

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Arthur William de Brito Savile,
Earl of Liverpool, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over
His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The Commission intrusted to us by Your Excellency with reference to the Public Trust Office directed us to inquire into and report upon the working of the Public Trust Office and to ascertain,—

- (a.) Whether the estates in the hands of the Public Trustee are efficiently administered.
- (b.) Whether the moneys controlled by the Public Trustee are satisfactorily invested.
- (c.) Whether the realizations are properly conducted.
- (d.) Whether the affairs of members of the Native race intrusted to the Public Trustee are carefully and satisfactorily managed; and to report whether Native business managed by the Public Trustee should be separated from the Public Trust Office and managed by a Board or a Trustee specially appointed for the purpose.
- (e.) Whether the methods of book-keeping and accountancy adopted by the Public Trustee are satisfactory, and in accordance with proper business methods.
- (f.) Whether the Public Trust Office is well and sufficiently staffed.
- (g.) Whether the present constitution of the Public Trust Office Board is satisfactory.

We were further directed to report generally upon any matters which came under our notice, and to make any suggestion which in our opinion would tend to the greater efficiency of the Public Trust Office.

We commenced our duties on the 9th day of January, 1913, and occupied ourselves with them continuously until the 4th day of February, 1913, when we adjourned for the purpose of preparing our report. The adjournment was made to the 28th day of March, 1913.

For the purpose of our inquiry, we first had an interview with the heads of the various Departments in the Head Office, and we then took the evidence of the officials we thought it desirable to examine. We had a notice put up in the office inviting any member of the staff to offer suggestions or to communicate with us on any subject relative to the inquiry if he desired to do so. A committee of six waited upon us as spokesmen on behalf of the junior staff, and their statements were taken. We also examined a number of gentlemen not belonging to the staff whom we thought might be of assistance to us. The office also furnished us with returns on various topics, and such returns accompany this report.

A list of the names of all witnesses is appended, together with their evidence, which was taken down, transcribed, and signed by them. In order to save space and expense, the evidence has for the most part been taken down in narrative form, and not in shape of question and answer.

In order to learn as much as possible from the District Managers we had a request sent to them by telegram in the following terms :—

15th January, 1913.

We have the honour to request that you will furnish us, as the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the working of the Public Trust Office, with a report, offering any suggestions as to the improved working of the Department, especially as regards branches, and your branch in particular; also, whether your staff is sufficient as regards number and competence; also,