

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 4TH AUGUST, 1885.

SIR JULIUS VOGEL: The claims I wish to bring before the Committee are,—

1. Claim to a commission of one-eighth on the £5,000,000 loan, incidental to which I shall refer to special services.

2. If claim to commission on negotiation not allowed, claim to commission on conversion.

3. Claim to compensation for being deprived of agency for inscribed stock.

Soon after I became Agent-General, Major Atkinson asked me if I would, instead, be inclined to take the office of Agent for Inscribed Stock.

Major Atkinson left office, and the matter remained in abeyance, and was not renewed by Sir George Grey.

Some time after Sir George Grey came into office I became a director of the New Zealand Agricultural Company (Limited). At least three, and I believe four or five, members of the Government knew of this, and were favourable to my joining—Mr. Stout, Mr. Ballance, Mr. Larnach, and I am almost sure I had a communication from Mr. Macandrew on the subject, and that Mr. Sheehan knew of it.

I had no communication with Sir George Grey on the subject previous to my joining; but Mr. Stout stated in the House a short time ago that Sir George Grey knew of the company and had been asked to join himself, and knew of my being asked to join.

On the 13th February, 1879, I wrote a formal letter to the Minister for Immigration [see A.—10, Session I., 1879] :—

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, 13th February, 1879.

I have the honour to inform you that I have joined the board of directors of the New Zealand Agricultural Company (Limited), and, following the precedent established by my predecessor when he joined a public company, I have to express the hope that you will see no objection to my doing so.

The primary object of the company is to promote settlement. The large estates it is to acquire are to be cut up into farms for the occupation of settlers. Frequently, since I have been in England, I have represented to the Government the desire on the part of suitable persons in this country to acquire land in New Zealand, on which they could settle and pursue their avocations as farmers. I, indeed, once suggested that a block of land should be set apart for the purpose, and that I should be authorized to dispose of it. The Government, however, replied that there was a great demand for land in the colony, and that they could not put people at a distance on more favourable terms as regards absence of competition than people within the colony had to submit to. I mention these circumstances in order to show you that, in my opinion, the company will fulfil a really public object. I believe it will greatly benefit the colony, by affording an opening to the numerous desirable people who constantly express the desire to obtain land for settlement in New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister for Immigration, Wellington.

JULIUS VOGEL, Agent-General.

To which Sir George Grey replied by telegram :—

The PREMIER to the AGENT-GENERAL.

Wellington, 22nd April, 1879.

AGENT-GENERAL appointed additional Agent Inscribed Stock. Instructions by next mail. Government cannot approve connection Agricultural Company. Request you arrange early retirement therefrom.

Vogel, London.

G. GREY.

I replied by letter of the 17th June, 1879, asking further consideration at the request of the directors :—

SIR,—

7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W., 17th June, 1879.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 104, of the 26th April, 1879. I had previously received the telegram to which it refers. I wrote you last mail that I would reply to the telegram this month. The delay arose through the request of the directors that I should postpone bringing the matter before them until the return of one of their number, who was absent. On the return of this gentleman I addressed to the directors a letter of which the enclosed is a copy. I also forward a copy of the reply which I have received, and, in accordance with its request, I propose to refer the matter to you for further consideration. I do not think, in courtesy, I could refuse to do so, especially as your letter and telegram do not urge upon me hasty action.

From passages which have occurred in some of the papers in New Zealand, I think the objects of the company are misunderstood. It is essentially the object of the company to cut up large estates into small farms, and to settle thereon a good class of farmers. We are preparing to send out at once a number of these and their families, and we will continue to supply similar emigrants. Nor will our operations be confined to one part of the colony. Ever since I have been Home I have urged on the Government the desirability of enabling me to make arrangements with farmers to proceed direct to farms in the colony engaged by them in advance. The best class of farmers is reached in this way. Men in every way suitable and with adequate means shrink from emigrating with uncertainty before them as to their proceedings in the colony. I am convinced that to allow an Agent-General to influence emigration of this character is to place him in the position of rendering the largest service to the colony.

The present salary of the Agent-General is inadequate, considering the expenses he is put to, if he is restrained from entering into other pursuits. Dr. Featherston was allowed to join the board of a bank; besides that, he was permitted to draw up to £500 annually for travelling expenses. It is a common thing here for officers of the Civil Service to act as directors of public companies. There is also a land company which constantly advertises that its local board in Queensland and in South Australia is respectively presided over by the Premiers of those colonies.

I have, &c.,

JULIUS VOGEL.

This is the letter directed to the New Zealand Agricultural Company referred to in that letter :—

DEAR SIRS,—

135, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, 9th June, 1879.

I have received an intimation from the Government of New Zealand that they desire me to retire from the board of the company.

It is due alike to you and myself that I should explain that when I helped to organize the company I was aware that one if not more members of the Government knew I was to do so, and approved the same. Mr. Larnach will be able to satisfy you that this was the case. I looked upon this knowledge as a tacit approval of your consent to my joining the board, and, though when the company was formed I asked permission, I considered my doing so was a