

1881.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

REPORT ON THE PETITION OF MESSRS. BROGDEN

Report brought up 15th September, 1881, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

In dealing with the petitioners' case the Committee have availed themselves of the evidence taken by the Public Works and Immigration Committee of 1873. The Committee have also obtained documentary evidence from the Public Works Department, and fully examined such witnesses as have been submitted for examination by the petitioners. After carefully considering the evidence, and giving due weight to the circumstances under which the immigration contract was entered into, I am directed to report that the Committee are of opinion that the petitioners have no claim against the colony

15th September, 1881.

THOMAS KELLY,
Chairman.

PETITION

To the Honorable the House of Representatives, in Parliament assembled.

THE RUMBLE PETITION OF ALEXANDER BROGDEN, M.P., HENRY BROGDEN, AND JAMES BROGDEN, OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, IN ENGLAND.

SHOWETH:—

Your petitioners in June, 1871, after many months of previous negotiation with the Honorable Julius Vogel, at that time the Treasurer of the Colony of New Zealand, and then in England, executed in duplicate three instruments, dated respectively the 21st, the 22nd, and the 26th June, 1871, each of which was expressed to be made between the then Governor of New Zealand, of the one part, and your petitioners, of the other part.

2. The first instrument expressed that the Governor would intrust to your petitioners, and that they would undertake, the construction of railways in New Zealand to the value of £4,500,000; that the Governor, besides paying your petitioners the cost of the railways to them, and a profit of 5 per cent. thereon, would make to them grants of land at the rate of three-quarters of an acre for every pound sterling of cost of the railways, and one-fifth of which should be suitable for settlement, and for settlers to take immediate possession of; that the portions of the latter required for immigrants should be granted as and when required; that your petitioners would within ten years land in New Zealand ten thousand approved European immigrants; and that the Governor would also pay your petitioners the sum of £1 per head per annum for ten years for all immigrants so landed.

3. The second and third instruments related to the construction of railways, without any reference to immigration; neither of the three contracts referred to was, however, adopted by the House of Representatives, and long negotiations ensued, which resulted in certain other contracts for the completion of various lines of railway in different parts of the colony being entered into between the Government and your petitioners, the subject of immigration being altogether excluded from them.

4. The negotiation with your petitioners relative to immigration, to which the present petition refers, was initiated by the Government, and pressed upon your petitioners. To a certain point it was carried on in the colony between the Honorable the Minister for Immigration and your petitioner, James Brogden (who had come over to New Zealand with a large and experienced staff, at the special request of the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer); but, being deemed by the latter an affair of too much importance to be undertaken without the concurrence of his partners, it was, in November, 1871, relegated to the Agent-General for the colony in England, on the part of the Government, and to the partners of your petitioners' firm, resident in England, on behalf of the firm. (See Parliamentary Papers, 1872, D. No. 1, pages 8, 9, and 10.)

5. On receipt by the Agent-General of his despatches from the colony on this subject, he opened a communication with your petitioners, Alexander and Henry Brogden, concerning it. Negotiations