

PRESENT :

Mr. J. C. Brown,	Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Luckie,	Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Murray,	Mr. Thomson.
Mr. O'Neill,	

Mr. T. L. Shepherd in the Chair.

The minutes of Tuesday and Wednesday's meetings were read and confirmed.

Moved by Mr. Studholme, That though the sale was strictly within the letter of the law, yet that, in the opinion of the Committee, it was contrary to the intention of the Act. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Sheehan, That the Provincial Government, before proceeding to sell, obtained the sanction of the Provincial Council to the sale of 50,000 acres in terms of the following resolution:—

“That, with a view to place the Government in a position to provide revenue to meet the expenditure of the votes in the appropriation of the present Session, this Council resolves to authorize the Government to dispose of 50,000 acres of land in one or more blocks; provided that no block of an area of less than 10,000 acres shall be sold under this resolution, nor shall any block be sold known to be payably auriferous.” Carried.

Moved by Mr. Studholme, That a fair price was obtained for the land. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Sheehan, That the block in question does not appear to be of a payably auriferous character, and so far the sale was not in contravention of the resolutions of the Council. Carried.

Moved by Mr. J. C. Brown, That the evidence as to the extent of agricultural land is very conflicting—varying from nothing up to 10,000 acres. That your Committee, after weighing the evidence, is of opinion that the block, though first-class pastoral country, may be estimated to contain 3,000 acres of land suitable for tillage.

On this motion the Committee divided.

For, 3.

Mr. J. C. Brown,
Mr. Murray,
Mr. O'Neill.

Against, 4.

Mr. Luckie,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Thomson.

The motion was therefore lost.

Moved by Mr. Sheehan, That the evidence before the Committee as to the area of agricultural land within the block is very conflicting, the report of the Geodesical and Inspecting Surveyor of the Province being, “that for agricultural settlement the land is wholly unsuitable;” while other witnesses variously estimate the area from 1,000 up to 10,000 acres of land fit for agricultural purposes.

Moved by Mr. J. C. Brown, as an amendment, That all words after “conflicting” be struck out.

On this amendment the Committee divided.

For, 1.

Mr. J. C. Brown.

Against, 5.

Mr. Luckie,
Mr. O'Neill,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Thomson,

The amendment was therefore lost.

The Committee then divided on the original motion.

For, 5.

Mr. Luckie,
Mr. O'Neill,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Thomson.

Against, 1.

Mr. J. C. Brown.

The motion was therefore carried.

Moved by Mr. Sheehan, That as to the policy of disposing of land in large blocks, the Committee are clearly of opinion that it is not to the interest of the Province or the Colony that sales should be allowed to take place as in the present instance; and that upon any sale of land, of whatever description, the opportunity should be given to the whole public of competing. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Studholme, That no land comprising within it any considerable extent suitable for agriculture, or likely to prove auriferous, should be sold in large blocks. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Sheehan, That it was generally admitted by the several witnesses that lands unfit for agricultural purposes are the most likely to prove to be auriferous; and the Committee are of opinion that, in disposing of large blocks of pastoral country, the Crown should reserve to itself the right to authorize mining on such blocks, subject to reasonable conditions for compensation. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Studholme, That No. 1 motion standing in his name be reconsidered. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Sheehan, That in lieu of No. 1 the following be substituted:—

“That the sale is not in contravention of the Land Laws in force within the Province.”

On this motion the Committee divided.

For, 5.

Mr. Luckie,
Mr. O'Neill,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Thomson.

Against, 1.

Mr. J. C. Brown.

The motion was therefore carried