

*Address of the Legislative Council of Hongkong in reply to the Speech
of His Excellency the Governor at the opening of the
Session on the 3rd of December, 1884.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

1. We the members of the Legislative Council of Hongkong, in Council assembled, desire to thank Your Excellency for your speech, and to assure you of our cordial co-operation in the labours and duties of the Session which has now been opened.

2. We regret that the trade and commerce of the Colony have been injuriously affected by the political complications which prevail in this region; but we trust with Your Excellency that the present depression will prove to be only temporary, and that the return of peace at no distant date will restore the elasticity of the public revenue. Meanwhile we acknowledge the necessity for a prudent economy; and in that view we shall carefully consider the list of proposed public works to be submitted to us, so as to report as to which of them should be pushed on and which may be conveniently postponed.

3. We are glad to hear that the Imperial Government has determined to proceed with the measures required for the protection of this City with its harbour and shipping. We doubt not that the Colony will be prepared to contribute its share towards the cost of the Defence works to be undertaken, and we shall carefully consider such propositions for that purpose as may be laid before us. We trust, however, that as soon as the plans of the defences are completed, the valuable lands now reserved, which may not be required for military purposes, will be restored to the Colonial Government, free of all restriction.

4. While thanking Your Excellency for the steps that you have taken to impress upon the Imperial Government the expediency of providing for the junction of the Eastern and Western divisions of this City by means of a continuous marine embankment, we regret that the necessary negotiations with the War Office and the Admiralty have not yet been brought to a successful issue.

5. We are glad to understand that the condition of the several departments of the public service is satisfactory.

6. We shall carefully consider the Legislative measures which are to be introduced in the course of the Session.

7. We look with hope to the results to be obtained by the Commission appointed to revise and consolidate the laws now in force in this Colony.

8. We shall be glad to consider the propriety of enacting in a permanent form some of the provisions of the temporary Peace Preservation Ordinance. It is a cause for thankfulness and satisfaction that on the occasion of the recent disturbances the precautionary measures promptly adopted by the Government, supported by the military, sufficed for the speedy repression of all tendency to disorder and the perfect restoration of tranquillity. While we recognize with pleasure that the Government has ample strength to enforce obedience to law, and will not brook the interference of Chinese Secret Societies, or of other unauthorized associations, we believe with Your Excellency that it will always receive the loyal support of all nationalities dwelling in this Colony under the protection of the British flag.

9. In conclusion, we join with Your Excellency in the sincere hope that, under the favour of Divine Providence, the prudence, firmness and justice of the Government and Legislature will conduce to the general welfare and contentment of all classes and races in the population.