

REPORT

Of the Committee on the New Zealand Company's Debt.

The Committee appointed to consider and report upon the steps to be taken to follow up and give effect to the proceedings of the House during the former Sessions, relative to the New Zealand Company's debt, having considered the matters referred to them, and having conferred with a Committee of the Legislative Council appointed for the like purpose, have agreed to the following Report :

Further investigation has satisfied your Committee that the debt imposed upon the Colony was unjust, and they conceive it to be the duty of the House again to record its protest against that debt.

They are also of opinion that the Legislature would be justified in adopting any means within its power, having regard to the provisions of the Constitution Act, for practically relieving the Colony from the charge, but before recommending the House to adopt such a course, they conceive it would be desirable to offer to the Company, fair and reasonable terms of compromise.

Many modes have presented themselves to your Committee by which the Land Fund could practically be relieved from the burthen imposed upon it, but they conceive it would be inexpedient, until the ultimatum of the Company, in reference to terms of compromise has been ascertained, to offer to the House any specific suggestion for effecting such a purpose.

The amount to be offered to the Company by way of such compromise has been much discussed by your Committee, and they are of opinion that it ought not to exceed the sum of £150,000.

In agreeing to recommend this sum to the House, your Committee were influenced simply by the hope that it would be at once accepted, and thus prevent the necessity of resorting to measures which would practically render valueless the present security of the Company.

They are further of opinion, that the above mentioned sum should be secured (by way of Debentures) upon the general Revenues of the Colony, and that the ultimate payment should be guaranteed by the Imperial Government. Such a guarantee would enable the Colony to obtain the money at a fair and reasonable rate of interest.

The details of any such arrangement ought to be left as much as possible to the agent of the Colony.

Your Committee conceive that it would be desirable, if practicable, to pass an Act during the present Session to enable the suggested compromise to be effected.

It also appears to your Committee to be essential that a further sum of £500 should be at once appropriated for the expenses of the Agency, and that Mr. Adlerley should be requested to avail himself of the services of Mr. Sewell in any negotiations or arrangements with the Company.

ROBERT HART,
Chairman.

Committee Room, House of Representatives,
September 11, 1855.

