

Letter from Mr. Maxwell, of the 22nd July, read.

Mr. O'Connor, Under-Secretary for Public Works, was in attendance, and gave evidence.

Resolved, That this meeting adjourn till 11 o'clock on Monday, the 26th July, 1886, to consider the purchase of the Waimea Plains Railway.

MONDAY, 26TH JULY, 1886.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

Present: Mr. Moss (Chairman), Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dargaville, Mr. Montgomery, Dr. Newman, Mr. Holmes, Hon. Sir Julius Vogel, Hon. Major Atkinson, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Barron, Mr. Peacock, Hon. Mr. Ballance.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Memorandum from the Chairman to Mr. Maxwell, General Manager of Railways, read.

Resolved, on motion of Mr. Peacock, That the Chairman be requested to get the evidence in the matter of the Waimea Plains Railway printed by to-morrow (Tuesday), including Mr. O'Connor's memorandum.

The further consideration was deferred for Mr. Cowan to furnish a list of ratepayers, amount of rates in arrear, and amount due by each.

The Committee adjourned till Tuesday, the 27th July, 1886, at 11 o'clock, to settle the Waimea Plains Railway question.

TUESDAY, 27TH JULY, 1886.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

Present: Mr. Moss (Chairman), Mr. Cowan.

There being no quorum, the Chairman adjourned the meeting till Wednesday, the 28th July, 1886, at 11 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH JULY, 1886.

The Committee met at 11 o'clock.

Present: Mr. Moss (Chairman), Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dargaville, Mr. Barron, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Holmes, Hon. Sir Julius Vogel, Mr. Peacock, Dr. Newman, Mr. Gore, Hon. Mr. Ballance, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Major Atkinson.

The minutes of the meetings of the 26th and 27th July were read and confirmed.

Mr. Cowan produced the *Mataura Ensign* of the 16th June, 1885, and 9th July, 1886, containing information asked for by Committee on 26th instant.

The Chairman reported and read the following correspondence: Letter and memorandum from Mr. Maxwell, of the 26th July, 1886; telegram from Mr. Leary, Dunedin, to Mr. Cowan.

Mr. Cowan moved, That the proposed terms of purchase of the Waimea Plains Railway, set forth in the agreement embodied in Parliamentary Paper D.-6A, are such as the Committee can recommend.

Upon which it was moved by Mr. Wilson, by way of amendment, That all the words after the word "That" be omitted, for the purpose of inserting the following in lieu thereof: "this Committee considers that the Government should not pay more than a sum equal to £110,000 cash for the Waimea Plains Railway; but should leave the company the right to collect half-rates up to date of purchase."

And the question being put, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question.

The Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follows:—

Ayes, 7.—Hon. Major Atkinson, Hon. Mr. Ballance, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Dargaville, Mr. Gore, Mr. Holmes, Hon. Sir Julius Vogel.

Noes, 5.—Mr. Barron, Mr. Montgomery, Dr. Newman, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Wilson.

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

And the original question being put, it was resolved in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the said resolution be reported to the House this day.

The Committee adjourned till 11 o'clock on Thursday, the 29th July, 1886.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 22ND JULY, 1886. (Mr. F. J. Moss, Chairman.)

Mr. J. P. MAXWELL, General Manager of Railways, examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] You wish to continue your evidence in respect to certain other railways. We want information about the Waimea Plains Railway, as we are engaged in investigating an agreement submitted to the Committee by the owners, and purporting to be between them and the Government, for the purchase by the latter of this line. Can you give any information as to the condition of this railway, the character of the traffic, the character of the country, and other general matters that may strike you as necessary?—I can only give the Committee limited information about the Waimea Railway, because it has never been under the General Government: it has always been worked by the company. We only know it so far as we exchange traffic. I have been over the line a good many times. I have had it looked into a few months since to see what order it was in. I think it is in fair order, taking its age into account. It is a well-constructed line; but, owing to its age, the cost for renewal of sleepers will be getting heavier year by year. Except in that respect there can be nothing much amiss with it. I have not heard anything of it for a few months, since I had it looked into unofficially. For some considerable time the company worked