HON. MR. POLLOCK—I agree with my honourable friend, Mr. Bird, that a clause, such as he suggests, is very desirable, if it could be obtained. I suggest it should be added now.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—It seems to me that it should pass the wit of man to devise any clause to provide that any buildings should be erected to a particular pattern. This Bill requires the assent, not only of this Council, but of a very large number of frontagers, and we are much indebted to Sir Paul Chater for the trouble he has taken to secure their assent. I tremble to think what would have happened if they had been required to assent to commit themselves to any particular type of building. Instead of having reached the second reading of this Ordinance, now, we should not reach the first reading five years from now. I quite sympathise with the hon. member's views, but not being an architect, I, perhaps, do not feel quite so strongly in favour of uniformity of pattern.

HON. MR. BIRD—I meant more as regards the height of buildings in the block, so that all buildings in one block might be kept the same height. Very often, lots are sold in small strips and each owner builds as he fancies, and floors are at different levels. My idea is to try and limit that.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The tendency recently has been for everybody to build as high as the Government will let them. I think we shall get most of them at one height.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—If the hon. member (Mr. Bird) feels able to propose, in Committee, any clause to give effect to what he has said, no doubt the Council will be glad to hear it.

The second reading of the Bill was then carried.

The Bill passed through Committee without amendment and, on the Council resuming, the third reading was approved, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Bill passed accordingly.

Bills of Exchange Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend further the Bills of Exchange Ordinance, 1885.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the second reading was carried.

The Bill was committed to Committee for consideration clause by clause, and, when the Council resumed, the third reading was approved, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Bill passed accordingly.

Indemnity Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to restrict the taking of legal proceedings in respect of certain acts and matters done during the war and to provide in certain cases remedies in substitution therefor, should be postponed to the next meeting of the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The Deportation Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend the Deportation Ordinance, 1917.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the second reading was carried.

The Bill passed through the Committee stage without amendment and, when the Council resumed, the third reading was approved, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Bill passed accordingly.

The Tobacco Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend the Tobacco Ordinance, 1916.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the second reading was carried.

The Bill passed through the Committee without amendment and, when the Council resumed, the third reading was approved, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Bill passed accordingly.

The Stamp Amendment Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend the Stamp Ordinance, 1921.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the second reading was approved.

The Council in Committee considered the bill clause by clause and, on the Council resuming, the third reading was approved, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Bill passed accordingly.

The Estate Duty Ordinance

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend the Estate Duty Ordinance, 1915.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the second reading was approved.

After the Bill had been considered in Committee clause by clause, the Council resumed, and the third reading was approved, on the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, seconded by the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

The Bill passed accordingly.

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—The remaining item on the agenda—(the second reading of the Bill intituled, An Ordinance to amend further the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903)—it is proposed, with the consent of the Council, to postpone. The Finance Committee will now consider the financial provisions of the Bill for the Supplementary Appropriation for 1920. If the Council desires, I will resume, afterwards, in order to take the third reading. It depends on the time which Council requires for the consideration of the Bill. I will adjourn, at any rate, until after the Finance Committee.

The Council then adjourned.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The Finance Committee then met, the COLONIAL SECRETARY in the chair.

The Bill intituled, An Ordinance to authorise the Appropriation of a Supplementary sum of \$1,457,787.74 to be charged upon the revenue of the Colony for the year, 1920, was considered, clause by clause, and approved.

The items in the Bill were as follows:

Governor	\$ 2,205.45
Colonial Secretary's Department and Legislature,	3,181.13
Treasury	* 5,985.34
Harbour Master's Department	26,448.38
Royal Observatory	2,294.53
Miscellaneous Services	742,979.36
Judicial and Legal Departments	18,510.65
Police and Prison Departments	378,103.67
Medical Department	35,581.81
Sanitary Department	26,658.44
Botanical and Forestry Department	884.49
Education Department	60,464.53
Public Works, Recurrent	20,654.37
Kowloon-Canton Railway	29,496.68
Charitable Services	104,338.89

Total\$1,457,787.74

Motor Ambulance Maintenance

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$1,240 in aid of the following votes:—

Police and Fire Brigade:—

B.—Fire Brigade, Other Charges:—

Repairs to motor engines and plants	\$420.00
Coal and oil fuel.....	750.00
Incidental expenses	70.00
Total	\$1,240.00

THE CHAIRMAN—This sum is required in connection with two motor ambulances which have recently arrived in the Colony. The estimated cost of running a motor ambulance is, for repairs, \$500. There are two, so that is \$1,000. The \$420 is for five months from August 1st to the end of the year. The estimated cost, for petrol and lubricating oil, for each motor ambulance, for a year, is \$900, or \$1,800 for two. The \$750 is for five months. The estimated cost of incidentals is \$80, making \$160 for two; the \$70 is the proportionate part for five months.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—May I inquire what the Government has done with the motor ambulance presented by the St. John's Ambulance Brigades?

THE CHAIRMAN—That ambulance was found rather top heavy in use; it was cut down a little and is in use in the New Territory, at Taipo.

HON. MR. HOLYOAK—Still in use?

THE CHAIRMAN—Yes.

Approved.

Produce Shelter at Taipo Market

The Governor recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$150 in aid of the vote Kowloon-Canton Railway, Special Expenditure, Produce Shelter, Taipo Market.

THE CHAIRMAN—A sum of \$150 is provided under special expenditure for this new produce shelter at Taipo Market, and the lowest tender—which is a very low one compared with the others—is just under \$900—\$885.45. The \$150 is asked for to make up the amount required.

Approved.

Council Resumes

The Council then resumed, H.E. the GOVERNOR presiding.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said—Sir, I beg to report that the Appropriation Bill has been considered by the Finance

Committee and has been adopted, without amendment. I move the third reading of the Bill.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the third reading was approved.

The Bill passed accordingly.

The Adjournment

H.E. THE GOVERNOR—With regard to the next meeting of the Council, it seems certain that nothing will be ready next week and somewhat indefinite whether anything will be ready in a fortnight. Therefore, I propose we should adjourn *sine die*.