

1884.
NEW ZEALAND.

WEST COAST ROYAL COMMISSION.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER APPOINTED UNDER "THE WEST COAST SETTLEMENT (NORTH ISLAND) ACT, 1880."

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

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

West Coast Commission Office,
Wellington, 2nd June, 1883.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward a report on the progress and present position of the work of my Commission, and to request that you will lay the same before His Excellency the Governor.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FOX,
West Coast Commissioner.

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

To His Excellency the Hon. Sir WILLIAM FRANCIS DRUMMOND JERVOIS,
G.C.M.G., C.B., Governor of New Zealand.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Referring your Excellency to my report of the 7th June, 1883, I have now the honour to report the further progress of the work done under the Commission held by me since that date.

1. I then expressed my hope that, if the weather proved favourable, the work would be finished at an early date. In this I was somewhat disappointed. The prevalence of the wettest winter weather ever remembered in the colony, and the extremely rough character of most of the bush country, in which a large part of the compensation awards and reserves had to be allocated, retarded the completion of the surveys till about a month since. They are, however, now finished, and the whole of the survey parties which had been employed on the work of the Commission have been dispensed with. As the surveys progressed I have been able to allocate all the reserves and compensation awards which remained to be disposed of at the date of my last report; and I have made recommendations to your Excellency from time to time for the issue of grants in respect of them, which have been accompanied by special reports explaining the grounds on which my recommendations were made. I have appended hereto such of those reports as appeared of sufficient interest to be thus placed on record.

2. An important subject which came under my consideration during the year was the irregular leases, which had been entered into in many cases between Natives and colonists, of lands which, though intended to be made Native reserves, had not been then granted, but were technically and in fact Crown lands under the "confiscation," and which leases themselves had no legal validity. "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1881," and "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act 1881 Amendment Act, 1883," contained provisions by virtue of which the Governor was empowered to confirm these leases on being satisfied by the report of the West Coast Commissioner that certain conditions had been complied with. In pursuance of notice given by me applications for confirmation