

ADDRESSES OF COUNSEL AND OTHERS.

TUESDAY, 15TH JULY, 1890.

[Hon. Sir H. A. Atkinson, Hon. T. W. Hislop, and Mr. G. Hutchison, M.H.R., in attendance.]

The Chairman.—The Committee has decided, Mr. Hutchison, to ask you at the outset to let us know in what way you purpose proceeding with your charges against the Government. We also asked the members of the Government to be present to hear in what way it was intended to proceed, so that we may have a fair start with our inquiry. I should like to point out to you that the order of reference refers only to the speech made by you in the House on Wednesday, the 2nd instant.

Mr. Hutchison.—I purpose asking the Committee to order the attendance of certain witnesses, whose names I will give the Committee, with a note of the books and papers which I desire to have produced. I am prepared to hand in that list now, if the Committee thinks this the proper time to do so. (List handed in.)

The Chairman.—Mr. Hutchison desires the attendance of Mr. John Murray, Auckland, Mr. George Buckley, Christchurch, Mr. J. C. Gavin, and Mr. Kane, Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee in the session of 1889—four witnesses. Are these all, Mr Hutchison?

Mr. Hutchison.—As far as I know at present.

The Chairman.—Could you summarise and put as distinct charges the charges which you made in your speech?

Mr. Hutchison.—I have considered that, and I think it would be conducive to the orderly proceeding of the Committee if I did so. I am prepared to formulate the charges.

The Chairman.—Have you the charges written out?

Mr. Hutchison.—Yes, Sir, I have. (Handed in.)

The Chairman.—Then, I think, gentlemen, I could not do better than read these charges over at once. (Charges read.)

Hon. Mr. Hislop.—Would it be convenient for me to state the position which the Government think they ought to occupy with regard to the inquiry?

The Chairman.—I should like, first of all, to ask Mr. Hutchison if he proposes to put in anything further than this?

Mr. Hutchison.—No, Sir; of course these are the charges as they appear to me to be collated from the speech, or the larger part of the speech. I am not dealing with any other part than that which appears to me to be a fair statement of facts. Inferences I do not deal with.

The Chairman.—As we have now before us the way in which Mr. Hutchison proposes to proceed, and the names of the gentlemen, and the books and papers he wishes to have before the Committee, it would be quite proper to ask the Government in what way they propose to meet the charges.

Hon. Mr. Hislop.—I should like to say to the Committee that it was the intention of the Premier to be present throughout the inquiry, and take the leading part in it on behalf of the Government; but his colleagues, and ultimately himself, came to the conclusion his state of health would not permit of that; and with the permission of the Committee I should like to appear as a member of the Government. Other members of the Government, being also interested, might occasionally wish to bring matters before the Committee, independently of myself, and I wish to ask the Committee if they would have any objection to their being present. With regard to the charges which have been read out, I would submit to the Committee that the charges as now put in by Mr. Hutchison—I am speaking under some difficulty, only having heard them read and not having seen them—are not the charges shown in the speech. They do not go nearly so far in some respects, and they do not communicate what is really charged in the speech. I submit that perhaps the best plan to follow would be that these charges should be taken by the Committee into consideration, and the Government will be prepared to put in writing to the Committee what they believe are the charges contained in the speech—and in doing so they will only follow the words used by Mr. Hutchison—and then we ask the Committee themselves to settle between us what are the matters to be tried.

The Chairman.—May I ask if you draw any distinction between Mr. Hutchison's charges appearing in *Hansard*, and what it is alleged he actually said in the House?

Hon. Mr. Hislop.—All I wish to say is, that what has been lodged by Mr. Hutchison is not a complete statement of the charges as they appear in *Hansard*. I mean, the charges go very much further in some directions and not so far in others as the statement. I think it would be much better that the Government should put specifically in writing their differences with Mr. Hutchison's charges. I do not wish at present to address the Committee on the point as to whether that is a proper transcript of the charges or not. Mr. Hutchison puts in what he thinks his speech contains, and we are willing to put in what we think the speech contains; and we ask the Committee to compare them and decide as to the charges to be tried. I should like to add that we should like to meet all the charges in the speech, because the speech has gone out not only as has been stated in *Hansard*, but also as is stated in this pamphlet-form to some extent; and we should not consider we had been offered a fair opportunity of meeting these charges if something which is contained in the speech is not contained in Mr. Hutchinson's charges as he has put them in.

Mr. Hutchison.—I do not want to minimise what is contained in the speech. I have drawn these out fairly as facts upon which the speech was based. Inferences, of course, I have not alleged. It is not usual to do so.

Hon. Sir H. A. Atkinson.—If I might be allowed to say one word, I should like to say I wish the charges put in the words of Mr. Hutchison; they were quite distinct. I would also wish that, after the specific charges are disposed of, the Committee should inquire into the transactions between the Bank of New Zealand and the Government during their term of office, so that the whole of the dealings with the bank may be known completely to the public.