

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 749.

The following Correspondence regarding the Increase of Salaries of Subordinate Officers, which was laid before the Legislative Council on the 5th instant, is published.

By Command,

J. H. STEWART LOCKHART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 6th December, 1901.

Governor to Secretary of State.

No. 426.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HONGKONG, 19th October, 1901.

SIR,—When the Estimates were being considered, I found that a very strong feeling existed among the Un-official Members that any increase of salaries granted to the subordinate officers should date from the 1st January of the present year. I undertook to forward their unanimous recommendation to this effect, and I do so now with a strong recommendation that the views expressed by the Un-official Members, and shared by every member of the Legislative Council, may be acceded to. I attach a report of the proceedings, and if you concur in my recommendation I shall be glad to receive a reply by telegram.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

HENRY A. BLAKE,
Governor.

The Right Honourable J. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.,
His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies.

&c.,

&c.,

&c.

(Enclosure.)

THE SALARIES OF SUBORDINATE OFFICERS.

*Extracts from Report of Proceedings of the Finance Committee
at a Meeting held on 10th October, 1901.*

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—Before proceeding with the consideration of the Supply Bill, I should like to point out that some time ago several of the Heads of Departments were awarded an increase of salary, and when the Unofficial Members of Council voted that increase I think there was a distinct promise or undertaking given that subordinate officers' salaries would be dealt with forthwith. I have not a copy of the *Hansard* with me, and have not been able to find the newspaper containing the account of the Council proceedings, but I have a recollection that such a promise was given—that the increase in the salaries of subordinate officers would be dealt with forthwith. Now I learn that the increase is not to become due till next year.

The CHAIRMAN.—That is so. If the Honourable Member had refreshed his memory by reading the correspondence on the subject, he would have seen that H.E. the Governor, in accordance with the recommendations of the committee appointed to enquire into the question of the salaries of subordinate officers, recommended to the Secretary of State that the increase should date from the beginning of this year.

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—I have read the correspondence carefully, but I am referring to the promise made in the Council.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am just pointing out that the Governor recommended to the Secretary of State that the increase should begin from the 1st of January this year, but the Secretary of State did not approve that course.

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—The promise I speak of was made about April last year, I think, and in virtue of that promise, when several of the Heads of Departments were awarded an increase in their salaries—I think including the Governor himself—

The CHAIRMAN.—Yes.

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—The salaries of subordinate officers were to be dealt with forthwith, and that increase to subordinates would come into operation about the same time as that to the Heads of Departments.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have no recollection of the exact wording of what was said, I presume you mean, by H.E. the Governor.

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—I think it was.

The CHAIRMAN.—However, we are not now dealing with that matter, but if the Honourable Member desires, I shall be very glad to look it up and inform the Honourable Member what the result of my researches has been. At the same time, I don't think that is the question before us now.

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—It is before us inasmuch as the increase is not to take place before next year. I don't think justice has been done to subordinates, and I for one would not have voted for the increase to the Heads if the subordinates were to be left out in the cold.

Honourable HARBOUR MASTER.—This is very interesting, but I don't think it is a matter that should be discussed just now.

The CHAIRMAN.—I don't think so. I may say that H.E. the Governor has the welfare of subordinate officers quite as much at heart as that of higher officials. I don't think there can be any doubt about that.

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—I quite understand that.

The CHAIRMAN.—As long as there is no misunderstanding, then, there is no need to discuss the matter further. We will therefore proceed with the consideration of the Supply Bill.

Extracts from Report of Proceedings of the Legislative Council at a Meeting held on 17th October, 1901.

In connection with this Report the COLONIAL SECRETARY said:—This Report deals with the Supply Bill, and the main suggestions contained in the Report will be considered when this Council goes into Committee on the Supply Bill to-day. In addition to the matters dealt with in that Report, Sir, a question was raised by the Honourable Member who represents the Chamber of Commerce on the Finance Committee, and I promised him that I would enquire into the point raised by him and let him know the result of my enquiries. The point raised by the Honour-

able Member was in connection with the salaries of subordinate officials in the Civil Service of the Colony, and he considered that a distinct promise or undertaking had been given that the subordinate officials' salaries should be dealt with forthwith. I have very carefully gone over the pages of the *Hansard* in which the question was considered, and I have failed to find anything of the nature of a distinct promise. I lay upon the table the memorandum I have been able to find in the *Hansard* dealing with this subject. At the same time I may mention that all the papers dealing with this subject of the salaries of subordinate officials show very clearly the desire of the Committee appointed to enquire into the salaries of subordinates that any increase that might be recommended should take place without any unnecessary delay, and this opinion was shared by Your Excellency, because, in your despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, you recommended that the increase should take place from the 1st of January this year, but the Secretary of State did not see his way to approve of that. Now I think, Sir, that the Supply Bill reveals a very satisfactory state of affairs, so far as the financial position of this Colony is concerned, and I desire to express the hope, which I am sure is shared by every member of Council, that Your Excellency will see your way to make further representations on this subject to the Secretary of State, especially as a number of the representative heads and assistant heads were granted increases while the salaries of subordinates were being enquired into by the Committee. The Chinese employees also had received an increase. In view of these circumstances I trust Your Excellency will see your way to make further representations in the matter to the Secretary of States for the Colonies. (Applause.)

Honourable T. H. WHITEHEAD.—Since last meeting of Council I have gone carefully over the *Hansard*, and looked up all that took place when the question was before the Council. Since then, too, I have consulted the Senior Unofficial Member and one or two others, and I have every reason to believe the Unofficial Members are unanimous in favour of Your Excellency again urging upon the Secretary of State for the Colonies the expediency, upon public grounds—for the benefit of the public and of the public service—that the increase in the salaries of subordinate officers should come into force as from the 1st of January this year. The great increase in the cost of living and the immense rise in the price of the necessaries of life must have been felt more severely by subordinate officials than by those drawing higher salaries. I heartily concur with the Honourable the Colonial Secretary who has just spoken of the desirability of urging with all Your Excellency's force upon the Secretary of State the necessity of granting the increase from the 1st of January this year.

His Excellency the GOVERNOR.—As far as I am concerned, as the Council would see when I sent forward the recommendation of the Committee, I heartily endorsed that recommendation myself. But I can quite well understand the answer from the Secretary of State; the Imperial Government possibly wished to see what the finances of the Colony were like. However, if it is desired that I should again bring the matter before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, I shall do so with the greatest pleasure. I will ask the Senior Unofficial Member if all the Unofficial Members are agreed that the increase should be from the 1st of January this year.

Honourable C. P. CHATER.—Sir, I may state that the Unofficial Members are unanimously of opinion that the increase should take place from the 1st of January this year, instead of January, 1902.

His Excellency the GOVERNOR.—Very well, I shall take steps accordingly. (Applause.)

Telegram from Secretary of State to Governor, dated 26th November, 1901.

"In reply to your despatch No. 426 of 19th October proposal approved.

CHAMBERLAIN."