

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

TUESDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 1898.

THE Committee met pursuant to notice.

Present : Mr. Duncan, Mr. Duthie, Mr. Graham, Mr. Massey, Hon. Mr. J. McKenzie, Mr. Morrison, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Sligo, Hon. Mr. Ward.

The Clerk read the order of reference.

Resolved, on motion of the Hon. Mr. J. McKenzie, That Mr. Sligo be appointed Chairman of the Committee.

Resolved, on motion of Mr. Morrison, That the evidence of witnesses be taken down in shorthand.

The Right Hon. the Premier attended the meeting, and made a statement indicating the course he was prepared to take in regard to calling witnesses and tendering evidence. He also indicated, in a marked copy of *Hansard* No. 17, the passages which contained the allegations reflecting on the character of himself and his uncle, the late Nathan Seddon.

The Clerk was instructed to obtain copies of *Hansard* No. 17, and mark as in copy supplied by the Premier.

A reporter took down the Premier's statement in shorthand.

Resolved, on motion of the Hon. Mr. Ward, That the Justice Department be requested to supply copies of the notes of the Resident Magistrate in the case of the charge of embezzlement against the Town Clerk of Kumara in 1882; also notes of the Supreme Court Judge in Hokitika in 1883, when same accused was charged in Supreme Court.

Resolved, on motion of Mr. Morrison, That the Committee do now adjourn to Wednesday, the 5th October; that Mr. G. Hutchison, M.H.R., be asked to attend the next meeting; that he be supplied with a copy of *Hansard* No. 17, marked showing the portion containing the charges implied against the Premier; and that, provided Mr. Hutchison attends the meeting, the proceedings be begun *de novo*.

The Committee then adjourned to Wednesday, 5th October.

WEDNESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 1898.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

Present : Mr. Sligo (Chairman), Mr. Duncan, Mr. Duthie, Mr. Graham, Mr. Massey, Hon. Mr. J. McKenzie, Mr. Morrison, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Hon. Mr. Ward.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Letter from Mr. G. Hutchison, M.H.R., in reply to letter from the Committee desiring his attendance, declining to attend the meeting.

Motion made and question proposed—(1) That the Committee regrets Mr. Hutchison declines to attend to furnish facts and details of the charges implied against the Right Hon. the Premier; (2) that, as the whole evidence is to be taken in shorthand and recorded with the minutes of proceedings and laid upon the table of the House, the Committee regrets that Mr. Hutchison has seen fit to reflect upon the presumed impartiality of the Committee.—(*Hon. Mr. Ward.*)

A point of order was raised by Mr. Duthie as to whether the Chairman could not refuse to put the motion, and Mr. Sligo ruled that he could not refuse to put the motion.

A point of order was raised by Mr. Massey as to whether the motion fell within the order of reference, and Mr. Sligo ruled that the motion did fall within the order of reference.

On the question being put, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow :—

Ayes, 4.—Mr. Duncan, Hon. Mr. J. McKenzie, Mr. Morrison, Hon. Mr. Ward.

Noes, 4.—Mr. Duthie, Mr. Massey, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Sligo.

The numbers being equal, the Chairman gave his casting-vote with the "Noes."

So it passed in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Duthie, That the following books, documents, and papers be obtained, to be put in as evidence : Special audit report (Kumara Borough); all books of Kumara Borough Council—cash-book, bank-book, ledger; documents in reference to the sum of £510 10s. alleged to have been paid to Nathaniel Seddon during the period covering from the 25th December, 1879, to December, 1881; depositions before the Resident Magistrate in the case of James Wylde, December, 1882; authority by N. Seddon to R. J. Seddon to draw moneys due to N. Seddon; and files of the *West Coast Times*, *Grey River Argus*, and *Kumara Times* of the dates involved.

The Right Hon. Mr. Seddon made a further statement supplementary to that made by him yesterday.

A reporter was present, and took down the statement in shorthand.

Resolved, That the allegations by Mr. Hutchison be taken under two headings : A, Personal reflections on the Right Hon. the Premier and the late Nathan Seddon; B, Allegations as to the Right Hon. the Premier having been a partner of Chinese, and having borne a Chinese name.

A. *Resolved*, That the following witnesses be summoned to attend next meeting of the Committee : Mr. Wylde, ex-Town Clerk, Kumara; Messrs. Burger and A. C. Campbell, ex-Councillors, Kumara; Mr. Rudkin, present Town Clerk, Kumara; Mr. W. Barnett, chemist, Christchurch, ex-Mayor of Kumara; Mr. George Harper, barrister, Christchurch; Mr. Guinness, M.H.R.; Mr. W. Nicholson, Palmerston North; Mr. Marks, *Hansard* Supervisor.