

1902.
NEW ZEALAND.

PAYMENTS BY MAJOR PILCHER IN CONNECTION WITH
GOVERNMENT SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO).

Laid on the Table by Mr. Speaker.

The CONTROLLER AND AUDITOR-GENERAL to the SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Audit Office, 5th September, 1902.

THE Controller and Auditor-General has the honour respectfully to inform the House of Representatives that certain payments made on behalf of the Government in connection with its service in South Africa have, though unsupported by the vouchers necessary to audit, been passed by the Audit Office in accordance with the request of the Treasury; and he begs leave to submit a copy of the correspondence on the subject.

J. K. WARBURTON,

Controller and Auditor-General.

The Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

No. 1.

The Controller and Auditor-General.

Audit Office, 10th April, 1902.

Major Pilcher's Accounts, 29th June, 1900, to 31st October, 1901.

THESE accounts show a total expenditure of £7,562 Os. 6d., but this amount has been found by the Defence Department to include payments which can be set against moneys received by Major Pilcher for specific purposes, but not from the Treasury, and so not imprested to him. The amount of such payments may therefore, I think, be excluded from the Public Accounts ... £4,208 10 11

Leaving to be dealt with	£3,353 9 7
Less recovered and already credited to the imprestee	20 0 0
	<u>£3,333 9 7</u>

The Defence Department proposes to give Major Pilcher credit for an expenditure of	2,086 10 6
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Leaving a balance of	£1,246 19 1
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This balance of £1,246 19s. 1d. represents payments made by way of advance to members of the contingents, which the Defence Department is unable to deal with at present. Full particulars are with the papers.

I attach a summary of the expenditure amounting to £2,086 10s. 6d., from which you will see that there are payments amounting to £1,438 9s. 11d. not supported by vouchers. The Audit Office can therefore, on a strict audit, pass for credit of the imprestee £648 Os. 7d. only.

No doubt for a portion of the expenditure receipts may not have been readily procurable, or it may not have been deemed expedient to ask for them, say, in the cases of cash paid to men in hospitals, &c. On the other hand, there are a number of cases in which I think receipts might and ought to have been obtained. The circumstances under which the disbursements occurred were, of course, very exceptional, and there is little likelihood now of receipts being ever supplied; it is also probable that before the imprest accounts of officers of the first three contingents are closed many insufficiently vouched payments will be found to have been made, which the Audit Office will, as in the present case, be unable to pass. The matter therefore requires some consideration, so that the difficulty experienced in regard to such payments may be overcome, and the Audit Office be relieved of the responsibility of passing claims for credit of imprestees which in ordinary circumstances it would not pass.

J. C. GAVIN, A.C. & A.

11th April, '02.