

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, *Resolved*, That the Clerk of the District Court be requested to inform the Committee how and when he came to understand that the Hon. Mr. Ward had resigned prior to filing his petition.

The Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives attended.

The Clerk-Assistant of the House of Representatives attended, and, at the Hon. the Speaker's request, produced the correspondence with reference to the notification by the Hon. Mr. Ward of his resignation.

Resolved, That this correspondence be ordered to be received, and be read by the Clerk.

Resolved, That the representatives of the Press be not admitted to the proceedings of the Committee.

Resolved, That the proceedings be reported in shorthand.

The Hon. the Speaker gave evidence.

The Hon. J. G. Ward attended and gave evidence.

Resolved, That the Hon. Mr. McKenzie be requested to attend the next meeting, and give evidence.

The reports of the sub-committees were placed before the Committee, and it was suggested that precedents of the British Parliament should be obtained.

The Committee then adjourned until 11 a.m. to-morrow.

THURSDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 1897.

Present: Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon (Chairman), Mr. Allen, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and Captain Russell.

The minutes of the previous meeting were amended and confirmed.

The Hon. Mr. McKenzie attended and gave evidence.

Mr. Skerrett attended as counsel for the Hon. Mr. Ward.

On motion of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon, *Resolved*, That the following report of the sub-committee be now considered, and also the amendment suggested by Mr. Skerrett:—

Proposed Case stated by Privileges Sub-Committee.

"1. Is a bankrupt within the meaning of the laws relating to bankruptcy qualified to be elected a member of the House of Representatives?"

"2. If he is so qualified, and is elected, does the fact of his being an undischarged bankrupt cause his seat to become vacant immediately on such election, or at any other time?"

"3. If his seat does not so become vacant, can he take the oath and exercise the rights and privileges of a member of the House of Representatives?"

Amendment suggested by Mr. Skerrett.

To insert the following paragraph in lieu of the first paragraph:—

"1. Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt under 'The Bankruptcy Act, 1892,' whose adjudication has not been annulled, and who has not been granted an order of discharge from his bankruptcy, but who otherwise possesses the necessary qualifications, qualified to be elected a member of the House of Representatives?"

Before proceeding to the consideration thereof, the Committee agreed to hear Mr. Skerrett, who addressed the Committee.

Mr. Skerrett retired on the conclusion of his address, and the Committee proceeded to deliberate.

On motion of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon, *Resolved* unanimously, That this Committee recommends that the question as to whether, under the existing law, the seat of the Hon. Mr. Ward for the Electoral District of Awarua is vacant be referred to a judicial tribunal.

On motion of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon, *Resolved*, That said tribunal be the Court of Appeal.

On motion of the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, *Resolved*, That the Government be requested to bring in a Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee.

On motion of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon, *Resolved*, That Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Guinness, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and the mover be appointed a sub-committee to draw up a report suggesting provisions to give effect to the foregoing resolutions.

Resolved, That said sub-committee meet at 10 a.m. to-morrow.

The Committee then adjourned till 11 a.m. to-morrow.

FRIDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 1897.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

Present: The Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon (Chairman), Mr. Allen, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and Captain Russell.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read, amended, and confirmed.

On motion of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon, *Resolved*, That the following report from the sub-committee be received:—

"That legislation enabling the Court of Appeal to hear and determine the following case be introduced:—

"(1.) The Hon. J. G. Ward filed a petition, and was adjudged a bankrupt on the 8th day of July, 1897.

"(2.) The adjudication has not been annulled, and he has not been granted an order of discharge from his bankruptcy.