

1896.

NEW ZEALAND.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

REPORT ON THE PETITION OF G. B. PARKER, TOGETHER WITH PETITION, MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE, AND APPENDIX.

*Report brought up on the 29th September, 1896, and ordered to be printed.*

## ORDER OF REFERENCE.

*Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives.*

THURSDAY, THE 25TH DAY OF JUNE, 1896.

*Ordered*, "That Standing Order No. 211 be suspended, and that a Committee, consisting of sixteen members, be appointed to examine into and report upon such questions relating to the Public Accounts as they may think desirable, or that may be referred to them by the House or by the Government, and also into all matters relating to the finances of the colony which the Government may refer to them; five to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Button, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Hogg, Mr. Lang, Hon. Mr. Larnach, Mr. Lewis, Mr. T. Mackenzie, Dr. Newman, Mr. Saunders, Hon. Sir R. Stout, Mr. Tanner, Hon. Mr. Ward, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. SEDDON.)

## REPORT.

PETITIONER prays that Parliament will consider the grievances which the debenture-holders in the New Zealand Midland Railway Company have against the Government, in respect of the seizure of the railway; and also the claim of the said debenture-holders for payment of the amount expended on the construction of the said railway.

Your Committee has the honour to report that, having carefully considered the petition of the debenture-holders in the Midland Railway Company, it finds that, from the facts contained in the report of the Committee of even date with this in respect to the Midland Railway Company's petition, it has no recommendation to make.

29th September, 1896.

W. J. M. LARNACH,  
Chairman.PETITION. (*Presented 30th June, 1896.*)

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives, in Parliament assembled.

THE humble petition of George Babington Parker, of 24, Ashley Place, Victoria Street, Westminster, in England, but at present temporarily residing in the City of Christchurch, in New Zealand, sheweth,—

1. That in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four the Parliament of New Zealand passed "The East and West Coast (Middle Island) and Nelson Railway and Railway Construction Act, 1884." By that Act several advantages were proposed and offered by the colony to such company as should undertake the construction of the railways therein specified. By section 7 of that Act it was provided that the Governor should cause an area of Crown land, for a distance not exceeding fifteen miles on each side of the proposed line, to be withdrawn from sale. That such lands should be surveyed into rectangular blocks, and that the company, by alternate choice, should obtain land having one-half the frontage to its line. By section 8 it was provided that should there not be sufficient Crown land adjoining the line, then other land should be set aside in places which would be specially benefited by the construction of the railway; and by the same section, subsection (5), it was provided that the company should be entitled to any coal found upon the land comprised in its grants. By subsections (8) and (9) certain lands used for mining purposes, on which were known gold-workings, were excepted, and declared not to be Crown lands for the purposes of the Act. By section 9 power was given to the company from time to time to borrow, and take up at interest, such sums as might be necessary for completing the construction of the railway, and for such purpose to issue debentures under the Act.

2. A contract under the Act of 1884 was, on the seventeenth day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, entered into between Her Majesty of the one part, and several gentlemen therein named of the other part, and was laid before the General Assembly in the session of 1885.

3. On the fourteenth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, this original contract was, with the consent of the Governor of the colony, assigned to the New Zealand Midland Railway Company (Limited).

4. The Amendment Act of 1886 was then passed, authorising the Governor to enter into a new contract with the company.

5. In the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven "The Midland Railway Contract Act, 1887," was passed, authorising the Governor to enter into a contract with the company, and providing by statute for the provisions of such contract, and declaring that such contract should operate as a substitute for the original contract.