

1854.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND COMPANY'S DEBT, (AUCKLAND).

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE

THE SELECT COMMITTEE

ON THE

NEW ZEALAND COMPANY'S DEBT, (AUCKLAND).

FRIDAY, 8TH JULY, 1854.

MEMBERS PRESENT :—

MR. WORTLEY,
„ PORTER,
„ MACKAY,

MR. KING,
„ CARLETON.

Mr. E. G. WAKEFIELD in the Chair.

The Honourable Francis Dillon Bell, Esq., examined.

1. By the Chairman : You were for a long time in the employment of the New Zealand Company? Yes, I was.
2. For some time as Secretary to the Company? Yes, for some time as Secretary in England, and afterwards their agent for the management of the Nelson Settlement.
3. Do you recollect the circumstances connected with the Company's proceedings at Auckland, as respects the selection of a block of land? Yes.
4. Will you be so good as to state them to the Committee? The Company made an agreement with Lord Stanley, by which they were to select 50,000 acres of land here in lieu of 50,000 acres, part of a block, to which they were entitled in the South, under the agreement, and I was appointed to make the selection. The condition of the agreement was, that the Company should, within a certain time, expend a considerable portion of £50,000 in colonizing operations at Auckland. I believe it was three-fourths. I came to Auckland and made a selection of town land and suburban land to the amount, I believe, of £10,000, part of the £50,000, and I made examination of various parts of the country for the purpose of selecting the remainder, chiefly in rural land. Governor FitzRoy objected to the most valuable selections I had made in the Town of Auckland, which I believed to be a contravention of the agreement of Lord Stanley, and the question was referred to the then principal agent of the Company at Wellington, Col. Wakefield. Some negotiations ensued between Col. Wakefield and the local government on the subject of finally completing the selection of land at Auckland, but as the proceedings of Gov. FitzRoy were believed by the agents of the New Zealand Company to be calculated to destroy the agreement, one condition of which was the selection of land at Auckland, the whole subject was referred to England, among other questions of dispute between the local government and the Company's local agents the result was that the selection of the land was not finally completed as intended at Auckland, and that the Company took no steps for laying out the money to which I have referred. In May, 1847, when the time was expiring in which the Company would be bound to have expended the money, they came to a fresh agreement with Earl Grey, by which they gave up the land they claimed to have selected at Auckland, and declared that they would take no steps for colonizing at Auckland. This freed the land which I had chosen, and which for some years had been kept out of the market here, to the injury of the settlers, who found some very valuable land locked up from occupation by them without the fulfilment of the condition by which they were to receive any benefit from the Company's operations.