

6TH JULY, 1944.

PRESENT:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, SIR FRANCIS HENRY MAY, K.C.M.G.

HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL F. H. KELLY, C.B. (General Officer Commanding Troops).

HON. MR. CLAUD SEVERN (Colonial Secretary).

HON. MR. J. H. KEMP (Attorney-General).

HON. MR. E. D. C. WOLFE (Colonial Treasurer).

HON. MR. A. F. CHURCHILL (Director of Public Works).

HON. MR. E. R. HALLIFAX (Secretary for Chinese Affairs).

HON. MR. C. McI. MESSER (Captain Superintendent of Police).

HON. MR. WEI YUK, C.M.G.

HON. MR. H. E. POLLOCK, K.C.

HON. MR. E. A. HEWETT, C.M.G.

HON. MR. E. SHELLIM.

HON. MR. D. LANDALE.

HON. MR. LAU CHU PAK.

MR. M. J. BREEN (Clerk of Councils).

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Financial

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, by command of H.E. the Governor, laid on the table the Report of the Finance Committee (No. 9), and moved its adoption.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

West River Floods

HIS EXCELLENCY — Gentlemen, I asked you to come here to-day in order that I might move the resolution which appears on the orders of the day. You all know, of course, that there have been very disastrous floods on the West River, and although I cannot give you full particulars of the distress occasioned thereby it is no doubt widespread. This is an extract from a despatch from the Tutuh responsible for the Province to the Consul-General, whom I asked to make inquiries on the subject. It says:—

“The floods this year have been more disastrous than any that have been known for many years. In the districts of Kwangchow and Shaoching a clean sweep has been made of all the dykes, the worst destruction having been caused at the Lo Ko, Ting An, and Sang Yuen dykes in the Namhoi District, and at the Yeng Lo dyke in the Sau Hui District. The victims of the floods are scattered all over the country and their state is indeed pitiful to look upon. In connection with the local charitable societies and institutions, I am doing my utmost to provide the relief that is required, and in response to your telephone message I have the honour to send you this brief description of the state of things with the request that you will be good enough to convey it to His Excellency the Governor of Hongkong.”

In order to gain further particulars I sent up Mr. A. E. Wood, the first Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs, and he has just returned from Canton, and says most excellent work is being done by the Government and by the charitable society there known as the Kau Tsoi Kung Sho, who have already sent vast quantities of rice to the starving people right up as far as Nanning. The Tung Wah Hospital in this Colony has already sent food to the value of \$20,000 to the Kau Tsoi Kung Sho for distribution, while the proposal now is, if you vote the money which

appears on the orders of the day, to make that the nucleus of a public subscription, and that subscription would be raised by a committee which I propose to appoint of all nationalities here in the Colony—Chinese, British, and other Europeans and Americans. Then, in order to assist the Chinese Charitable Society and the Chinese Authorities themselves in the organisation for the distribution, I propose, with their concurrence, which they have already given, that Mr. Wood shall proceed to the Shiu Hing District and there assist in the organisation of the distribution of food, and subsequently in such other relief work as there may be funds for. The Tutuh has very kindly offered to place a gunboat at his disposal, which will be moored at Shiu Hing for Mr. Wood's accommodation, and Mr. Wood will act there in conjunction with the local official on the spot who already has a very good grip of the situation. I think that these arrangements will be satisfactory. The subscription will be practically under Government auspices, and Mr. Wood at Shiu Hing will be the agent of the Government and of the subscribers to the fund, and he will communicate with us from time to time of the progress made and as to the necessity of funds. I hope that these arrangements meet with your

approval, and if they do I shall proceed, after the vote has been taken, to appoint a committee the names of which will be published in due course. I can only say I have not the slightest doubt that I echo the voice of all the members of the Council and the community in general when I say that we deeply sympathise with the population in the district in the neighbouring province which has been visited by this terrible disaster.

HON. MR. WEI YUK—I beg to second your Excellency's resolution.

The resolution, which was as under, was then read by his Excellency, put to the meeting, and carried unanimously:—

That this Council on behalf of the community of Hongkong desires to express the deepest sympathy with the sufferers by the recent disastrous floods in the West River, and it is further resolved that a sum of \$50,000 be disbursed from the General Revenue of the Colony for the relief of those who are in distress.

HIS EXCELLENCY—There is no further business, gentlemen. Thank you for your attendance.