

1883.
NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

(REPORT ON UNAUTHORIZED EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR 1882-83.)

(Report brought up 29th August, and ordered to be printed.)

ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 29TH DAY OF JUNE, 1883.

Ordered, "That Mr. J. G. Wilson and Mr. Wright be added to the Public Accounts Committee; and that the Unauthorized Expenditure Account for 1882-83 be referred to the Committee, with directions to report their observations thereon, and the minutes of evidence they may take."—(*Hon. Major Atkinson.*)

REPORT.

The Public Accounts Committee have considered the statement of unauthorized expenditure, B.-8, submitted to them, and have agreed to the following as their report on various items, which they considered as calling for special observation:—

Consolidated Fund.—Ordinary Revenue Account.—Travelling Expenses of Members of Waste Land Boards, £166 11s.

1. Your Committee find that section 23 of "The Land Act, 1877," provides that out of any moneys that may be appropriated by the General Assembly there shall be paid to every member of a Land Board a sum not exceeding £1 for every attendance at a meeting of the Board, "and also a sum for travelling expenses actually incurred."

2. Several members of the various Land Boards in the colony have hitherto refused to produce sub-vouchers in support of their claims for travelling expenses, asserting that they considered the sum of £1 a day in addition to the £1 for attendance a fair claim for their travelling expenses. The Minister of Lands does not consider that £1 a day is an excessive charge for members of Land Boards who have to come in from the country for the purpose of attending meetings of the Boards, but the Audit Department has hitherto declined to pass any claims for travelling expenses of members of Land Boards unless supported by sub-vouchers. In order to get over the difficulty the Government decided to charge all claims in favour of members of Land Boards, which were not supported by sub-vouchers, at the rate of £1 per diem for each day a member of a Land Board was absent from his home on service of the Land Department. Hence the item, £166 11s., referred to.

Miscellaneous.

Sir P. G. Julyan, £666 13s. 4d.

3. Your Committee find that in 1881 the colony was about to enter into large transactions in money matters in England. Two Loan Agents were wanted, because the Agent-General could not do all the business which the Loan Act required, and make the other financial arrangements then in prospect, some of which had been carried out. At the same time the Secretary of State required that these matters should not be done by the Crown Agents. Sir Penrose Julyan and the Agent-General were therefore appointed to conduct the business. The arrangement was made by Sir John Hall that Sir Penrose Julyan should receive £2,000 for his services. It was thought better that the payment should extend over three years during which the service would last, and the consequence was that he received £666 13s. 4d. a year. The £2,000 will be exhausted at the end of next year, and the payment would then cease.

Bonus to Clerk-Assistant, £50; additional salary to Serjeant-at-Arms, £50.

4. Your Committee find that, at the close of the last session, these additions were suggested by Mr. Speaker, and that the Treasurer informed the Committee that, it being too late to have them formally voted, he should "take it for granted, if there was no expression of dissent, that the Committee authorized the Government to make these payments, and the money would be paid accordingly." (See *Hansard*, 9th September, 1882.)

Land Fund Account.

Payments made as advances in respect of rates payable under "The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, 1882:" Tauranga County, £160; Westland County, £1,000.

5. Your Committee are informed that it was represented to the Treasury that the funds at the disposal of the Tauranga County Council were quite inadequate to enable them to carry on the necessary maintenance of the county roads, and that, unless some assistance were rendered by the Government before the winter months set in, the roads would become impassable, and serious inconvenience would result to the settlers. The rates could not be paid by the Treasury in consequence of the non-completion of the valuation rolls. The sum of £160 was therefore paid on account, with the express condition that the money should be expended in paying the wages of surfacemen employed by the Council in keeping the roads in repair.

6. Your Committee are informed that the Westland County Council applied for £2,000, urging that the county was in great financial difficulty and was unable to pay wages and contracts. The Government consented to advance £1,000 only, on the same conditions and