

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,—

We, the Commissioners appointed by Your Excellency on the 7th July, 1914, to report upon the several matters mentioned in the attached Commission, have the honour to report to Your Excellency as follows :—

The Commission assembled at Wellington on the 15th July, and there arranged its itinerary, providing for visiting all portions of the district with a view to becoming thoroughly acquainted with the conditions as they existed on the ground, and also for the holding of sittings in all localities where settlement and mining operations were being carried on. Leaving Wellington on the 15th July, the Commission first proceeded to Auckland and inspected the records and plans in the District Lands and Survey Office there, and acquired the necessary information relative to the district covered by its order of reference. The following places were then visited in the order named, sittings being held at each : Thames, Tapu, Coremandel, Cabbage Bay, Kennedy's Bay, Kuaotunu, Whitianga, Tairua, Hikuai, Nevesville, Hikutaia, Puriri, Paeroa, Te Aroha, Galatea, Taneatua, Opotiki, Te Puke, Waihi, Karangahake, and Fitzroy (Great Barrier Island).

In all ninety-five witnesses were examined at these sittings, the whole of the evidence being given voluntarily. Written statements were also received from a number of persons who were unable to appear personally before the Commission. The evidence produced at the sittings, together with copies of the written statements submitted, is attached.

The accompanying lithograph shows the routes travelled by the Commission.

Before proceeding to set out our recommendations we have considered it advisable to bring under your notice the following important matters to which our attention was drawn by witnesses, with our remarks thereon :—

Respecting the Regulations for the Occupation of Pastoral Lands in the Hauraki Mining District.

(a.) *Registration of Licenses.*—Up to the present these licenses have not been registered under the Land Transfer Act, and consequently the licensees find it impossible to obtain the financial assistance necessary to enable them to improve their holdings. The majority of the areas have not yet been surveyed, and legal access has not been provided as required by the Land Transfer Act; registration under that Act cannot therefore be effected. The shape in which areas have in some cases been granted is somewhat undesirable, but we consider that the surveys should be made without delay, as far as possible in accordance with the boundaries as granted, and that licenses registered under the Land Transfer Act should be issued. The necessary provision for registration of these licenses is made by section 90 of the Land Act, 1908.

(b.) *Negotiation of Loans.*—Great difficulty is experienced by holders of Hauraki pastoral licenses in obtaining financial assistance towards the improvement of their holdings. This is mainly due to the fact that these licenses are not accepted as securities by the New Zealand State-guaranteed Advances Department. Early opportunity should be taken of providing the necessary legislation to enable these licensees to obtain the same assistance in the matter of advances from the State as is now enjoyed by lessees of Crown land under other tenures.

(c.) *Road Access to Areas granted.*—The difficulty of obtaining practicable road access is a very considerable drawback to the permanent occupation of some of these areas. Instances have been brought under our notice in which licensees have found it necessary to acquire a right of access through private property, and as this right can only be exercised during the pleasure of the owner of such private