

APPENDIX V.—REPORT ON THE CROWN GRANTS RECOMMENDED
FOR THE STONY RIVER RESERVE.

No. 1.

Hon. Sir W. Fox, West Coast Commissioner, to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,— West Coast Commission Office, New Plymouth, 12th January, 1883.

I have the honor to forward a report on the Stony River Reserve, for grants in which block I have this day forwarded recommendations to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FOX,
West Coast Commissioner.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

Enclosure.

Report of the Commissioner under "The West Coast Settlement (North Island) Act, 1880," on the Stony River Reserve.

RECOMMENDATIONS for the issue of seven Crown grants of the Stony River Block have been forwarded this day for submission to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government. The circumstances under which confiscation was practically abandoned in the cases of this and the Opunake Blocks are stated in the Second Report of the Commissioners of 1880 (page xxxix), from which it appears that, though the intention of the Government to restore these blocks to the Native owners in their entirety was perfectly clear, and had been for several years recognized in practice, the Proclamation necessary to give technical effect to the transactions had not been issued, and that therefore in law the blocks are confiscated and Crown lands. The issue of the grants now recommended will, in the case of the Stony River Block, fulfil the pledges of the Government by giving to the tribe Crown titles to the whole of their original territory, less only about 3,000 acres included in the six miles' radius reserved from the summit of Mount Egmont downwards, which applies equally to all blocks abutting on the mountain.

The Commissioner begs to call attention to the fact that 1,675 acres of compensation scrip, which were awarded by Judge Rogan in March, 1869, to be selected between Stony River and Waiweranui, will merge in these grants, which is perfectly understood by the grantees. It has never been made clear to the Commissioner why the Compensation Court took upon itself to deal with this and the Opunake Block years after the Government had declared its intention to abandon confiscation over them. The sole ground on which compensation was provided was the plea that the lands of loyal Natives had, for State reasons, been included in the confiscation promiscuously with that of rebels. What, then, was there to make compensation for in those blocks where confiscation was not enforced, and when no loyal Natives had lost a single acre of land? Care has been taken to insert in one or other of these grants the name of every Native to whom, under the circumstances referred to, compensation had rightly or wrongly been awarded, and none of them have expressed the least dissatisfaction at the course pursued. To have done anything else would have been to give an unearned preference to the few awardees of the Court; in fact, to pay them compensation twice over.

The Commissioner also encloses herewith a list of the grantees recommended for each of the seven grants, with the specific acreages to which each has been declared entitled in his or her individual right. This apportionment has been made by Major Parris, at the request of the Natives, and with their assistance, as a friendly act on his part, which has involved a very great amount of labour and care. It has, of course, no legal validity; but it will prove a very valuable aid to the Trustee of Native Reserves, when he comes to deal with the reserves under the Act of 1881, in arranging leases or dividing rents, with a view to which operations, I understand, the Natives have gone so far towards individualization. They perfectly understand that, if they wish to have their individual holdings surveyed on the ground, it will have to be done at their own expense; but the present step will greatly facilitate it, if it ever is done; and it is respectfully suggested that a copy of the document should be supplied to the Trustee of Native Reserves on the West Coast.

WILLIAM FOX,
West Coast Commissioner.