

were made in the cases of sixty leases. Of these, many were not in conformity with the provisions of the Acts referred to; but the defects of most of them (such as imperfect plans) were rectified, and I was able ultimately to recommend thirty-nine of them, comprising about 14,000 acres of land, for your Excellency's confirmation, which has been given to them, and the leases returned to the owners, of which a list will be found appended. Records of these transactions have been kept, and handed to your Excellency's Government.

There was one class, however, which, I had no power to recommend for confirmation—namely, such as had been entered into subsequently to the passing of "The Confiscated Lands Inquiry and Maori Prisoners Trials Act, 1879," shortly after which date the Commissioners of 1880 commenced their labours. These were, I think very properly, excluded by the terms of "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1881." For it was known from the first of those dates, and to nobody better than the West Coast settlers, that Parliament had given special powers to the Governor to investigate and to remove the very serious complications affecting the confiscated lands on that coast. It was evident to every one from that date that any further unauthorized dealings with the lands in question must tend to increase the complications and to render their solution more difficult. It was clearly the duty of every one to abstain from such transactions. And most of the settlers did so; and, though several were very desirous of increasing their holdings or getting their terms extended, they very properly refrained. In one instance a gentleman who had actually got an arrangement in writing entered into with Natives for the extension of a very valuable lease, on receiving a hint from the Government that such transactions might complicate matters, tore up the document. Some persons, however, did, after the period specified by the Act, enter into new leases, or got extended terms of leases previously granted, and asked me to recommend their confirmation. Of course I declined, both because the Act prohibited me, and because I did not consider that on equitable grounds they had any right to ask it. I have been informed by one of them that a petition to Parliament is in course of signature asking that the restriction of the Act of 1881 may be repealed and their leases or agreements rendered confirmable by your Excellency. I think it my duty to express a hope that, if only in justice to those whose loyalty prevented them engaging in such transactions, the law will not be relaxed in favour of those whose self-interest led them to disregard such a motive. They appear to me to have no claim whatever to any equitable consideration, and it seems that it would be a bad precedent to grant it.

Which is with great respect submitted to your Excellency.

WILLIAM FOX.

Wellington, 2nd June, 1884.

APPENDIX I.

No. 1.

The Hon. Sir W. Fox to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

West Coast Commission Office, New Plymouth, 15th January, 1884.

I have the honour to forward a special report on the grants recommended by me for issue to the Ngatirahiri tribe, and to request that you will lay the same before His Excellency the Governor.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM FOX,

The Hon. the Native Minister, Wellington.

West Coast Commissioner.

REPORT on the Grants recommended to be made to the Ngatirahiri Tribe.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The circumstances connected with the granting to the Ngatirahiri tribe of lands between Rau-o-te-Huia and Titirangi render it necessary that I should lay before your Excellency a special report explanatory of the case, and that I should make a recommendation that, beyond the issue of the grants, some special compensation should be given to that tribe.

1. From the commencement of the West Coast difficulties the Ngatirahiri tribe, with the exception of about twenty individuals, was always loyal, and even those few who joined the rebels returned to their loyalty before Sir George Grey's condoning Proclamation of 1865, which restored them to all their rights as members of the tribe. A number of the tribe were enrolled under Captain Good, two lieutenants, and an ensign, and employed in the military occupation of the