

Objects and Reasons.

This Bill is framed to a considerable extent upon the lines of the Squatters' Ordinance, 1890, (Ordinance 27 of 1890), which has been found to work satisfactorily.

The chief aim of this Bill is to provide owners and occupiers of land in the New Territories with a tribunal to which they can appeal, without incurring the expense of resorting to the Supreme Court, and to arrange amicably questions of disputed title and land and rent disputes generally.

It is proposed by this Bill to substitute a certificate of title for a Crown lease, because it has been ascertained that the ordinary holding of land in the New Territories is a tenancy in perpetuity, and this Government could not, under the terms of the Convention with China, grant a lease for more than 99 years from the date of the Convention.

Clause 15 of the Bill contains special provisions for the commutation of rent in produce into a payment of rent in money, calculated upon the fair price of such produce. Provision for such commutation appears to be necessary in order to avoid friction between landlord and tenant and to induce the tenant to cultivate the land to the best advantage.

Clause 16 of the Bill provides for the redemption of rent in produce, when such rent is payable in perpetuity, by the payment of a capital sum of money.

Clause 17 provides that, in any agreement made on and after the 31st day of January, 1900, (which is the first day of the next Chinese year), no rent in produce shall be reserved.

The object of clause 18 is to settle disputes in cases (*inter alia*) where a man, who is adjudged to have no proper title, has been occupying and improving land and where he appears to be equitably entitled to continue to occupy such land upon his paying such a rent as is fair and reasonable, having regard to such improvements.

HENRY E. POLLOCK,
Acting Attorney General.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 650.

The following Order-in-Council is published.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 24th November, 1899.

ORDER

Made by the Governor-in-Council under section 8 of "The Post Office Ordinance, 1887," on the 23rd day of November, 1899.

It is hereby ordered by the Governor-in-Council that any correspondence, which is sent to the Colony from any place outside the Colony for the purpose of being posted in the Colony, shall be charged, upon being posted at the General Post Office of the Colony, with the same rates of postage as if such correspondence had been posted at any office other than in the Colony.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
HONGKONG.

R. F. JOHNSTON,
Acting Clerk of Councils.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 651.

His Excellency the Governor has given his assent, in the name and on behalf of the QUEEN, to the following Ordinance passed by the Legislative Council:—

Ordinance No. 35 of 1899.—An Ordinance to apply a sum not exceeding Two million Six hundred and Eighty-one thousand Six hundred and Fifty-one Dollars to the Public Service of the Year 1900.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 24th November, 1899.