

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE NEW
ZEALAND COMPANY'S DEBT.**

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:—

Messrs. Fitzgerald, Forsaith, Greenwood, King, Ludlam,	Messrs. Macandrew O'Neill, Picard, Monro, Sewell,
Mr. Hart, Chairman.	

Committee met on Wednesday, 5th July, 1854.

Present :—Messrs Hart (in the chair), Picard, Forsaith, King, O'Neill, Macandrew, Monro, Ludlam.

The Hon. Francis Dillon Bell, Esq., was also present to give evidence. In answer to the preliminary questions of the Chairman, he described himself as Commissioner of Crown Lands, of Wellington.

The Chairman then asked :—

Have you had any, and what opportunities of becoming acquainted with the extent of land in the colony, exclusive of the Province of Auckland, the native title to which had been extinguished prior to the surrender of the New Zealand Company's charter?

I have, in the course of my various occupations, 1st, as an officer of the Company, and speaking without opportunity of referring to official documents, and dealing for practical purposes with round numbers, I may say that the native title to the greater portion of the middle island, excepting, indeed, some claims since extinguished in the Nelson and Otago Provinces, was extinguished prior to the surrender of the Company's charter. But with respect to Wellington, speaking also in round numbers, the extent of land to which the native title had been extinguished was under 400,000 acres, and that in New Plymouth the amount was under 50,000 acres, I believe, under 40,000.

Can you state in round numbers the number of acres in each Province, distinguishing, if practicable, the different Districts?

In the middle island the districts in which the native titles were extinguished, were Nelson, Canterbury, and Otago, and in the North Island, Wellington and New Plymouth.

Do you know if any land has been parted with by the New Zealand Company since 1847?

A large quantity, close upon 180,000 acres, including all the claims of compensation, settled up to this time.

Have you had any, and what opportunities of becoming acquainted with the amount of land which has been awarded to the purchasers of land from the Company in satisfaction of their claims for compensation? Can you state what amount of these lands have been selected, distinguishing the provinces and districts?

I have put in a statement in answer to this question, and with respect to Nelson and New Plymouth will obtain information. No compensation has been awarded in Canterbury and Otago, but a small portion of the other compensation land, under 1,000 acres, has been selected in Canterbury Province.

In the selection of these lands, has any attempt been made to maintain the value of the residue of the land in these districts, or have they been selected so as to reduce the average value of the remaining lands.