
REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE

Appointed to enquire into the circumstances connected with the refusal to pay or return a Voucher presented at the Treasury by the Agent of Reed Bros.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Your Committee appointed to enquire into the circumstances connected with the refusal to pay or return a Voucher presented at the Treasury by the Agent of Reed Bros., submit the following:

That on the 2nd December, 1878, Messrs. Reed Bros.' Agent, Mr. Dawson, presented a voucher for \$5,091.00 at the Treasury. That the voucher had the signature of the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works upon it, but it is not clear that it was certified by him.

That the Deputy Treasurer spoke to the Finance Minister about it; and that the latter took it to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works with Mr. Dawson's knowledge, who was present in the Treasury, and informed the Chief Commissioner that there was no warrant for the sum mentioned.

That Mr. Dawson immediately afterwards saw the Chief Commissioner at the request of the latter, and he was informed that the question of payment of the voucher would be considered by the Executive Council.

The voucher was retained by the Chief Commissioner with Mr. Dawson's tacit consent, and Mr. Dawson never afterwards applied to him for it; although some weeks subsequently he did apply, by letter to Mr. Beaven, for its return. Search was then made for it in the Lands and Works Department, but it could not be found, and was supposed to be destroyed with other useless papers.

That it was decided by Order in Council on the 7th day of December, 1878, that the voucher should not be paid, and that no further payments should be made until Messrs. Reed Bros. completed their contract, as its progress had been unsatisfactory. Mr. Dawson was informed of this decision at the time.

That the Resident Engineer's certificate for the amount of the voucher was not countersigned by the Chief Commissioner, and the voucher could not therefore have been paid even if it had been regular in other respects. That the voucher was not initialed by the Auditor, this being necessary before it could have been paid.

All of which is respectfully submitted, with copy of evidence.

W. SAUL,
Chairman.