

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

FRIDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 1897.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present:* Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Captain Russell, and the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon.

The Order of Reference of the 30th September constituting the Committee was read by the Clerk.

Mr. Joyce moved, seconded by Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon, That Mr. Guinness be appointed Chairman.

Mr. Allen moved, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, That the name of Mr. Montgomery be inserted in lieu of the name of Mr. Guinness; and the question being put, That the name of Mr. Guinness stand part of the question, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

*Ayes*, 4: Mr. Duncan, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon.

*Noes*, 4: Mr. Allen, Mr. Guinness, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Captain Russell.

The numbers being equal, and there being no Chairman to exercise a casting-vote, Mr. Guinness retired from nomination, and moved, That the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon be appointed Chairman. This was seconded by Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Allen then moved, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, that the name of Mr. Montgomery be inserted in lieu of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon. And the question being put, That the name of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon stand part of the question, the Committee divided, and the names were taken down as follow:—

*Ayes*, 5: Mr. Duncan, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon.

*Noes*, 3: Mr. Allen, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Captain Russell.

So it was resolved in the affirmative.

The Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon took the chair accordingly.

*Resolved*, That the following documents and information be obtained for the next meeting of the Committee:—

- (1.) Copies of *Gazette* in which the resignation of the Hon. Mr. Ward is notified.
- (2.) Notifications by letters and telegrams to the Speaker from the Hon. Mr. Ward, resigning his seat.
- (3.) Gazetted bankruptcy of the Hon. Mr. Ward, and declaration of Official Assignee as to same, and as to present position of the Hon. Mr. Ward.
- (4.) Copy of writ for election of member for Awarua.
- (5.) Extract from Journals the House of Representatives *re* member for Awarua taking the oath.

*Resolved*, That Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Guinness, and the Hon. Mr. Rolleston be appointed a sub-committee to search for precedents of the British House of Commons bearing on any matter in the Order of Reference. Also, to search for and bring before the Committee the several laws in force in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as to qualification of candidate, and as to members becoming bankrupt, or if bankrupt when elected.

*Resolved*, That the Hon. Mr. Ward be notified to attend before the Committee for examination at the next meeting.

*Resolved*, That the Hon. the Speaker be requested to attend the next meeting of the Committee, and that it be intimated to him that the Committee wish him to produce documents in his possession in connection with the resignation of the Hon. Mr. Ward.

*Resolved*, That Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Allen, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and Mr. Guinness be appointed a sub-committee to state a case for approval at the next meeting of the Committee.

*Resolved*, That the Clerk of the District Court at Invercargill be communicated with, and requested to inform the Committee whether, in connection with the bankruptcy of the Hon. Mr. Ward, Member for Awarua, he has complied with the provisions of section 131 of "The Electoral Act, 1893," and, if not, why not. Also, to furnish the Committee with any telegrams or correspondence in connection with the same.

The Committee then adjourned till Wednesday, the 6th instant.

WEDNESDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 1897.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present:* Rt. Hon. Mr. Seddon (Chairman), Mr. Allen, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Montgomery, Hon. Mr. Rolleston, and Captain Russell.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and, after discussion, confirmed.

Mr. Skerrett applied to be allowed to appear before the Committee as counsel for the Hon. Mr. Ward.

A discussion arose.

On motion of Mr. Guinness, *Resolved*, That Mr. Skerrett be allowed to appear on behalf of the Hon. Mr. Ward.

Mr. Skerrett appeared.

The following reply from the Clerk of the District Court, Invercargill, was read: "*Re* Hon. J. G. Ward: I did not comply with section 131 of 'The Electoral Act, 1893,' as I understood he had resigned prior to filing his petition, and thought, he having resigned, section did not apply. On ascertaining he was a Justice of the Peace, I reported the bankruptcy to Minister of Justice on 16th July last. No other correspondence or telegrams passed in connection with this matter."