

1882.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

(REPORT ON PETITION OF J. CATTELL AND OTHERS, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDIX.)

Report brought up 8th September, 1882, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

No. 477.—Petition of J. CATTELL and Others, Wellington.

THE petitioners state they are purchasers of reclaimed land, sold by order of the Government in Wellington in 1879; that the auctioneer, after consultation with the Colonial Secretary, who was present, stated the Government would make, metal, and complete the public streets abutting upon the said land; that, relying upon this statement, they purchased several allotments, and that the roads still remain unmetalled and not completed. They pray for relief.

I am directed to report: Having taken the evidence of Sir G. Whitmore, who was at the time of the land sale Colonial Secretary, and also the evidence of other gentlemen, who were present at the sale, the Committee are of opinion that the Government has carried out in a liberal manner what appears to have been authorized with reference to the formation of the streets on the reclaimed land.

8th September, 1882.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1882.—(Mr. KELLY, Chairman.)

Dr. NEWMAN examined.

1. *The Chairman.*] Do you know anything of the facts of this case?—Yes; I was one of the purchasers at the sale. I was present, and the question was raised whether the Government would make the streets, as the land was not within the borough limits. That question was asked of the auctioneer while Colonel Whitmore, the Colonial Secretary, was standing by; and Colonel Whitmore told the auctioneer to state that the streets would be made thoroughly, and not in the half-and-half wretched manner in which the late Provincial Government would have made them. If that statement had not been made by the auctioneer we certainly should not have paid as much as we did for the land. The Government have not carried out their agreement, and now the Corporation says to us that we shall either make the streets or get them made. We bought the land three and a half years ago, and we have paid a large sum of money to the Government. We are now called upon to pay another large sum in order to get the streets properly made.

2. Do you hold the land now?—Yes.

3. Does the Corporation levy rates on this land?—Yes; but it will not make the streets. The Colonial Secretary allowed his auctioneer to make the statement that the streets would be made without any contradiction.

4. In the case of private persons selling land the Corporation refuses to take over any streets that are made until they are completed?—They refuse to take over the streets until they are completed, but in the meantime they take the rates. In this case it was expected that the Government would make the streets in such a way that the Corporation would take them over. At the sale Mr. Duncan said he had the full consent of the Colonial Secretary to make the statement that he did make.

5. Does Colonel Whitmore now deny that he authorized the auctioneer to make that statement?—He raises a quibble, I believe, about having agreed to form the streets only, and not to make them.

6. Do you know whether the Corporation has made any estimate of the cost of completing the streets?—Yes; the Corporation Engineer made an estimate at the instance of the Government.

7. *Mr. Swanson.*] How much did the Corporation get for this land before you bought it?—Nothing.