

Mr. Levestam moved, That the Government were justified in paying for the property the price they did.

Moved, as an amendment, by Mr. Peacock, That all the words after the word "That" be struck out, in order to insert the following: "the purchase was made without sufficient inquiry as to the value of the property; and, apparently from that cause, the price paid was much in excess of the rate at which the best part of the property had been offered to private individuals within a short time of the sale made to the Government, and at which time property in Auckland and suburbs was of equal, if not higher, value."

And the question being put, That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

*Ayes*, 6.—Hon. Mr. Ballance, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dargaville, Mr. Gore, Mr. Levestam, Hon. Sir Julius Vogel.

*Noes*, 5.—Mr. Barron, Mr. Montgomery, Dr. Newman, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Wilson.

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

And the original question being put, it was resolved in the affirmative.

The Hon. Major Atkinson stated that he would have voted with the "Noes" but for the unavoidable absence of Mr. Holmes, as explained in Mr. Holmes's letter (*vide* end of paper).

Moved by Mr. Dargaville, That the weight of evidence goes to show that the property could not have been obtained for a less amount in the Compensation Court.

Moved, as an amendment, by Mr. Peacock, That all the words after the word "That" be struck out, in order to insert the following: "there is reason to believe, after making all allowance for the alleged tendency of Compensation Courts to give decisions disadvantageous to the Government, that the property could have been purchased at a lower price in such Court."

And the question being put, That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

*Ayes*, 6.—Hon. Mr. Ballance, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dargaville, Mr. Gore, Mr. Levestam, Hon. Sir Julius Vogel.

*Noes*, 5.—Mr. Barron, Mr. Montgomery, Dr. Newman, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Wilson.

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

And the original question being put, it was resolved in the affirmative.

The Hon. Major Atkinson stated that he would have voted with the "Noes" but for the unavoidable absence of Mr. Holmes, as explained in Mr. Holmes's letter (*vide* end of paper).

Moved by Mr. Peacock, That it is desirable that careful and deliberate inquiry should be made by the Government or its agents in the purchase of property for public purposes, especially as such property can always be acquired after full local inquiry in the Compensation Court.

Moved, as an amendment, by Mr. Levestam, That all the words after the word "That" be struck out, in order to insert the following: "in the opinion of this Committee, the Government exercised reasonable care in ascertaining the value of the property before purchasing it."

And the question being put, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

*Ayes*, 5.—Mr. Barron, Mr. Montgomery, Dr. Newman, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Wilson.

*Noes*, 6.—Hon. Mr. Ballance, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dargaville, Mr. Gore, Mr. Levestam, Hon. Sir Julius Vogel.

So it passed in the negative.

The amendment was, with the leave of the Committee, withdrawn.

The Hon. Major Atkinson stated that he would have voted with the "Ayes" but for the unavoidable absence of Mr. Holmes, as explained in Mr. Holmes's letter (*vide* end of paper).

*Ordered*, That the said resolutions be reported to the House this day.

The Committee then adjourned.