

1881.
NEW ZEALAND.

OTAGO PASTORAL LEASES COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE).

Report brought up 17th August, 1881, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF JUNE, 1881.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the proposals of the Government with regard to the disposal of the waste lands in Otago, now held under pastoral lease about to expire, and to report generally upon the best mode of dealing with the lands. The Committee to consist of Mr. Bastings, Mr. Macandrew, Mr. De Lautour, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Shanks, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Ballance, Mr. Oliver, and the mover; three to be a quorum. The Committee to report in three weeks."—(*Hon. Mr. Rolleston.*)

WEDNESDAY, THE 13TH DAY OF JULY, 1881.

Ordered, "That the name of Mr. Shrimski be added to the Otago Pastoral Leases Committee."—(*Mr. Pyke.*)

THURSDAY, THE 21ST DAY OF JULY, 1881.

Ordered, "That an extension of time for fourteen days be granted to the Otago Pastoral Leases Committee within which to bring up their report."—(*Mr. Macandrew.*)

REPORT

THE Committee have the honor to report that they have agreed to the following resolutions:—

1. That, in order to prevent future difficulties in the way of settlement, care should be taken, in any classification of the Crown land, to exclude all land fitted for agriculture from areas proposed to be leased for a term of years for pastoral purposes.

2. If the whole of the runs, the leases of which terminate in March, 1883, are offered to the public, in terms of the Act, in or about March, 1882, the Committee is of opinion that, however minutely they may be subdivided, the great bulk of the country would be secured by the present tenants at little, if any, increase upon present rentals.

3. The Land Acts now in force would, with a few careful amendments, enable a responsible administrator to deal with the whole of these runs to the best advantage.

4. It is unadvisable to amend the Land Act during the present session (except as hereinafter provided) for the purpose of completely dealing with the whole of the runs the leases of which terminate in March, 1883.

5. The runs containing auriferous deposits in Central Otago should not be offered for sale.

6. Runs not known to contain auriferous deposits, and so situate as to be likely to be immediately required by existing settlers, settlers' sons, or others, for purchase or lease as agricultural or pastoral lands, should be divided—in the case of pastoral lands, not sold on deferred payments, in areas calculated to carry not more than 5,000 sheep—according to the configuration of the country, and offered in terms of the Act for sale on pastoral deferred payments, or for lease for a term of ten years, so soon as the law will allow. The widest publicity should be given to such intended sale. Where possible, the deferred-payment pastoral blocks should be placed alternately with blocks offered for lease only.

7. A short Act should be introduced by the Government this session giving power to take the whole or any portion of any runs terminating in March, 1883, or subsequently thereto, immediately required for sale, settlement, or public purposes.

8. Careful amendments of the Land Act should be prepared during the recess, to enable the balance of the runs not immediately required for settlement or subdivision to be dealt with so as to give the freest facilities for settlement where and whenever required, and to insure limitation of area and fixity of tenure to all leaseholds, with valuation for improvements to be paid by the incoming tenant at the end of the term, and to compel residence in the case of each of such leaseholds.