

REPORT

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Whereas by Warrant dated the 18th day of July, 1946, under Your Excellency's hand and sealed with the public seal of the Dominion of New Zealand, I, the undersigned, James Rankin Bartholomew, was appointed a Commission to inquire into the proceedings of the War Assets Realization Board in relation to the acquisition and disposal of certain assets—namely, the motor-vehicles made available to the War Assets Realization Board constituted under the War Assets Realization Board Regulations 1945, by a declaration by the United States Joint Purchasing Board dated the 24th day of October, 1945, and into the question whether the members and officers of the War Assets Realization Board acted in relation thereto, carefully, diligently, in a business-like and efficient manner and with faithfulness to the interests of the State, and generally to inquire into and report upon such other matters arising out of the premises as might come to my notice in the course of my inquiries and which I considered should be investigated in connection therewith, and to report to Your Excellency under my hand and seal not later than the 31st day of August, 1946, my findings and opinions on the matter aforesaid, together with such recommendations as I think fit to make in respect thereof. And whereas by Warrant dated the 28th day of August, 1946, under Your Excellency's hand and sealed with the public seal of the Dominion of New Zealand, the time for making such report was extended to the 30th day of September, 1946: Now, therefore, I have the honour to report that due notice of the sitting of the said Commission was previously given by public advertisement in the daily newspapers in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and that the Commission held sittings at the departmental building, Stout Street, Wellington, from the 12th day of August, 1946, to the 2nd day of September, 1946, inclusive, when the Solicitor-General, Mr. H. E. Evans, K.C., and Mr. P. B. Cooke, K.C., appeared as counsel appointed by the Crown to assist the Commission. Mr. T. P. Cleary appeared for the War Assets Realization Board; Mr. S. G. Stephenson appeared for Brigadier H. E. Avery, General Manager of the War Assets Realization Board; Mr. J. Meltzer appeared for Mr. O. Conibear, Secretary to the War Assets Realization Board; Mr. D. R. Hoggard appeared for G. T. Gillies, Limited, Oamaru; Mr. L. G. Rose appeared for Mr. G. Laing, Government Inspector of Motor-vehicles; and Mr. W. E. Leicester and Mr. R. E. Tripe appeared for Messieurs W. S. Goosman, R. G. Gerard, W. J. Broadfoot, and W. A. Sheat in their private capacity as members of the public; and at a later stage during the proceedings Mr. R. E. Harding appeared for Mr. W. P. Warner, truck salesman, of Christchurch, and Mr. R. Watterson appeared for Mr. C. R. Vincent, motor-dealer, of Newmarket, Auckland. A visit of inspection was also made to the site at Seaview, the parking-place of the said motor-vehicles.

Evidence was given at length by the officers and some members of the War Assets Realization Board (hereinafter throughout this report referred to as the Board) and by numerous other witnesses, and full opportunity was given to the various counsel to examine and cross-examine, and a most thorough and exhaustive inquiry was made into the premises.

A record of the proceedings and the evidence and the exhibits accompanies this report.