

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

PRIVILEGE COMMITTEE No. 1.

SATURDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 1912.

The Committee met pursuant to notice at 11 a.m.

Present: Mr. Allen, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Hanan, Mr. Lee, Hon. Mr. Millar, Mr. Nosworthy, Mr. Reed, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Russell, Mr. G. M. Thomson.

The order of reference setting up the Committee was read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. Lee, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Millar, it was resolved that Mr. Hanan be elected Chairman.

Mr. Hanan then took the chair, and returned thanks for his election.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Millar it was resolved that all witnesses be examined on oath, and that the evidence and proceedings be taken down in shorthand; that the strictest confidence as to the business before the Committee be observed, and that the Press be not admitted during the sittings of the Committee.

Mr. Massey, M.P., at this stage entered the room and informed the Committee that he had telegraphed for the writer of the letter to him to come down to Wellington, and that until his arrival he (Mr. Massey) could do nothing further.

Mr. Payne, M.P., then came into the room and informed the Committee he would like the persons named in the letter to be called, and also that the letter signed by Maurice O'Connor, of the Thistle Hotel, and written on blue paper, should be produced.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Millar, seconded by Mr. Allen, it was resolved that Charles McMaster, merchant, of Richmond, Auckland, should be summoned to attend before the Committee.

The Committee then adjourned until 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday next, 27th February.

TUESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1912

The Committee met pursuant to notice at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Mr. Hanan (Chairman), Mr. Allen, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Lee, Hon. Mr. Millar, Mr. Nosworthy, Mr. Reed, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Russell, Mr. G. M. Thomson, Mr. Veitch.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. Millar, seconded by Mr. Veitch, it was resolved that the resolution in the minutes of the previous meeting with reference to the admission of the Press be rescinded, and that the Press be admitted at future meetings during the taking of evidence.

On the motion of Mr. Thomson, it was resolved that any party desiring to be represented by counsel be allowed such representation.

Mr. Lee moved that the Committee do now adjourn until 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 28th February.

The Hon. Mr. Millar moved, as an amendment, to strike out the words "10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 28th February," and to insert in lieu thereof the following words: "3 p.m. to day (Tuesday), provided the House adjourns."

And on the question being put on the amendment, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

Ayes, 3: Hon. Mr. Millar, Mr. Reed, Mr. Russell.

Noes, 7: Mr. Allen, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Lee, Mr. Nosworthy, Mr. Robertson, Mr. G. M. Thomson, Mr. Veitch.

So it passed in the negative.

And on the original motion being put it was resolved in the affirmative.

The Committee thereupon adjourned until 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 28th February.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 1912.

The Committee met pursuant to notice at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Mr. Hanan (Chairman), Mr. Allen, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Lee, Hon. Mr. Millar, Mr. Nosworthy, Mr. Reed, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Russell, Mr. G. M. Thomson, Mr. Veitch.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. Myers appeared on behalf of Mr. Massey, M.P., and Mr. Skerrett, K.C., on behalf of Mr. Payne, M.P.

On the motion of Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Fraser, it was resolved that, in order to enable the Committee to inquire into the writing and publishing of the letter and further the truth or otherwise of the extract read by Mr. Massey in the House, Mr. Massey be asked to produce the letter referred to.

Mr. Massey, M.P., through his counsel, respectfully declined to produce the letter.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Allen, that, Mr. Massey having been asked to produce the letter referred to and to give the name of the writer, and having respectfully declined to produce the letter or name the writer, the Committee is unable to inquire further into the matters contained in the order of reference.

The Committee then adjourned.