

THURSDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 1898.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present:* Mr. Tanner (Chairman), Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Duthie, Mr. Graham, Mr. Guinness, Mr. McLean, Captain Russell, Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Committee proceeded to consider its report on the action of the Audit Office with reference to (1) the Mines Department, (2) Government House, and (3) the Post Office Account.

THE AUDIT OFFICE AND THE MINES DEPARTMENT.

*Resolved*, on the motion of Mr. Guinness, to report, That the Committee, having taken evidence on the subject of the collection of arrears of rent on mining leases, and the difference between the Audit Office and the Mines Department regarding the action taken by Warden Stratford, submits the same to the House for the information of members.

*Resolved*, on the motion of Mr. J. Allen, to report also, That the Committee finds that the Minister has power to remit surcharges, and is of opinion that such remissions, when made, should be reported to the House.

THE AUDIT OFFICE AND GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

*Resolved*, on the motion of Mr. J. Allen, to report, That the Committee recommends that the Government should make any necessary alteration in the law or in the Appropriation Act to provide for payments which the Controller and Auditor-General has seen fit to object to.

THE AUDIT OFFICE AND THE POST OFFICE ACCOUNT.

*Resolved*, on the motion of the Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon, to report, That the Committee has taken evidence on the note made by the Controller and Auditor-General on the Post Office Account, and, the time at its disposal not permitting that consideration which the importance of the subject demands, it places the evidence at the disposal of the House.

*Resolved*, That the Chairman be authorised to confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee.

The Committee then adjourned.

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FRIDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 1898.

The Committee met pursuant to notice.

*Present:* Mr. Tanner (Chairman), Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Guinness, Mr. McLean, Mr. Montgomery, Captain Russell, Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Committee proceeded to re-consider its report on the action of the Audit Office with reference to (1) the Mines Department, (2) Government House, and (3) the Post Office Account.

THE AUDIT OFFICE AND THE MINES DEPARTMENT.

Mr. Guinness moved to rescind the resolution passed yesterday on the motion of Mr. J. Allen.

On the question being put, it passed in the negative.

*Resolved*, on the motion of Mr. Montgomery, to report, That the Committee has further inquired into a surcharge made by the Controller and Auditor-General on the Receiver of Gold Revenue at Paeroa; that it finds that the Controller and Auditor-General was acting strictly in accordance with law in so making such surcharge, but recommends that the law should be amended as soon as possible, so as to prevent such difficulties arising with respect to the collection of overlapping rents in the future, and considers that if the Minister decides to disallow such surcharge he will be justified in so doing.

*Resolved*, That the Chairman be instructed to report to the House in accordance with the resolutions passed yesterday and to-day, and to move that the report be printed, together with the minutes of proceedings and evidence.

The Committee then adjourned.

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