

G. Fowlds and the Hon. Dr. Findlay, supply them with copies of the resolutions passed at this meeting, and request them to bring the matter before Cabinet without delay, with a view to a Royal Commission of inquiry into the administration of the Defence Department being set up at once.

No. 50.

STATUTORY DECLARATION MADE BY COLONEL TUSON, ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE DEFENCE FORCES:—

I, HARRY DENISON TUSON, of Wellington, in the Dominion of New Zealand, Colonel, Adjutant-General of the Defence Forces, do solemnly and sincerely declare,—

1. On or about the 13th day of November, 1909, I received from Lieut.-Colonel Wolfe, the Officer Commanding the Auckland District, a letter dated the 10th day of that month, signed by F. B. Knyvett, then a captain of Volunteers in the Auckland District.

2. The said letter was addressed to the Hon. the Minister of Defence, and made grave charges against Colonel Robin, the Chief of the General Staff.

3. I thereupon called a meeting of the Council of Defence to consider the matter, and the meeting was held on November 22nd, the persons present thereat being Colonel Collins, Colonel Robin, and myself.

4. At that meeting Colonel Robin made a statement in relation to the charges contained in the said letter, but no resolution was proposed or passed as to any action to be taken in the matter.

5. On November 26th I received from Colonel Robin a written statement in reply to the charges made in the said letter.

6. On November 29th I directed the Officer Commanding the Auckland District to take proceedings under section 54 of the Defence Act, 1908, with the view of having a charge of insubordination preferred against Captain Knyvett.

7. A preliminary inquiry was thereupon, in accordance with the Defence Act, 1908, made by the Officer Commanding the Auckland District, who reported, in accordance with section 54 of the said Act, that he considered the matter too serious to be dealt with by him.

8. The Minister of Defence thereupon, on the 15th day of December, while I was absent in Australia, directed, in pursuance of the said Act, that the charge so preferred against the said Captain Knyvett should be heard before a Board of Inquiry.

9. On the 17th day of December the said Board of Inquiry, consisting of Lieut.-Colonel Chaytor, Captain Julius Sandtmann, and Captain Bosworth, was summoned to sit at Auckland on December 21st.

10. On that day, while I was still absent from New Zealand, the inquiry was held accordingly, and the report of the Board of Inquiry was duly forwarded by the Board to Headquarters.

11. On December 29th, having carefully considered the said report, and being of opinion that Captain Knyvett had been proved guilty of an act of gross insubordination, I laid the report before the Right Honourable the Minister of Defence, with my recommendation that His Excellency the Governor should be advised to dismiss Captain Knyvett from the Defence Forces.

12. On December 31st this recommendation was approved, and, by Warrant signed by His Excellency the Governor on January 1st, 1910, Captain Knyvett was dismissed accordingly.

13. At no time in the whole course of the proceedings in connection with the aforesaid matters did Colonel Robin exercise or take part in any act of authority in relation to those matters or any of them, nor was he at any time consulted by me or, as I believe, by any other person as to any action to be taken in respect of any of those matters. The only occasion on which I held any communication with Colonel Robin on the said matters was the occasion already referred to, when a meeting of the Council of Defence was summoned and held in order that he might be afforded an opportunity of replying to the charges so made against him by Captain Knyvett.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908.

H. D. TUSON, Colonel,
Adjutant-General.

Declared at Wellington, this twenty-first day of May, 1910, before me—Hugh Pollen, a Justice of the Peace.

No. 51.

Letter from CHIEF REPORTER, *Dominion*, Wellington, to the Right Hon. the PRIME MINISTER.
SIR,—

Wellington, 13th July, 1910.

I wish to make quite clear to you, or any one else concerned, that the report which has been widely circulated to the effect that I admitted to Mr. Knyvett and his fellow officers that Colonel Robin supplied the information on which the *Dominion* based its news article, on the Monday succeeding the Saturday on which Knyvett and his men arrived in Wellington, is an entirely false one. When Knyvett and Co. called on me in reference to the same on the Monday morning in question I was as ignorant as anyone as to the source of the information; and also as to who wrote the article, having been off duty the previous day. Colonel Robin's name only cropped up with reference to the last line or two, which I explained was doubtless the result of a telephone inquiry (which is made quite clear in the article itself). This is what has been twisted into my saying that Colonel Robin supplied the information on which the article was based. I subsequently learned that Colonel Robin had nothing whatever to do with it beyond the telephone ring after the article was written.

I have, &c.,

HARCUS PLIMMER,
Chief Reporter, *Dominion*.

The Hon. the Prime Minister, Wellington.