

1943.

NEW ZEALAND.

LAND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(INTERIM REPORT OF THE, ON LAND DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS).

(MR. ROBERTS, CHAIRMAN.)

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives.

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 17TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1941.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed, consisting of eight members, to consider the best means in the national interest of bringing back into production or of developing and utilizing deteriorated or marginal lands in the Dominion, the Committee to have power to sit during the recess and for twenty-eight days after the commencement of next session, and at such times and at such places as the Committee may think fit, and to report to the House within twenty-eight days after the commencement of the next ensuing session; the Committee to consist of Mr. Broadfoot, Mr. Goosman, Mr. Kidd, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Thorn, Mr. Tirikatene, and Mr. Williams." (Hon. Mr. NASIL)

ORIGIN OF COMMITTEE.

The appointment of the Committee was the outcome of a criticism of the operations of the Lands and Survey Department in the development and reconditioning of certain lands under the provisions contained in the Land Laws Amendments Act, 1929, and the Small Farms Act, 1932-33, and which was made during a debate on the National Development Loans Bill. Certain matters relating to the accounts of the Department were referred to the Public Accounts Committee. All matters contained in the order of reference were dealt with by the Public Accounts Committee, which went a little beyond the order of reference and concluded its report as follows—

"The foregoing findings deal with matters comprised in the order of reference, but after considering the evidence produced in this inquiry the Committee recommends that the Government should set up a Select Committee to consider and report on the best methods of development and utilization in the national interest of lands of the types referred to in this report."

SCOPE OF INVESTIGATIONS.

The scope of the order of reference has given the Committee some concern, as it was considered that if an investigation was made into all the deteriorated and marginal lands of the Dominion a tremendous amount of work and investigation would be involved. Deteriorated lands are to be found in all the land districts in both Islands of the Dominion, whilst the term "marginal" is generally used to refer to land of low fertility which requires special treatment in order to make it productive, or lands which are only capable of economic farming during periods of high prices or low costs. The Committee has consequently concentrated on the actual areas and districts in which the Lands Department has been operating. Furthermore, the Committee has only been able to investigate the operations of the Department in the North Island, and to this end has visited each district and inspected a considerable number of the blocks under development. Owing to the serious change in the war situation in the Pacific it was decided to postpone the investigation into the South Island blocks indefinitely, and to submit a report on the North Island areas, which comprise by far the greater number of blocks under active development.

ITINERARY OF COMMITTEE.

The following blocks were inspected by the Committee on the dates mentioned:—

1941.		
6th November	..	Ohakune, Raetihi, Piu, and Mapara.
7th	..	Waitanguru, Otoru, Mangaorino, Pururu, Bain's (Te Kuiti district).
8th	..	Aria, Ngatamahine, Kohua, Kaeaea (Te Kuiti district).
10th	..	Te Rau-a-Moa, Burns', Henderson's, Mangatutu, Wharepapa, Maihiihi (Te Kuiti district).
11th	..	Kairangi, Ellicott's, Arohena (Te Kuiti district).
18th	..	Hoe-o-Tainui, Matanuku, Tokoroa (Morrinsville - Putaruru districts).
19th	..	Mihi, Waikite Valley, Broadlands (Rotorua district).
20th	..	Murupara, Galatea (Rotorua district).
21st	..	Onepu, Tarawera, Edgecumbe (Bay of Plenty district).
24th	..	Bradley's, Bassett's (Dargaville district).
25th	..	Mangawai.
27th	..	Whangamomona.
3rd December	..	Kakariki, Kaheka (Hawke's Bay district).
4th	..	Ahuriri Lagoon (Napier).