

Mr. William Booth attended, and made a further statement, which was taken down by the reporter.

Mr. Booth handed in a document, which was marked Exhibit No. 25.

During Mr. Booth's examination Mr. Montgomery asked, Was this advance of £20,000 and £5,000 secured on the debentures of the Ward Farmers' Association?

The witness declined to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Seddon, as a point of order, asked if the question could be put, as in accordance with the order of reference.

After discussion, the Chairman ruled that the question could not be put until it was proved the amount was a writing-off.

At 1 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Monday next, at 10.30 a.m.

MONDAY, 10th AUGUST, 1896.

Present: Mr. Graham (Chairman), Mr. Guinness, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Maslin, Mr. McGowan, Hon. Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Major Steward, Mr. Tanner.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Chairman read a letter received from Mr. J. C. Hanna, asking to be excused from waiting further to give evidence, so that he might be allowed to proceed to Auckland, and that, when required, he would immediately return to Wellington.

The Committee agreed to Mr. Hanna's request.

Mr. Booth made a further statement, which was taken down by the reporter.

During Mr. Booth's examination Mr. Hutchison asked Mr. Booth, does this sum of £20,000 previously mentioned by you have reference to a parcel of debentures?

Hon. Mr. Seddon raised a point of order as to whether or not the question came within the order of reference.

After discussion, the Chairman ruled the question was premature and irrelevant at the present time.

At a further stage of the examination Mr. Hutchison asked Mr. Booth, "Whether the directors—you being one—are responsible for these two advances at the time they were made?"

A discussion ensued.

The Chairman ruled that the question is one that could be put.

At 1.30 p.m.,

Mr. Maslin asked the Committee to adjourn until 3 o'clock p.m.

Hon. Mr. McKenzie moved, by way of amendment, That the Committee adjourn until 10 o'clock to-morrow.

The question being put that 3 o'clock p.m. stand, a division was called for, and the names were taken down as follow:—

Ayes, 5.—Mr. Graham, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Maslin, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Tanner.

Noes, 4.—Mr. Guinness, Mr. McGowan, Hon. Mr. McKenzie, Hon. Mr. Seddon.

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

At 3 o'clock p.m. the Committee resumed.

The Chairman asked for directions as to which of the exhibits should be printed.

Resolved, to print Exhibits Nos. 14, 15, 16, and 17(a).

17(b): The Hon Mr. Seddon moved, That it be printed; and a division being called for, the names were taken down as follow:—

Ayes, 7.—Mr. Graham, Mr. Maslin, Mr. McGowan, Hon. Mr. McKenzie, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Hon. Major Steward, Mr. Tanner.

Noes, 3.—Mr. Guinness, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Montgomery.

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

Resolved, to print 17 (c), 18, 19, 20 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), and 21, and 24.

Resolved, on motion of Mr. Montgomery, That an index of the exhibits be prepared showing which are printed and which are not.

Resolved, That Mr. Foster be asked to supply further statement of balance-sheets of the stations, showing profit and loss accounts of the Estates Company for 1895–1896.

Mr. Hutchison moved, That there being evidence now before the Committee that under the agreement of the 18th October, 1895, between the Colonial Bank and the Bank of New Zealand, that the last named, or "purchasing bank," has complied with so much of clause 18 as provides: "That the purchasing bank shall immediately on their contract taking effect write-off the amounts standing in the right-hand column of the 'C' list, and credit the respective accounts in such list with the amounts so written-off," this Committee calls on Mr. W. Booth, the witness now under examination, to produce a certified copy of such "C" list.

The Chairman ruled that such a motion could not be put without notice.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Hutchison, That the consideration of Mr. Booth's refusal to answer certain questions be deferred.

Mr. Guinness desired to move the notice of motion standing in his name asking the House to amend the order of reference.

Objection being taken, the Chairman ruled it could not be put, as Mr. Booth's evidence should be first completed in accordance with a previous resolution of the Committee.

The Committee at 4.15 p.m. adjourned until to-morrow at 10.30 a.m.

TUESDAY, 11th AUGUST, 1896.

Present: Mr. Graham (Chairman), Mr. Guinness, Mr. G. Hutchison, Mr. Maslin, Mr. McGowan, Hon. Mr. J. McKenzie, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Mr. Seddon, Hon. Major Steward, Mr. Tanner.