

1898.
NEW ZEALAND.

NAVAL AND MILITARY CLAIMS

(REPORT ON, BY MR. J. C. MCKERROW, COMMISSIONER APPOINTED IN PURSUANCE OF SECTION 3 OF "THE NAVAL AND MILITARY CLAIMS SETTLEMENT AND EXTINGUISHMENT ACT, 1896.")

Laid on the Table by leave of the House.

To His Excellency the EARL of RANFURLY, Governor and Commander-in-Chief over the Colony of New Zealand.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

In pursuance of the Commission issued by His Excellency Sir James Prendergast, dated the 10th May, 1897, I most respectfully beg to report as follows:—

In order to afford every opportunity possible to each claimant to properly prosecute his or her claim, and having in view the fact that many of the claimants were in impecunious circumstances, your Commissioner deemed it advisable to hold sittings in any part of the colony where a number of claimants could reasonably be expected to be met, the places where sittings were held being Wellington, Greytown North, Carterton, Masterton, Pahiatua, Woodville, Dannevirke, Waipawa, Hastings, Napier, Auckland, Orehunga, Papakura, Pukekohe, Waiuku, Mercer, Hamilton, Paeroa, Thames, Coromandel, Dargaville, Whangarei, Kawakawa, Helensville, Tauranga, Rotorua, New Plymouth, Stratford, Hawera, Waverley, Wanganui, Marton, Feilding, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Timaru, Oamaru, Invercargill, Dunedin, Blenheim, Westport, Hokitika, Greymouth, Nelson, Gisborne.

Recognising the urgency for bringing to finality all claims under the Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Acts, your Commissioner caused notices to be sent to all claimants of the time and place at which inquiry would be made into their claims. Advertisements were also inserted in the newspapers circulating in the districts within which sittings were held. With the same object, though the time within which claims could be made by the Act of 1896 was limited to the 1st December, 1896, your Commissioner received and adjudicated upon the claims of 174 persons who had not preferred claims by the date above mentioned, but, while doing so, notified the claimants that legally their claims were barred by the time-limit.

Your Commissioner desires to state that, in reporting on the whole of these claims, a fair and equitable view of the circumstances surrounding each case was taken, apart from the existence of any technicalities which may have formed a bar to substantiation.

The results of your Commissioner's recommendations, as detailed in the schedules, are as follows:—

Class I.—The claims which are established according to law, and the category under which they are classed: Number of claims, 82; amount recommended, £2,660.

Class II.—The claims which are rejected on the ground of the claimant's character not being technically "good," but which would be established if the expression "good character" were read with the Queen's regulations for the army, 1859 to 1868: Number of claims, 7; amount recommended, £210.

Class III.—The claims which are rejected on technical grounds: Number of claims, 1,820; number of claims recommended, 14; amount recommended, £420.

Class IV.—The claims for Volunteers who have served for five years, although the service was not continuous: Number of claims, 12; number of claims recommended, 5; amount recommended, £150.

Class V.—New claims made subsequent to the 1st December, 1896: Number of claims, 174; number of claims recommended, 2; amount recommended, £45.

Summary.—Total number of claims, 2,095; total number of claims recommended, 110; total amount recommended, £3,485.

I have, &c.,

J. C. MCKERROW, Commissioner.