

6. There is 12 (a): You gave an answer on Friday that you declined to produce these?—We are not able to produce them at present.

7. Then there is 11 (a), "Statement showing in detail the landed property and bank premises," &c.?—These premises are practically in the position of trading concerns. Some have been sold, and some partly sold and paid for, and others are under offer, and it would be very injurious to the bank to give the details required in that item.

8. I will read the paragraph: "Statement showing in detail the 'landed property and bank premises' referred to in paragraph 25 (b) of the agreement of 18th October, 1895, with the value of each, and the price against any since sold, and the present income in respect of any remaining unsold"—That is the difficulty as I have stated it, Sir. That we do not see how the return could be produced without its doing a considerable amount of injury to the business of the bank.

9. Are you prepared to produce the list as it was handed by the Colonial Bank to the Bank of New Zealand at the time of the purchase?—Without the values attached?

10. As it was produced by the Colonial Bank to the Bank of New Zealand at the time of the sale?—I do not think we can do that.

11. What is the Committee to understand by that answer? Do you refuse to do it?—I would not take upon myself to say in a case of this kind I would refuse to disclose that, because it is a special piece of business in connection with which the bank can be injured only as to the identical properties. It is on a different footing from that of papers of the bank which would disclose private accounts. It is like a private trading concern. Some of the properties have been sold, some are partly paid for, and some are under offer, and to disclose the particulars required by this section would very much cripple the bank in dealing with these properties, and probably involve a considerable amount of loss.

12. Did the bank take a transfer of each property from the Colonial Bank?—Yes; the properties have been transferred to the Bank of New Zealand.

13. Your answer now to that question is, shortly?—That I am not able to produce it at present for the reasons given; but if the Committee insists upon its production, I do not think I should be at liberty to refuse. I should like to say, if I might, that it is a very painful position to place me in in connection with some of the questions. A question was asked, for instance, about the Australian business, and almost before the ink was dry an imperfect statement was cabled to Australia, and did a considerable amount of injury to the bank.

14. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] Was that as to withdrawing from the business there?—Yes. It is very unfortunate, because the answer is sure to be misunderstood or misrepresented by interested parties over there, to the damage of the bank.

15. I thought, myself, the way you answered that question was rather premature.

16. *The Chairman.*] Then, there was another question you gave the same answer to—"statement showing the recoveries in respect of the £200,000 'contingent liability' "?—I shall not be able to produce that.

17. You will not be able to?—That would disclose private accounts.

18. Then the same answer holds good to it—you decline at present?—Yes.

19. Have you any objection to give a return or statement showing the total amount of the recoveries?—No.

20. Are you in a position to give the total amount now?—Not now.

21. I will ask you to be good enough to take a note, and give us the statement showing the total amount of recoveries against that?—Yes.

22. There were others, 7, 8, and 9, "the reports of Globo Assets Department, and the names of the officers who prepared such reports; the reports of the Estates Company, and the names of the officers who prepared such reports; also in relation to the Bank of New Zealand Estates Company"—you decline to produce these?—Yes.

23. That is, you still adhere to your first answer, and decline to produce them at present?—Yes.

24. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] Have you any other papers?—Not any more.

25. Have you the papers in on the Australian business?—Those were in on Saturday.

The Committee here deliberated. On resuming,

26. *The Chairman.*] The Committee have taken into consideration your reply in reference to subsection (a) of clause 11, "Statement showing in detail the 'landed property and bank premises' referred to in paragraph 25b of the agreement of 18th October, 1895,"—that if the Committee insist you will not feel at liberty to refuse the information. The Committee have decided to ask you to produce that statement at the next meeting of the Committee.—Yes.

27. You will remember that, in answer to subclause (f), you said you will give a statement showing the total amounts at the next meeting?—Yes.

28. With regard to 11a, "Statement showing in detail the 'landed property and bank premises' referred to in paragraph (b) of the agreement of 18th October, 1895, with the value of each, and the price against any since sold, also the present income in respect of any remaining unsold." You will understand that means the value placed upon each at the date of the balance-sheet of the Colonial Bank Agreement?—Yes.

29. *Hon. Mr. Seddon.*] I desire to state, Mr. Chairman, to the Committee that the Committee having decided, on the casting-vote of the Chairman, to proceed with the inquiry notwithstanding that a no-confidence debate is proceeding, I do not think I am justified in going on to ask the witness any questions at present. I reserve to myself my rights, but I do not think I should be justified in going on. The responsibility of the no-confidence motion must rest with the leader of the Opposition. The questions which may be put by the Committee may be made to supply food for this no-confidence motion. I do not wish to say anything further than this: that the responsibility lies with the Chairman and his casting-vote. He desires that the proceedings should go on, and therefore the matter must rest with him.