

SESS. II.—1887.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW PLYMOUTH HARBOUR BOARD COMMITTEE

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

Report brought up 16th December, 1887, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

WEDNESDAY, THE 23RD DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1887.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the financial position of the New Plymouth Harbour Board, and to report their opinion whether the Board is likely to be able to continue to meet its annual charges; and, if not, whether such failure is in any respect owing to causes outside the control of the Board, and which it could not have anticipated at the time of the raising of the New Plymouth Harbour loan; and to make such recommendations as they may think desirable. The Committee to consist of ten members, five to form a quorum; to report in a fortnight. The Committee to have power to call for persons and papers; and to consist of the Hon. G. F. Richardson, Mr. Jones, Mr. Larnach, Mr. Stuart-Menteath, Mr. O'Connor, Major Steward, Mr. Tanner, Mr. Ward, Mr. Whyte, and the mover."—(Mr. SAMUEL.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1887.

Ordered, "That the petition of W. Carroll and others be referred to the New Plymouth Harbour Committee."—(Mr. SEYMOUR.)

REPORT.

YOUR Committee, having been directed "to inquire into the financial position of the New Plymouth Harbour Board, and to report their opinion as to whether the Board is likely to be able to continue to meet its annual charges, and, if not, whether such failure is in any respect owing to causes outside the control of the Board, and which it could not have anticipated at the time of the raising of the New Plymouth Harbour loan, and to make such recommendations as they may think desirable," and having considered the petition of ratepayers of Waimate Plains, referred to them by order of the House, have the honour to report—

That they have examined a number of witnesses, whose evidence is attached hereto, viz., Mr. Samuel, M.H.R.; Mr. T. King, Chairman of the Board; Mr. J. C. George; Mr. T. Bayly; Mr. W. Milne; Mr. E. Godsal; Hon. Major Atkinson, M.H.R.; and Mr. Marchant, M.H.R.; and that the result of the inquiry is to show—

1. That the Board will have great difficulty in meeting the interest-charges after the next half-yearly payment falls due (1st May, 1888), and that unless some change is made as regards the land administration it will be unable to do so after the 1st November, 1888.

2. That the difficulty arises almost entirely from the large extent to which land has been disposed of during the last two or three years upon the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems, and to the consequent diminution of cash sales, from the proceeds of which the Board is by law entitled to receive 25 per cent.

3. That the Board is unable to raise any larger sum by way of rate than at present, the full amount of rate authorised by law, viz., $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound on the capital value, being now imposed.

4. That this rate (equal at present to about 1s. 3d. on the annual value), added to other local rates, presses with great severity on the settlers, and is calculated seriously to retard settlement.

Your Committee are of opinion that the difficulty might be, to some extent, decreased by raising the landing-charges, but that after this is done the Board will still be unable to provide for its annual charges, notwithstanding the heavy rate at present imposed upon the lands of the district.

Your Committee consider that it may be possible to devise some means of relief without entailing any additional burdens on the colony; and your Committee recommend that this report, and the evidence attached thereto, be referred to the Government, with a view to proposals to that end being submitted to Parliament.

W. J. STEWARD,
Chairman.