

"SIR,—

"Wellington, 23rd September, 1876.

"Having been present on every occasion on which the Committee has assembled, and as I shall be unable to attend at the preparation of the report, I venture to address you on the subject. It appeared to me that the award of Mr. Commissioner Hamilton was not in excess of the just claims of the petitioner, but that, as the Commissioner was appointed by the Ministry then in office to carry out the provisions of 'The Taranaki New Zealand Company's Land Claims Act, 1872, it is not necessary to inquire into any circumstances which may have happened prior to the date of that award, and that the issuing of land orders in satisfaction of the Commissioner's award was a virtual admission of the justice of that award. Taking these facts into consideration, I am of opinion that we should report in favour of granting the petitioner's land to the value of the land order issued under Mr. Commissioner Hamilton's award, and interest on the value of land from the date of the presentation of the original land order until the issuing of a new one.

"I have, &c.,

"W. R. RUSSELL.

"The Chairman, Sartoris and Downe Committee."

The Hon. Major Atkinson attended and stated that he had consulted with his colleagues and with the Provincial Government of Taranaki, and submitted a plan of part of that province, showing land that would be available for purchase by the claimants to the amount of their respective land orders, and said that such a suggestion from the Committee would receive favourable consideration from the Government.

Resolved, That Mr. Batkin, Mr. T. Kelly, and Sir Julius Vogel be requested to attend for the purpose of giving evidence.

The Committee then adjourned till Friday, the 29th instant, at 11 o'clock.

FRIDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1876.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11 o'clock a.m.

PRESENT:

Mr. Fitzroy,
Mr. Harper,
Mr. Larnach,

Mr. D. Reid,
Mr. Seymour.

In the absence of the Hon. Mr. Stafford, Mr. Harper took the Chair.

A reporter attended.

Sir Julius Vogel, Mr. Batkin, and Mr. Kelly attended and gave evidence (see minutes).

The Committee then adjourned till Tuesday next, 3rd October, at 11 o'clock a.m.

TUESDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 1876.

The Committee met, pursuant to adjournment, at 11 o'clock a.m.

PRESENT:

Hon. Mr. Stafford in the Chair.

Mr. Fitzroy,
Mr. Harper,
Mr. Larnach,

Mr. Reid,
Mr. Seymour,

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

The Chairman read a letter from Sir Julius Vogel, handed in by Mr. Harper, asking that part of the evidence given by him before the Committee should be expunged, and enclosing a written statement of what he wished to say before the Committee.

Sir Julius Vogel subsequently attended in person and preferred his request.

The Committee decided that the letter of Sir Julius Vogel be inserted in the minutes, in correction of the evidence given by him.

The Committee, having deliberated upon the evidence, Mr. Seymour moved the following report for adoption by the Committee:—

The Committee appointed to consider the question of the position of certain holders of land orders issued by the Governor under "The Taranaki New Zealand Company's Land Claims Act, 1872," and to recommend what course should be taken to satisfy the said land orders, have the honor to report,—

That, in the opinion of the Committee, the claims, on account of which the land orders in question were issued, could be most satisfactorily satisfied by paying (at the option of the Government) to the holders of these land orders the several amounts awarded to them by Mr. Commissioner Hamilton, either in cash, Treasury bills, or Colonial debentures; any sums so paid to be charged against the balance of the fund appropriated by "The Public Debts Apportionment Act, 1858," to the purchase of Native lands in the Province of Taranaki; and if not satisfied in that manner, then by grants of land equivalent to the several awards; such land to be selected within the Province of Taranaki out of any lands in the possession of the Government, whether acquired under the New Zealand Settlements Acts, Public Works Acts, or otherwise. The cost of acquiring which to be charged against the fund appropriated by the Act of 1858, before referred to.

After some discussion, the Committee postponed the consideration of the report until next sitting day.

The Committee then adjourned until Wednesday, 4th October instant, at 12 o'clock.