

1881
NEW ZEALAND.

WEST COAST ROYAL COMMISSION:

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER APPOINTED UNDER "THE WEST COAST SETTLEMENT (NORTH ISLAND) ACT, 1880."

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To His Excellency the Honorable Sir ARTHUR HAMILTON GORDON, G.C.M.G.,
&c., &c., &c., Governor of New Zealand.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

In pursuance of your Excellency's command, given in the 9th section of the Commission under which I was appointed a Commissioner under "The West Coast Settlement (North Island) Act, 1880," I have already reported to your Excellency upon many special claims which had been brought before me, and have made recommendations for the issue of Crown grants of reserves to Natives whom I found entitled to them, either individually or collectively in hapus. With your Excellency's permission I will now report on the general progress of the work which I have been required to do.

The final report of the Commissioners appointed under the previous Act of 1879 was presented to your Excellency's predecessor on 5th August, 1880. It concluded by a summary of the objects which the inquiries of the Commissioners had led them to believe were essential to the settlement of the West Coast difficulties, and it was suggested that powers should be given by Parliament to enable the Governor to give effect to the course recommended. An enabling Act for that purpose was passed, and received the Governor's assent on 1st September, 1880. The Commission which I hold from your Excellency was not issued till 23rd December following. In the interval, your Excellency's Government had entirely or partially given effect to many of the recommendations of the previous Commission. Under the superintendence of Major Parris, the Special Local Commissioner, the sectional survey of the Waimate Plains for purposes of sale and settlement, which had been interrupted two years before, was resumed, and what was considered by the late Commissioners the cardinal point of the case—the indication on the ground of a large continuous reserve—was accomplished, with considerate regard for the wants and wishes of the resident Natives for whose use it was made. This reserve had been intersected by a road-line from Manaia to the North Road, and portions had been excised for the purpose of intermixing European settlement, as recommended by the Commissioners. The broad metalled road, which was to connect the settled districts south of the Waingongoro River with the Taranaki settled country, was being vigorously pushed on, and was far advanced towards completion. A line of road had also been cut by Mr Hursthouse, Road Surveyor, from Opunake to Stratford.

On my arrival in the district in the middle of January, I was equally gratified and surprised to see the extent to which all that the previous Commission had recommended on this branch of the subject had been achieved by the judicious management of Major Parris, under instructions from your Excellency's Govern-