

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Arthur William de Brito Savile, Earl of Liverpool, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Your Warrant dated the 24th April, 1917, appointed us a Commission to inquire into and to report on the following matters :—

1. The best method of providing for the control of the Wairau River and its tributaries so as to safeguard the lands affected and to provide for the effective control and improvement of the rivers and their banks.
2. The desirability of appointing one competent authority to control the whole of the river and its tributaries.
3. The area which should be included in such district if constituted.
4. Whether in addition to the powers contained in the River Boards Act, 1908, the powers contained in the Land Drainage Act should also be conferred upon the Board of the proposed district, and whether any other powers in addition to those contained in the said Acts should be conferred on such Board.
5. Any other matters which may be brought before us in connection with the question of protection of land from damage by the Wairau River.

These matters have received our most careful consideration. We now have the honour to submit to Your Excellency our report thereon.

In pursuance of Your Excellency's instructions we advertised a sitting of this Commission to be held at the Courthouse, Blenheim, at 10.30 a.m. on the 22nd May, 1917.

All the local bodies interested were represented at the sitting—viz., Spring Creek Road Board, Spring Creek River Board, Pukaka River and Drainage Board, Wairau River Board, Picton Road Board, Tuamarina River Board, Wairau Road Board, Lower Wairau River Board, Pelorus Road Board, Wairau Harbour Board, Blenheim Borough Council.

LOCAL VISITS.

Preliminaries having been arranged, we adjourned the sitting of the Commission to the 28th May, 1917, to enable the Commission to visit the district generally, and particularly the works already carried out for protection from floods.

We spent the next five days in travelling over the district and inspecting the rivers and the protective works in existence, accompanied by representatives of the local bodies interested.

In the course of our examination of the rivers we inspected the Wairau River as far up as Branch River, and thence to the sea; the Waihopai River, the Omaka River, the Opawa River, the Tuamarina River, the Pukaka River and drain, and the Taylor River; the Fairhall, Mill, Doctor's, Spring, and many other creeks; and also the Wairau Harbour Board works, and the Wairau bar with its training-wall, also the various systems of banking.

WITNESSES.

We again sat on the 28th, 29th, and 30th days of May, 1917, and took the evidence on oath of nineteen witnesses, a copy of whose depositions are forwarded herewith.