

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

OTAGO ALLEGED EVASION OF LAND ACT COMMITTEE.

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

Reports brought up 20th July and 17th August, 1883, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, THE 28TH DAY OF JUNE, 1883.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed for the purpose of making a complete inquiry into the alleged evasion of the provisions of the Waste Lands Act in the Provincial District of Otago, known as "Dummyism;" to report in one month; with power to call for persons, papers and records. The Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Fulton, Mr. J. W. Thomson, Mr. McMillan, Mr. W. White, Mr. Stevens, Major Harris, Mr. J. Buchanan, and the mover; three to be a quorum."—(*Mr. J. McKenzie.*)

THURSDAY, THE 26TH DAY OF JULY, 1883.

Ordered, "That the Otago Alleged Evasion of Land Act Committee have leave to postpone making their report for one month."—(*Mr. Pyke.*)

REPORTS.

INTERIM REPORT.

THE Select Committee to whom was referred the question of the alleged evasion of the Land Act in Otago have the honour to report:—

That, in the opinion of this Committee, the present inquiry cannot be successfully prosecuted to a conclusion unless an indemnity be granted to witnesses who may be called upon to answer questions which they may allege would tend to criminate themselves.

That the Government be requested to take such steps, by introducing a Bill, as will give the Committee power to grant a certificate of such indemnity where necessary.

20th July, 1883.

VINCENT PYKE,
Chairman.

REPORT.

THE Select Committee appointed for the purpose of making inquiry into the alleged evasion of the provisions of the Waste Lands Act in the Provincial District of Otago, known as "dummyism," have the honour to make the following report:—

1. That the evidence taken discloses widespread and systematic evasion of the law.
2. With a view to the prevention of such evasion in the future, your Committee recommend that the following provisions be embodied in the Land Acts Amendment Bill now before your honourable House:—
 - (1.) That Waste Land Boards be empowered to sit as Boards of Inquiry, and to declare and enforce forfeiture and cancellation in certain cases.
 - (2.) For the purposes of such inquiry, the Board should have all the powers conferred by the Commissioners' Powers Act.
 - (3.) That whenever, in the exercise of such powers, it shall appear to the Board—
 - (a.) That purchasers at any sale have not purchased for their own use and benefit, it may declare such sale null and void, and the deposit paid thereon to be forfeited.
 - (b.) That, in the case of any licensee or lessee upon deferred payment who shall have held his license or lease for two years, and shall not have occupied his land *bona fide* exclusively and for his own benefit by personal use, in accordance with the declaration made at the time of purchase, it shall declare such license or lease cancelled, and all payment made thereon forfeited, and the land to be Crown land.