

(REPORT, BALANCE-SHEET, AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS IN RESPECT OF).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in pursuance of Section 13 of "The East Coast Native Trust Lands Act, 1902."

SIR,—

Gisborne, 11th September, 1907.

SIR,— I have the honour to submit the following report of the transactions of the late Board and of my predecessor (the late Mr. J. A. Harding), together with the balance-sheet and statement of the accounts of the Trust to the 31st March last.

Since the date of the Board's last report none of the lands have been disposed of either by sale or lease. In view of the duty cast on the Validation Court by the amending Act of last session to adjust the equities of the beneficiaries of the several lands, and to direct such sales, mortgages, and other dispositions of the several blocks as may be necessary to give effect to the scheme for such adjustment, the Board and the Commissioner were almost entirely precluded from disposing of any further areas until after formulation by the Court of the scheme of adjustment. If the Court is further empowered, upon the prorogation of the present session of Parliament, to complete and give effect to such a scheme of adjustment as was contemplated by the statute, the lands now remaining in the Trust can shortly be dealt with in accordance with the directions, and all the lands not required for the purposes of the Native beneficiaries can be leased.

The whole of the lands under lease are in profitable occupation, and in every instance the lessees have complied fully with the requirements of the improvement clauses in their leases.

Some of the lands in part-occupation of Natives cannot be leased upon terms which are mutually satisfactory to the Natives and their tenants. Such lands should be made productive. My predecessor in office was pressed by the Natives to utilise such lands, but felt restricted by the limitation of his powers. I recommend such power should be granted to the Commissioner. If the blocks to be improved, either singly or in groups, were first approved by the Minister, a sufficient check upon an undue exercise of such power would be provided. Power to borrow moneys for purposes of general improvement would be required.

I have, &c.,

T. A. COLEMAN, Commissioner.

The Hon. the Minister for Native Affairs, Wellington.

*Statement of Receipts and Payments in respect of the East Coast Native Trust Lands from the
25th August, 1906, to the 31st March, 1907.*

[illegible]

Gisborne, 13th July, 1907.

Examined and found correct.—J. SANDTMANN, F.I.A.N.Z.

T. A. COLEMAN, Commissioner.