

REPORT.

(Vide L-14, Session 1908.)

1. The Committee appointed to inquire and report as to the most suitable site for the erection of new Parliamentary Buildings have the honour to report that they have duly inquired into the matter, and have examined the following witnesses: viz., Messrs. John Campbell, Government Architect; Jackson Palmer, Chief Judge Native Land Court; H. J. H. Blow, Under-Secretary for Public Works; J. M. Bathan, Registrar-General of Lands and Deeds; G. F. C. Campbell, Valuer-General; A. Hamilton, Director of Museum; P. Heyes, Commissioner of Taxes and Superintendent Government Advances to Settlers Department; and Charles Wilson, Parliamentary Librarian.

2. The evidence of these witnesses is attached to this report, and, in the opinion of your Committee, clearly shows that the site presently occupied by Government House and now temporarily used by the Legislature has great advantages over the site bounded by Hill Street, Molesworth Street, and Sydney Street, on which were erected the recently destroyed Parliamentary Buildings (afterwards referred to in this report as "the Molesworth Street site"), and that no other available site in the City of Wellington is equally suitable.

3. The evidence also shows that further accommodation for the various Departments of the public service, and also for the Parliamentary Library and the Museum, is urgently required, the building in Lambton Quay being already fully occupied, and affording barely sufficient accommodation for the officers (numbering 670) employed therein, although to relieve the pressure a number of suites of offices scattered over various parts of the city are rented by the Government at a cost of £3,117 per annum.

4. Your Committee find that to extend the building on Lambton Quay would be to increase the already serious risk of destruction by fire, to which not only the building itself but also the valuable and irreplaceable public records stored therein are now exposed.

5. Your Committee regard it as imperatively necessary to make provision for suitable fire-proof buildings, and they find that this can best be effected by erecting such buildings on the Molesworth Street site.

6. They recommend that this be done, and that as soon as possible all the Departments now accommodated on Lambton Quay be gradually transferred to buildings to be erected on the Molesworth Street site.

7. So soon as this is carried into effect the block bounded by Lambton Quay, Featherston Street, Bunny Street, and Whitmore Street, on which the present wooden building stands, could be leased to the public in building allotments for a total rental which would provide interest on a large capital sum, the present value of the land being estimated by the Valuation Department at £264,000.

8. Your Committee therefore report that, in their opinion, the new Parliament Houses, including a new Library building, should be erected on the Government House site, and that the Molesworth Street site, including those portions of the old Parliamentary Buildings not destroyed by fire, should be utilized for departmental buildings and offices, and the old parliamentary lawn-tennis ground as a site for a building for the Museum, the Lambton Quay block to be eventually dealt with as above indicated; the sections and intersecting street-lines being laid off as shown in "Plan No. 2" as prepared by the Public Works Department: always provided that satisfactory arrangements can be made as between the Government and the City Council.

9. Your Committee desire to point out that the arrangements thus proposed will entail the necessity of providing a new site for Government House, the selection of which does not come within the order of reference.

15th September, 1908.

WM. J. STEWARD, Chairman.

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