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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, No. 17.

TUESDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 1888.

PRESENT:

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

(SIR G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX, K.C.M.G.)

His Honour the Acting Chief Justice (JAMES RUSSELL, C.M.G.), *vice* His Honour SIR GEORGE PHILIPPO, Knt., on leave.

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary, (FREDERICK STEWART).

„ the Attorney General, (EDWARD LOUGHLIN O'MALLEY).

„ the Acting Colonial Treasurer, (HENRY ERNEST WODEHOUSE, C.M.G.).

„ the Surveyor General, (JOHN MACNEILE PRICE).

„ the Captain Superintendent of Police, (WALTER MEREDITH DEANE).

„ PHINEAS RYRIE.

„ WONG SHING.

„ JOHN BELL-IRVING.

„ BENDYSDE LAYTON, (*vice* the Honourable ALEXANDER PALMER MACÉWÉN), on leave.

ABSENT:

The Honourable CATCHICK PAUL CHATER, on leave.

The Council met pursuant to notice.

The Minutes of the last Meeting, held on the 4th June last, were read and confirmed.

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.—GAP ROCK LIGHT-HOUSE.—Read the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

The Governor has pleasure in directing to be laid on the table the further correspondence (other than confidential) which has taken place on the subject of the proposed Light-house at the Gap Rock.

Though none of the alternative proposals recently submitted by the Governor to the Chinese Government were considered altogether free from objection, an arrangement based on them has, nevertheless, been arrived at which practically secures the object in view, viz.: the improvement of the Southern approach to Hongkong by the erection of a Light-house and the maintenance of a Light at a point where this convenience to shipping has long been very urgently required, and on the site which all competent authority regards as the best for the purpose.

This arrangement is not in all respects such as might be desired; but there is excellent reason for believing that it is the most favourable that can be obtained, and that unless it were accepted, the attainment of the end desired would again be indefinitely postponed.

In this view of the arrangement, the Governor feels bound to make public acknowledgment of the service rendered, in devising and proposing it, by Sir ROBERT HART, the able

Inspector-General of the Chinese Imperial Customs, who has thus found the means of furthering the interest of British trade while at the same time loyally conforming to the very natural and intelligible prejudices of the Chinese Government.

And while recognizing the means by which this benefit has been obtained, the Governor desires also to express his regret that any words used, or reported to have been used, by him in Council in connection with this question should have been considered as reflecting upon His Excellency Sir JOHN WALSHAM, Her Majesty's Minister at Peking.

Nothing in the knowledge of the Governor has furnished any ground for such reflection; on the contrary he considers that Sir JOHN WALSHAM deserves the thanks of the Colony for taking the only course which was at all likely to achieve success, and for thus bringing to a satisfactory termination, a question which has been the subject of much futile correspondence with his predecessors.

In connection with this Gap Rock arrangement, the Governor had hoped to be able to secure another improvement in the lighting of the approaches to Hongkong by the removal to Waglan Island of the Light-house now at Cape D'Aguiar. But, though his efforts in this direction have so far proved unsuccessful, he does not propose to relinquish them, if such course be approved by the Council.

The erection of a Light-house at Waglan would be far less difficult than at Gap Rock; and it is possible therefore that the Chinese Government might be more easily induced to undertake the work with its own staff, if a sufficient subsidy were promised by this Colony.

But pending any such negotiation, the issue of which would of course be uncertain, the Governor considers that there should be no delay of the work at the Gap Rock, if the arrangement respecting it should meet with the approval of the Council, and receive the sanction of the Secretary of State.

For this reason the proposal recently made (with a view to save time in construction) for placing a flashing Light at Waglan and a fixed Light at the Gap, will require to be abandoned; and it is deemed to be on the whole expedient to revert to the original plan of a flashing Light at the Gap. Placed at the same height there seems to be no doubt that a flashing Light would be much more useful than a fixed Light; and apparently Sir ROBERT HART, whose experience on the subject is entitled to very great weight, is of opinion that the greater height required for the former is a disadvantage which would not be sufficient to outweigh this superiority.

The two Light-houses, if we should succeed in obtaining both, would thus be more costly than would have been the case if the Governor's proposal to include them in the same arrangement had met with success; but considering that there now annually enter the Port of Victoria vessels with an aggregate measurement of nearly six millions and a half of tons (a tonnage it may be remarked which according to the published returns is larger than that of the Ports of all the British Possessions on the Continent of America and larger also than that of the total of the three leading Colonies of Australia) and considering that the Southern is, if anything, the more important of the two approaches to the Island, it may be taken as certain that no expense which is at all likely to be incurred can be otherwise than very inconsiderable by comparison with the advantage gained in the saving of time alone, and without reference to the losses of vessels directly attributable to the absence of Lights.

The cost which would have been saved to the shipping trade, if a Light at the Gap Rock had been provided at the time when the subject was first mooted would now amount to a sum which could probably be only expressed in hundreds of thousands of Pounds; and the Governor trusts therefore he has reason in congratulating the Council and the Colony that a want of such very great importance is at length to be supplied.

By Command,

FREDERICK STEWART,
Colonial Secretary.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
Hongkong, 27th August, 1888.

VOTES REFERRED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.—Read the following Minutes by His Excellency the Governor:—

(1.)

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

C.S.O.
515 of 1888.
\$13,000.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of Thirteen thousand Dollars for the drainage of the Wongnaichung Valley.

The advantages to be found by this proposed work are too well known to require pointing out.

Government House, Hongkong, 18th June, 1888.

(2.)

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

C.S.O.
730 of 1888.
\$46.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of Forty-six Dollars, to be awarded to members of the Police Force as Prizes for shooting.

The above amount was realised from the sale of empty ammunition boxes which the Police Authorities recommended should be devoted to prizes.

Government House, Hongkong, 27th July, 1888.

(3.)

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

C.S.O.
1428 of 1888.
\$531.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of Five hundred and Thirty-one Dollars for general overhaul and repairs to Health Officer's Steam-launch *Blanche*, and hire of a Steam-launch while the repairs are being executed.

Government House, Hongkong, 27th July, 1888.

(4.)

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

C.S.O.
1476 of 1888.
\$326.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of Three hundred and Twenty-five Dollars, for supplying and fixing a new Flag Staff complete, in front of the Harbour Master's Office.

Government House, Hongkong, 27th July, 1888.

(5.)

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

C.S.O.
1133 of 1888.
\$280.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of Two hundred and Eighty Dollars for the salary of an Overseer at the Peak, to prevent Contractors from removing stones, cutting earth, or turf on Crown land without permits, and ensuring that all regulations and conditions on the permits are strictly observed. 7 months at \$40 per month, ...\$ 280.00

Government House, Hongkong, 2nd August, 1888.

(6.)

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX.

C.S.O.
1678 of 1888.
\$1,000.

The Governor recommends the Council to vote the sum of One thousand Dollars as an additional vote to the Contingent expenditure of the Sanitary Department.

The vote on the Estimates has proved insufficient owing to the purchase of an unusually large quantity of disinfectants and to other expenses incurred in connection with the epidemic of small-pox in the early portion of the year, and the more recent prevalence of cholera.

Government House, Hongkong, 14th August, 1888.

The Colonial Secretary moved that these Minutes be referred to the Finance Committee.

The Acting Treasurer seconded.

Question—put and passed.

VOTES PASSED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.—The Colonial Secretary, by direction of His Excellency the Governor, laid upon the table the Report of the proceedings of the Finance Committee, (No. 24), held on the 4th June last, and moved that the following votes referred to therein be passed:—

SUPPLEMENTARY VOTES FOR 1888.

SERVICES EXCLUSIVE OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

Works and Buildings.

C.S.O.
932 of 1888.

Building a room over the two cells at the Magistracy to keep scales, balances, &c. for testing weights and measures,.....\$400.00

C.S.O.
1810 of 1887.

Erection of a Telegraphic line between the Gap and Mount Gough Police Stations, ...\$200.00

Miscellaneous Services.

C.S.O.
2610 of 1887.

Compensation to Mr. EDMUND SHARP, for deficiency in area of Inland Lot 670 at Belcher's Bay, (Kennedytown),\$782.22
Overcharge of Crown Rent on above, 58.19

\$ 840.41

The Acting Treasurer seconded.

Question—put and passed.

PAPERS.—The Colonial Secretary, by direction of His Excellency the Governor, laid upon the table the following papers:—

- (1.) Report of the Superintendent of the Botanical and Afforestation Department for 1887. (No. $\frac{13}{88}$).
- (2.) The Colonial Surgeon's Report for 1887. (No. $\frac{14}{88}$).
- (3.) Returns of Births and Deaths for the year 1887. (No. $\frac{15}{88}$).
- (4.) The Assessor's Report on the Assessment for 1888-9. (No. $\frac{16}{88}$).
- (5.) The Harbour Master's Report for 1887. (No. $\frac{17}{88}$).
- (6.) Report on the Blue Book and Departmental Reports for 1887. (No. $\frac{18}{88}$).
- (7.) Proposed Light-house on Gap Rock. (No. $\frac{19}{88}$).
- (8.) The Blue Book for 1887.

QUESTION.—Mr. LAYTON, pursuant to notice, asked the following question:—

Is there any truth in the rumours to the effect that an order has been given that Mendicants are not to be arrested in the Colony; and that the burning of paper clothes in the streets by the Chinese is to go on unchecked?

His Excellency replied.

BILLS ENTITLED THE FRENCH MAIL STEAMERS ORDINANCE CONTINUATION ORDINANCE, 1888, AND THE GERMAN MAIL STEAMERS ORDINANCE CONTINUATION ORDINANCE, 1888.—At the suggestion of His Excellency the Governor that both Ordinances should be taken together, the Attorney General moved the first reading of these Bills.

The Colonial Secretary seconded.

Bills read a first time.

On the motion of the Attorney General the Standing Orders were suspended.

His Excellency then addressed the Council.

The Attorney General then moved that the Bills be read a second time.

The Colonial Secretary seconded.

Mr. RYRIE opposed the motion, and addressed the Council.

His Excellency addressed the Council.

Question put—that the Bills be read a second time.

The Council divided:—

| <i>For</i> | <i>Against</i> |
|--|-----------------------|
| The Honourable the Captain Superintendent of Police. | Honourable B. LAYTON. |
| „ the Surveyor General. | „ J. BELL-IRVING. |
| „ the Acting Colonial Treasurer. | „ WONG SHING. |
| „ the Attorney General. | „ P. RYRIE. |
| „ the Colonial Secretary. | |
| „ the Acting Chief Justice. | |

Motion carried by a majority of *two*.

Bills read a second time.

The Council then went into Committee on the Bills.

Bills reported without amendment.

The Attorney General then moved that the Bills be read a third time.

Question—put and passed.

Bills read a third time.

Question put—that these Bills do pass.

Bills passed, and numbered respectively as Ordinances 18 and 19 of 1888.

BILL ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORISE IN CERTAIN CASES JUDICIAL INVESTIGATIONS INTO CAUSES OF FIRE.—The Attorney General moved the first reading of this Bill, and explained that it was in substitution of the Bill entitled *The Fire Enquiry Ordinance, 1888*, which was read a first time at the last Meeting.

The Colonial Secretary seconded.

His Excellency addressed the Council.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.—The Council then adjourned to Thursday, the 13th instant, at 4 P.M.

G. WILLIAM DES VŒUX,
Governor.

Read and confirmed, this 17th day of October, 1888.

ARATHOON SETH,
Clerk of Councils.