

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Arthur 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 23rd day of June, 1914, to inquire by all lawful means in regard to the existing reserves for landless Natives in the South Island and in the Waikato-Maniapoto Native Land Court District, and as to the disposition thereof, and to report on the several matters referred to in the said Commission, a copy of which is attached hereto, have the honour to report as follows:—

We assembled in Wellington on the 7th July, and from that date to the 11th were engaged in the preliminary work of procuring data from old official files and papers. We decided that it would be unnecessary to take a verbatim report of the evidence tendered, but very full minutes of all important views and statements given to the Commission were entered in the minute-book, which accompanies this report.

On Saturday, the 11th, we crossed over to Blenheim and took evidence there on the 13th. On the 14th and on the morning of the 15th the Commission sat in Picton, and on the afternoon of the 15th we proceeded to Endeavour Inlet by motor-launch, to inspect some of the Native reserves in that locality. In the evening we left for Nelson and held sittings there on the 16th and 17th, returning to Wellington on the 18th. We proceeded to Christchurch on the 20th, and held sittings at Kaiapoi on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th; at Temuka on the 28th and 29th; at Puketeraki on the 30th and 31st; and at Dunedin on the 3rd August. We left for Invercargill on the 4th, and held sittings there on the 6th and 10th; at Riverton on the 8th; and at Tuatapere on the 11th.

The Commission then proceeded to Auckland and held a sitting there on the 18th August; at Mercer on the 19th; at Hamilton on the 20th, with a short sitting at the Thames in the evening; and on the 22nd at Paeroa, whence we returned to Wellington to draw up this report.

Some 192 persons in all tendered information to the Commission at its various sittings.

We deal seriatim with the several matters set out in our order of reference:—

- (1.) *What Crown lands not vested in the Public Trustee have been (a) set apart to make provision for landless Natives in the South Island prior to the passing of the South Island Landless Natives Act, 1906; or (b) permanently reserved by Proclamation for the purpose of providing land for landless Natives in the South Island, under the provisions of the said South Island Landless Natives Act, 1906; or (c) since the repeal of that Act, set aside or reserved in the South Island for that purpose.*

Under sub-article (a) we find that an area of 142,463 acres 1 rood 8 perches was set aside by the Commission, consisting of Messrs. Percy Smith and A. Mackay, for 4,064 persons (see Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1905, G.—2). Of the area shown above 5,642 acres 2 roods 34 perches in six blocks were proclaimed under the provisions of sections 235 and 236 of the Land Act, 1892.

(b.) Under the South Island Landless Natives Act, 1906, twelve blocks, consisting of 126,324 acres 0 roods 12 perches, were permanently reserved, although in the case of four of these blocks the lists of names and shares have not yet been published.

(c.) Since the repeal of the above Act two blocks, containing 934 acres 2 roods 19 perches, have been reserved under the provisions of sections 321 and 322 of the Land Act, 1908.

(d.) In the case of three blocks, containing 9,561 acres 3 roods 23 perches, no Proclamation has yet been issued, although they are included in the area