

from both sides of the table which certainly do not receive my concurrence. I have asked one of the members of the Committee a few minutes ago to suggest that some time before you proceed with the case I should be heard as to how I would submit it should be conducted. Now, I was prepared to put the matter before the Committee in what I think would be some conclusive manner. I am not at this moment prepared to do that, but I shall be to-morrow morning, if you give me the opportunity I want to refer to cases and to documents. With regard to the formulation of the charges, I may say I did what I was asked to do in that manner some eighteen days ago—within ten minutes of the opening of the first meeting—immediately after this Committee became an executive body. If the Committee wish it I will deal with the matter of the formulation of the charges now, but I think it would probably conduce to the shortening of the proceedings, and, at any rate, to the clearing away of some misapprehensions that may exist in certain members' minds, if I were allowed to-morrow morning to submit fully, with authorities, what I conceive my position to be. I could go on now, but it would be somewhat unsatisfactory, because I have not the books that I want to refer to.

*The Chairman.*—Will you explain, Mr. Hutchison, what you mean by quoting authorities as to position?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—I shall submit, with some confidence, on the authority of precedents, that this being a Committee set up in answer to a challenge by me in the House of Representatives—a tribunal before which I said I would undertake to prove certain charges—that the onus of proof being thus on me—and that challenge having been accepted by the Ministry—the conduct of these proceedings, so far as calling evidence is concerned, rests—subject always to such reasonable regulations as experience has shown to be proper under the circumstances—rests, I say, with me. I shall, I think, demonstrate that to the satisfaction of the Committee; and I venture to anticipate that I shall prove to the satisfaction of the Committee that you will call such witnesses as I suggest, that I shall be allowed to examine these witnesses myself in the first instance, that the representative of the Government may afterwards cross-examine these witnesses, that I may then re-examine them, and that any member of the Committee may put questions to the witnesses so under examination.

*The Chairman.*—You ask till to-morrow morning?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—Yes; I have authorities, but they are not here. I did not anticipate that I should have the opportunity to-day. I ask that I may be allowed to-morrow to support the position which I have now communicated in the outline.

*The Chairman.*—Does that affect the formulation of the charges?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—No, Sir; I am anxious that you should go on with the formulation of the charges. I have had no communication with Mr. Ballance, or any other member of the Committee, as to my position. This application is quite independent of any member of the Committee, as far as your deliberations are concerned. I may say, one member was good enough to suggest this: that some authority should be before you so to determine the procedure, and I only ask that I should be heard. Perhaps that will do to-morrow better than to-day.

*Sir J. Hall.*—Is that subsequent to the formulation of the charges?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—At any stage: it does not matter when. If I had had my authorities here it might have been done now, but it would be quite as convenient to me at a later stage. The settlement of issues appears to me to be necessary first. My statement would do after that, or at any time it will be convenient before you fix the procedure on the issues.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce.*—May I ask what you mean by procedure?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—As to the proof of the charges.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce.*—After the charges have been formulated?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—Yes. It would be more convenient then, perhaps. I have formulated the charges, and I say that I wish to adhere to these formulated charges.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce.*—I should like to ask Mr. Hutchison whether the formulation of the charges might not possibly interfere with the way in which Mr. Hutchison wishes to proceed. We might formulate them in a different way to what Mr. Hutchison might like to conduct his case.

*Mr. Hutchison.*—I have indicated by my formulated charges, handed in in response to an invitation of the Committee, how I should wish the charges dealt with.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce.*—I do not think you understand me. Is it not possible that the Committee, when it proceeds to determine the way in which the charges should be formulated, may do so in a way that may interfere with what you consider to be the right manner?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—I do not anticipate that if the Committee take the speech any difficulty will arise. It appears to me that the charges might be made in a more concrete form than by taking the speech as a whole. But I do not apprehend that there can be much difference in the end.

*Hon. Mr. Ballance.*—Is it not possible for the Committee to formulate the charges in a way that will interfere with your procedure?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—It is possible, but I do not wish to anticipate that.

*The Chairman.*—Before any discussion is proceeded with, we will hear Mr. Hislop on this matter.

*Hon. Mr. Hislop.*—I submit, Sir, with regard to the application which Mr. Hutchison has made, that that cannot at all interfere with the formulation of the charges. I understand he is not to be heard to-morrow on this point as to the form of the charge, but as to whether, during the proceedings, he is to have the right to call witnesses and conduct their examination. We have both had the opportunity of placing before the Committee our ideas as to the charges contained in the speech, and we, I understand, are now to have the opportunity of being heard in support of our contentions as to how they should be formulated. I submit to the Committee that the most necessary part of the proceedings is to have the charges formulated, and that could be gone on with to-day, irrespective of the application by Mr. Hutchison as to future conduct of the proceedings. I should like to say, Sir, with regard to Mr. Hutchison's charges, as put in, that the first extract which Mr. Hutchison gives covers the same ground as given in the first extract made by the Government.