

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 652.

The following Memorandum regarding the Estimates for Public Works Extraordinary of 1900 is published.

By Command.

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 25th November, 1899.

MEMORANDUM BY THE UNDERSIGNED UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HONGKONG, REGARDING THE ESTIMATES  
FOR PUBLIC WORKS EXTRAORDINARY OF 1900.

1. We have carefully studied the Estimates for the coming year in the light of His Excellency the Governor's speech at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 11th October last, and it is with great satisfaction we observe that, notwithstanding the large expenditure which has already been incurred in connection with the taking over of the New Territory, there will still remain a balance of revenue over expenditure of no less than \$400,000 (including last year's balance) at the end of the current year.

2. When this is taken in conjunction with the fact that within the past five years the resumption of Taipingshan has been carried out at a cost of over \$850,000, defrayed entirely out of reserve, and of which but a fractional part has as yet been returned to the Treasury, the result is still more satisfactory.

3. Fortunately, the sales of Land have been large, and have in a great measure enabled this surplus to be attained, and we desire to impress upon His Excellency the necessity for expending during the coming year this surplus upon current and important Public Works within the limits of the Colony exclusive of the New Territory.

4. Whilst we are ready to concede that certain of the contemplated works in the New Territory may be defrayed out of the general revenue, we are most decidedly of opinion that the principal works for developing it should be provided for by a Loan.

The public works in this island have been long deferred for want of funds, and now that they are available for proceeding with the most important of these works we feel bound to deprecate, in the strongest manner, any proposal to divert such funds to any other purpose whatever.

5. In his speech His Excellency alluded to the works which had been approved by the Public Works Committee as among those to be undertaken next year, and paid for out of the surplus. A reference to the list of these works shows that the three most important are connected with extensions of the Waterworks.

6. The necessity for undertaking these works immediately has been demonstrated by the repeated introduction, year after year, of the intermittent supply which occurs just at the period when an abundant supply is most urgently needed, namely, when Plague begins to make its appearance. Though extensions have recently been carried out, experience has shown them to be insufficient, and a reference to the statements published monthly in the newspapers shows that the consumption is ever on the increase. From the latest return, this increase amounts to 8 % over the corresponding period of last year, and no time should therefore be lost in carrying out further extensions.

7. The construction of Roads is also a matter of great importance. The rapidity with which sites have been taken up along the roads recently constructed is the best proof not only of the necessity but of the sound policy from a financial standpoint of proceeding with the roads already projected.

In connection with this subject it may be worth considering whether the Government should not give the utmost encouragement to any scheme for connecting the centre of Victoria with the eastern or western suburbs by tramways in order the better to provide for the expansion of the city and the provision of house accommodation.

8. The importance of housing the Police Force suitably is one that should not be overlooked, and the provision of quarters for the married members of the Force should be made as soon as practicable. Meantime we welcome the proposal to erect a Police Station for the Western District, which has long been greatly needed.

9. Another work of the most urgent importance for the well-being of the Colony is the provision of adequate Latrine accommodation throughout the City, which we regard as one of the measures to be adopted for combating Plague. We are of opinion that at least Six Latrines should be proceeded with at once, two of which should be for women. There can be no doubt that such provision will tend to make the houses of the poor more wholesome, and will thus have a salutary effect on the health of the community generally.

10. Two minor works which we desire to see carried out without delay are the completion of the improvements of the Recreation Ground at Happy Valley, and the provision of a proper Chair Shelter at the Peak.

11. As regards the former, a considerable area of land has been sold in recent years in the immediate neighbourhood, on which houses have been built, and the improvements referred to will, it is hoped, tend to overcome the Malaria, for which this district has had a bad reputation in the past, besides rendering the ground available for purposes of recreation.

12. The Chair Shelter may be said to be a necessity from a humanitarian point of view. In the City, coolies can generally find refuge from sun or rain beneath the numerous verandahs and trees, and at Kowloon a Shelter has been in existence for some years; but at the Peak, where the effects of the weather are much more severely felt than elsewhere, there is absolutely no protection whatever except what is provided by the present open matshed.

13. The desirability of at once proceeding with the construction of the new Law Courts has been alluded to in His Excellency's speech. Seeing that this work will take several years to complete, it cannot be too strongly urged that the work should be put in hand immediately.

The projected new Post Office is even more urgently needed. We are of opinion that this work should on no account be delayed until the completion of the new Law Courts, but that its construction should be commenced at the same time if possible.

14. We are pleased to note that there is a likelihood of the Jubilee Road being proceeded with ere long—a work which we regard as of considerable importance in providing an outlet for the evergrowing population.

15. With these large and important Public Works in prospect, irrespective of those required in the New Territory, we view with concern His Excellency's remarks regarding the Staff of the Public Works Department. It is stated in His Excellency's speech that the Estimates provide \$96,000 more than was expended by the Department on Extraordinary Public Works in 1898, but these Estimates provide only a moiety of the sums which we consider should be expended to enable the works referred to being carried out with despatch, whilst some of them are totally unprovided for.

16. In view of this we are surprised to find, that notwithstanding the great amount of additional work which must be entailed on this Department by the New Territory, the Public Works Department Estimates actually show a

diminished expenditure as compared with 1899. We are still further surprised to find that the contemplated reduction is in the Engineering Staff which is surely rather in need of augmentation on His Excellency's own showing.

17. When we consider that in 1890 a sum of \$94,420 was voted for this Department as compared with \$91,402 in the Estimates under consideration, we are still further convinced of the inadequacy of the present Staff.

18. That this Department, with which the vital interests of the Colony as regards sanitation, water supply, and development generally are so inseparably bound up, should undergo reduction at such a time, we consider a serious matter, and we earnestly urge upon His Excellency to take immediate steps to put the Department on a footing commensurate with its extended duties.

19. We would suggest to His Excellency the desirability of appointing a Committee to investigate and report on the question of the staff of the Public Works Department, and we make this proposal because, as we have already stated, the policy hitherto has been to starve our Public Works, and we recognize the importance of providing a Staff sufficient to carry on the large works now impending.

C. P. CHATER.  
HO KAI.  
E. R. BELILIOS.  
WEI AYUK.  
J. J. KESWICK.

HONGKONG, 17th November, 1899.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 653.

By command of His Excellency the Governor an Election by the Rate-payers of two members of the Sanitary Board will take place at the City Hall on Tuesday, the 19th day of December, 1899, commencing at 4 o'clock.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 25th November, 1899.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 654.

The following Notice is published for general information.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 25th November, 1899.

#### NOTICE.

It is hereby notified that, by command of His Excellency the Governor, and pursuant to Section 4 of The Public Health Ordinance, 1887, an election by the Rate-payers of two Members of the Sanitary Board will take place at the City Hall on Tuesday, the 19th day of December, 1899, commencing at 4 o'clock.

The following persons will be entitled to vote at the election, that is to say:—

- (a) Rate-payers who are included in the Special and Common Jury lists for the year 1891.
- (b) Rate-payers who are exempted from serving on Juries on account of their professional avocations.

A list of Rate-payers entitled to vote will be posted at the Supreme Court for public inspection for one week from Monday, the 11th day of December, 1899, and any person not on the list claiming to be a Rate-payer entitled to vote should send notice of his claim to the Acting Registrar on or before the 19th December next.

The election will be conducted in accordance with the Rules made by the Governor-in-Council on the 31st May, 1888.

Voting will commence immediately after the nominations and continue until 6 P.M. when the ballot box will be closed.

A. SETH,  
*Acting Registrar.*

Supreme Court, Hongkong, 25th November, 1899.