

23RD DECEMBER, 1926.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council was held in the Council Chamber, the Colonial Secretary (Hon. Mr. W. T. SOUTHORN), presiding.

PRESENT:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (HON. MR. W. T. SOUTHORN).

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (HON. MR. C. McI. MESSER, O.B.E.)

HON. MR. H. T. CREAMY (Director of Public Works).

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

HON. MR. A. O. LANG.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD.

HON. MR. R. H. KOTEWALL, LL.D.

HON. MR. D. G. M. BERNARD.

Supplementary Expenditure

H.E. The Governor presented for the consideration of the Committee, message No. 14 containing items of Supplementary Expenditure Nos. 225 to 247 of 1926. Votes amounting to a total of \$67,193 were passed.

ITEM NO 226

Loss on Copper Coins.....\$7,000

HON. SIR H. E. POLLOCK—Is it not very unusual for the cost of any coins to exceed their nominal face value?

THE CHAIRMAN—We are in correspondence with the Crown Agents to see how costs can best be reduced so as to bring the actual cost below the face value of the coins.

HON. MR. R. H. KOTEWALL—I see exchange was fixed at $1/10\frac{3}{4}$. I suppose if the exchange had been fixed at a higher rate the loss would have been smaller.

ITEM NO. 229

British Empire Exhibition.....\$16,500

HON. SIR H. E. POLLOCK—Does this \$16,500 asked on Wembley account represent the loss of the two years' working?

THE CHAIRMAN—It is not a loss at all as I understand it. We voted a certain amount and that amount has not all been spent.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG—The Government will issue a report on the Wembley exhibition will they not?

THE CHAIRMAN—Yes.

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD—We were promised it a long time ago.

HON. SIR H. E. POLLOCK—What is meant by the trading account? I do not understand it.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG—That refers to the stall-holders does it not?

HON. MR. H. W. BIRD—Yes, an advance was made to the stall-holders and probably we shall get it all back.

THE CHAIRMAN—A sum of \$80,000 has already been repaid out of the \$100,000 advanced. Mr. Hallifax expects to get back \$90,000 at least and there is a probability of the whole \$100,000 being returned.

HON. MR. R. H. KOTEWALL—It was an advance to the shareholders because the Government were, in reality, in the second year, their own stall-holders. It was an entirely Government enterprise in the second year. The Government simply had an advance from the Treasury to buy the goods; when the goods were sold the money came back to the Treasury.

THE CHAIRMAN—The amount voted for Wembley was £25,000, apart from the Trading account. The whole of that amount was not expended. There will be no excess on the vote.

ITEM NO. 241

Further Reclamation at Shamsuipo...\$7,500

The vote was asked for to pay for work done on the reclamation at Shamsuipo in 1922-23, and for other minor works. Under payment was detected in the final measuring up.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG—Should not this have been ascertained in 1922-23 when the work was done? Is there no explanation?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The shortage was not discovered until the final certificate was being prepared for this contractor. It should have been discovered in 1922-23.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG—Why was it not?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—There was no order to get out the quantities.

HON. MR. A. O. LANG—Is there any excuse?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—The man concerned has now left the Government Service.

THE CHAIRMAN—I think the Director of Public Works is satisfied that it was a genuine mistake. The work was actually done.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS—There is no doubt about that.

THE CHAIRMAN—There is one other vote which does not appear in His Excellency's message. You will remember an Ordinance was passed authorising the Governor to approve the rates of pay for Volunteers while in Camp. The question was not raised by the military until recently when the camp took place. The Governor in Council this morning approved the rates of pay and instructed me to ask the Finance Committee to vote the necessary money to pay the allowances for the Volunteers who have been in camp this year. The amount estimated as required by the Volunteer Officers is \$4,000 and if you approve and pass this vote now I propose to ask the Commandant to pay the allowances before the end of the year.

The vote was agreed to.