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VOL. XX.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HONGKONG.

No. 12 OF 1874.

THURSDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 1874.

PRESENT:

His Excellency The Administrator JOHN GARDINER AUSTIN.
The Honorable the Chief Justice (SIR JOHN SMALE).
The Honorable the Acting Colonial Secretary (CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH).
The Honorable the Attorney General (JOHN BRAMSTON).
The Honorable the Acting Treasurer (CHARLES MAY).
The Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE.
The Honorable RICHARD ROWETT.
The Honorable WILLIAM HASTINGS ALEXANDER.

ABSENT:

The Honorable JAMES WHITTALL,—absent on leave.
The Council meets this day at 2.30 P.M., by Special Summons.
The Honorable the Chief Justice administers to His Excellency JOHN GARDINER AUSTIN, the Oath of Office as Administrator of the Government,—in the absence of Governor SIR ARTHUR KENNEDY, K.C.M.G., C.B., who has this day departed for England, on leave of absence on urgent private affairs.
His Excellency administers to CHARLES MAY, Esquire, the Oath of Office as Acting Treasurer, and a Member of this Council.
The Minutes of the Council held on the 7th September, are read and confirmed.
The Honorable PHINEAS RYRIE, in pursuance of notice, puts the following questions:—
1st—"Why the bell at the Central Station was not rung on the morning of the 23rd ultimo, when intimation was received of a Fire in the native portion of the town?"
2nd—"Why the Police Volunteers were not called out to assist in subduing the fire?"
3rd—"Why the usual notification of a fire occurring was not conveyed to Mr. MAY, the Superintendent of the Fire Brigade, and to the Assistant Superintendent, Mr. RUSSELL?"
The Honorable the Acting Colonial Secretary, by direction of His Excellency, makes the following Statement:—
"In reply to the questions of the Honorable Member, I have to state that the fire bell was not rung, nor were the other Members of the Fire Brigade summoned on the occasion referred to, because in the opinion of the Captain Superintendent of Police, (first,) such a proceeding would have been inexpedient, in face of other requisitions likely to be made upon the Reserve Force of the Police; and, (secondly,) because the staff detailed for the service was expected to be sufficient, as the result proved. Having made full enquiry into this matter, prior to the notice of these questions, Governor SIR ARTHUR KENNEDY considered it right to express his approval of the conduct of the Captain Superintendent of Police."
The Acting Colonial Secretary adds that the explanations of the Captain Superintendent of Police on the subject may be seen by any Member of Council.
Mr. RYRIE here gives notice of protest against the reply of the Government.
His Excellency adjourns the Council at 3 o'clock.

J. GARDINER AUSTIN,
Administrator.

Read and confirmed, this 26th Day of October, 1874.

CECIL C. SMITH,
for the Clerk of Councils.