

SUTTON, SIR G.

<17.6.1907>

File 65, item 4, pp. 52-3.

52 Chat with Sir G. Sutton.¹

There should be a man employed by the Govt. to prepare a statement of the Native Question in its various aspects - something which should be concise and yet comprehensive. It would be difficult to find a man to do this, if not impossible. The man must be an authority, one whose work would be likely to carry weight.

I asked why he did not carry this out, get the Govt. to do so as it was right; he said he was no longer in the Govt.

Considers a report should not be merely 'adopted', for it contains much which various members cannot possibly subscribe to. No one subscribes to only a portion of a p/n;² he is regarded as liable to all he signs to. A report, the substance thereof, should be reduced to a series of resolutions embodying in a concrete form the various leading principles. Akerman was a clear reasoner and insisted on reports being dealt

53 with in this way.³ It is business-like and the maker of the resolutions must be able to advance the facts so as to defend them. The opinions don't matter, but the facts are everything. In a complex subject, like Native Question, the resolutions might follow each sub-division of the subject. Most necessary to show clearly the causes of the rebellion.⁴

Notes

¹ George Sutton was Prime Minister of Natal from August 1903 to May 1905. He was knighted in 1904. Photographs of him appear in Twentieth Century Impressions of Natal (1906), p. 41, and Duminy and Guest, eds., Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910 (1989), p. 243.

² The meaning of 'p/n' is not clear.

³ John Akerman was a member of the Natal Legislative Council from 1865, and its Speaker from 1882 to 1892. He was knighted in 1887.

⁴ I.e. the Natal rebellion of 1906.