

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS.

To His Excellency Sir GEORGE GREY, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of New Zealand, and Vice-Admiral of the same, &c., &c., &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

THE Royal Commission issued by your Excellency on the 23rd of last month, authorized and appointed us to inquire generally into the clerical strength and efficiency of the several departments of the public service; and especially as to the numbers, age of admission, rules of advancement and promotion, and remuneration of the several clerks and higher officers of the said departments; and to report such improvements in the organization of the same, by way of consolidation or otherwise, as may in our opinion promote efficiency and economy. Also, to inquire and report on the subject of retiring and other allowances and pensions, and especially whether the same should be provided by a contribution from the clerks, in the nature of a benefit society; and, if so, whether the said contribution should be compulsory, and therefore general, or only voluntary. Also, to inquire and report as to the manner in which an Income Tax might be raised, and the most effective and economical mode of raising the same; and especially what proportion the cost of collection would probably bear to the gross amount of tax collected.

2. We propose in this report to take a general view of the existing Civil Service of this Colony, Purpose of first Report. and to suggest principles for its reorganization, and also to indicate broadly, in several directions, the means, in our opinion, of effecting in it considerable economy without impairing the efficiency of its administration.

3. We propose to include in a future report a series of special departmental reports, containing a detailed account of our inquiries into various departments, and any changes which we think they need. Further Reports. We also propose, in a separate report, to reply to the question referred to us in relation to an Income Tax.

4. The Constitution and Laws of the Colony of New Zealand render the civil administration of affairs in it in many essential respects dissimilar to that in any other Colony, and this organic difference presents at the outset various anomalies. There are actually in the Colony ten Civil Services (one Colonial and nine Provincial), each entirely independent of the other in those executive functions which the law absolutely imposes on it. Nor are those functions of the nine Provincial Executives of that minor kind the exercise of which requires only a small and unimportant staff in each Province, for they include the conduct of Immigration, the construction of Public Works, and the preservation of life and property in settled districts. In none of these services has, so far as we are aware, any systematic organization been established. Moreover, while the general relation of a Provincial Executive to the Executive of the Colony is one of independence, Provincial Governments have, under delegated authority or by mutual arrangement, acted as the representative of the General Government in important branches of administration (including the survey, sale, and management of land). It has been often necessary both for the sake of economy and of efficiency, that an officer of the General Government should also be a Provincial officer. In alluding to these matters we desire not to enter into, or to express an opinion upon, political questions outside of the sphere of our duty, but merely to illustrate the complication of the subject in connexion with that one Civil Service into which we have to inquire, and the difficulty of unravelling it with a view to the adoption of administrative reforms. We have no authority to examine Provincial Civil Services, but in order to facilitate our duties, the Honorable the Colonial Secretary has, on our suggestion, asked the several Superintendents of Provinces to furnish for our information returns of Provincial Services, showing in each case when Provincial officers also hold any office under the General Government. As these returns will be in the same form as the return (to be presented to the General Assembly) of officers of the General Government, we recommend that they, when they are received, should be presented together with it, in order to complete the Official Directory of New Zealand. Review of existing Civil Service.

5. The Commissioners appointed in Victoria, in 1859, to report on the Civil Service of that Colony, make the following remarks on its condition at that time:— Victorian Civil Service in 1859.