

SESS. II.—1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. the Speaker.

MEMORANDUM from the CONTROLLER and AUDITOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the SPEAKER of the
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THE Controller and Auditor-General has the honor to forward to the Speaker the correspondence which took place with him as Speaker of the late House of Representatives, and respectfully to request that the same may be brought before Parliament, with a view to the adoption of such rules as regards the travelling expenses of the members of Parliament as may enable the accounts of such expenditure to be properly audited.

11th October, 1879.

JAMES EDWARD FITZGERALD,
Controller and Auditor-General.

Enclosure.

THE CONTROLLER and AUDITOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the SPEAKER of the HOUSE of
REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR,—

Audit Office, 30th July, 1879.

The Controller and Auditor-General has the honor to submit the accompanying voucher again to the Hon. the Speaker, and respectfully to request that the House of Representatives may be moved to take such steps as may enable accounts of this nature to be passed by the Audit Office.

The only regulations as to the disposition of the vote for the travelling expenses of members are contained in the resolutions of the Committee of the House in 1874. The first resolution as to travelling expenses states,—

“That members of the Assembly residing more than three miles from the Assembly Buildings should receive actual fares by coach, railway, or steamboat, once each way, to and from their usual residences.”

The third resolution states,—

“That all allowances to members of the Assembly, excepting the actual fares before mentioned, should be paid for attendance during the sitting days of the session,” &c.

It appears, then, that any travelling allowance to members beyond the actual fares from their usual place of residence is contrary to the Order of the House, and ought not to be passed by the Audit.

In reference to the statement that such payments have, notwithstanding, been previously made, the Controller and Auditor-General respectfully submits that this has occurred owing to an irregular and highly objectionable practice, by which such payments have been made by the Cashier to the Treasury, out of moneys imprested to him, before the vouchers have been passed by the Audit Office.

I have, &c.,

JAMES EDWARD FITZGERALD,
Controller and Auditor-General.

The Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Major Campbell.

DOES Mr. FitzGerald state accurately the custom of dealing with members' claims for expenses to and from meeting of the Assembly?

2. What course was adopted by previous Speakers on receiving communications from the Controller and Auditor-General? Did the Speaker merely lay them on the table, or did he enter into a correspondence with that officer on the subject?

30th July, 1879.

G. MAURICE O'ROBKE.

Mr. Speaker.

THE Controller and Auditor-General correctly states the resolution of the House in reference to travelling expenses of members; but the Speakers have, of their own authority, been in the habit of treating as exceptional the cases of certain members who have long distances to travel to the port of departure, and who are frequently detained awaiting a steamer in Auckland and Dunedin. It would perhaps be well that the House should be moved to pass a resolution on the subject.

2. There is no record of any correspondence having passed between the Speaker and the heads of the Treasury and Audit Department. The Speaker's approval of the payment of these expenses has not hitherto been questioned.

2nd August, 1879.

F. E. CAMPBELL.

MEMORANDUM from the SPEAKER of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES to the CONTROLLER and AUDITOR-GENERAL.

The Controller and Auditor-General.

THE Speaker, having given full consideration to the demands made by Messrs. Pyke and Reeves, thinks they ought to be passed by the Audit Office. The practice of paying such accounts has not been challenged for some years, and these are not in excess of demands for similar services heretofore. The Speaker does not think the position of affairs as regards these charges is in a satisfactory state, and thinks it should be the duty of the Speaker of the next House of Representatives to have definite regulations made on the subject. Should the Auditor and Controller-General still determine not to pass these accounts, the Speaker will to-morrow, notwithstanding it may be the day of prorogation, bring the matter before the House for its opinion.

8th August, 1879.

G. MAURICE O'ROKKE,
Speaker.

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