

1892.

NEW ZEALAND.

# THE POLHILL GULLY RIFLE-RANGE

(REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE PURCHASE OF).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

## COMMISSION.

To all to whom these presents shall come, and to ALFRED SAUNDERS, of West Melton, in the Colony of New Zealand, a member of the House of Representatives; THOMAS KENNEDY MACDONALD, of Wellington, in the said colony, auctioneer; and JOHN HOLLAND BAKER, of Wellington, in the said colony, Assistant Surveyor-General: Greeting.

WHEREAS a certain block of land containing 40 acres, more or less, situate in or adjacent to the City of Wellington, and known as the Polhill Gully Rifle-range, has been acquired by the Government of the colony for the purposes of a rifle-range: And whereas it is expedient that a Commission should be issued for the purpose of making inquiry into all the circumstances connected with the proposal to purchase, and the negotiations incident to the purchase of, the said block of land:

Now, therefore, know ye that I, James Prendergast, Knight, Chief Justice, the Administrator of the Government of the Colony of New Zealand, reposing trust and confidence in your knowledge, integrity, and ability, in pursuance and exercise of all powers and authorities enabling me in this behalf, and by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council of the said colony, do hereby constitute and appoint you, the said

ALFRED SAUNDERS,  
THOMAS KENNEDY MACDONALD, and  
JOHN HOLLAND BAKER,

to be Commissioners for the purpose of making inquiry into all the circumstances connected with the proposal to purchase, and the negotiations incident to the purchase of, a block of land containing some 40 acres, more or less, situate in or adjacent to the City of Wellington, and known as the Polhill Gully Rifle-range; and in particular to make full and diligent inquiry into and to ascertain the following matters and things: namely,—

1. The names of the parties who made the proposal to the Government to purchase the said rifle-range, and the date of such proposal; the nature of the proposal, the reasons which led to it, to whom such proposal was first addressed or made; whether expert evidence was taken as to the suitability of the site for Volunteer purposes prior to any decision being arrived at as to purchase; and the nature of the instructions given respecting the purchase.
2. Whether there were any good and sufficient reasons why the land was not taken under the Public Works Act.
3. At what date were the first instructions given by the Minister of Defence authorising Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson to purchase the block at a cost not exceeding £3,000, and whether at this date Messrs. Kirk and Atkinson owned the land or any part thereof, or whether the same was then in their hands for sale; whether it was feasible for the Minister to have obtained an appropriation by Parliament for such purchase, thus avoiding the payment being charged to "Unauthorised."
4. Whether agents were employed on behalf of the Government to effect the purchase, and, if so, the names of such agents, and whether they carried out the original instructions given to them respecting the purchase.
5. If agents were employed, whether the Government agreed that such agents should be allowed to abandon their agency and become principal vendors. If so, whether such a change from agent to principal vendor was beneficial or otherwise to the Government in a monetary sense, and upon whom does the responsibility of such a change rest.