

it is stated, or to the matter by which it would be supported with reference to the charges numbered 1, 2, 3, and 5. I should like to say, having considered the matter since yesterday, that I would ask the Committee to take the charges as formulated by me, and at the end of each of those I have referred to—namely, 1, 2, 3, and 5—to add these words, so as to connect each formulated charge with the printed matter attached: “as more particularly set out in the following extract,” so that the two would be necessarily connected. If these words are at the end of each paragraph the end would be effected without omitting any possible part of any charge, for I do not want, less or more, than to cover the whole speech. Now, with reference to the charge numbered 4, “That, within the time of the happening of the events mentioned in Nos. 1, 2, and 3, Sir Frederick Whitaker, Sir Harry Atkinson, and the Hon. E. Mitchelson, members of the Ministry, were under pecuniary obligations to the Bank of New Zealand,” I would there add these words: “as referred to in the speech of which the following are passages, in addition to those set out under the other heads,” the three extracts being from different portions of the speech and referring generally to the operations of Ministers. This leads me to say that this charge is one which permeates the whole speech, although some individual passages are annexed which are more pointed than others. I would ask the Committee to remember that the passage numbered 3A being now added, every portion of the speech dealing with Ministers and the Bank of New Zealand is under one or other of the five heads. There is only a sentence or two here and there in the speech referring to my challenge to the Government to appoint a Committee not now comprised in these extracts; that is the only matter that is not in the charges thus formulated and amplified. The whole charge-part of the speech is now before the Committee. In support of the charge numbered “4,” which appears to be the one Mr. Hislop is most sensitive about, I would ask the attention of the Committee to the first of the passages extracted under this head, in which the action of the Colonial Treasurer is figuratively referred to as seeking to draw off our attention by his dealings with the Consolidated Fund—he being the Minister who has to do with the Consolidated Fund as such—while “his confederates in the next room” are “amusing themselves” with the Public Works Fund. Of course these are entirely figurative passages; but the “confederates in the next room” are, I think, sufficiently pointed to in other passages. For instance, reference is previously made to the Attorney-General. He was, as stated, at the time of the crisis of the colony and the bank, chairman of the directors of the bank and a member of the Ministry. Another “confederate” is, I submit, sufficiently pointed to in those portions of the speech which deal with the Public Works Fund—to the Minister (until recently) for Public Works, the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson. These references thus comprise the three names which appear in the charge numbered 4—Sir Frederick Whitaker, Sir Harry Atkinson, and the Hon. E. Mitchelson. The middle passage in the extract also deals inferentially with the same matter: “It was considered necessary to strengthen the position of the bank in various ways, one of which was by representing the contrary of what must be taken to have been known by some to be coming.” Then the last passage of all—“What is our outlook? We wish to leave this land as a noble heritage to our children. It will have to be done by better men than those who at present hold the Treasury benches. I will not, whatever I may think, refer to these honourable gentleman as the pimps and panders of banks and loan and mortgage companies;” and so on. I do not know what within the scope of parliamentary language could be more pointed than references such as these, taken in connection with the rest of the speech.

*Hon. Mr. Bryce.*—Does that apply to the whole Ministry?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—Yes; I may claim that it might apply to the whole of the members of the Ministry. I might individualise the whole seven or eight, but I only purpose calling evidence as to the three named. If it be desired that I should put in the whole of the names of the Ministry I will do so; but it would only be supererogation, as I should have no evidence to offer with reference to any but the three named—the Colonial Treasurer, who dealt with the Consolidated Fund; the Attorney-General, who, although his office did not put him in an official position to deal directly with the bank, was, nevertheless, a director of the bank; and the Minister for Public Works, who dealt with the Public Works Fund.

*Hon. Mr. Larnach.*—Do you say the Attorney-General was chairman of the bank?

*Mr. Hutchison.*—Yes; he was chairman of directors in 1887, and he was then also a Minister of the Crown. That is what I allege, and what I undertake to prove. I think it is not irrelevant to this question to consider how this inquiry was referred to the Committee. It is in the knowledge of every member of the Committee that there was considerable negotiation in the way of ascertaining the names to compose the Committee; but before the House there was no difference of opinion whatever as to the terms of the reference, and I am not, I think, travelling outside my province when I say that the terms of the motion were the subject of negotiation which resulted in the words (other than the names of members) being as they now appear. And I have the right, I think, to say that in the first instance, as drafted, the reference specified the Colonial Treasurer and Attorney-General as those against whom the incriminating charges were understood to be levelled. But I objected to these two only being named, with the result that the phrase in the reference was adopted—namely, “certain members of the Ministry.”

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