

1907.

NEW ZEALAND.

# CLAIMS OF JOHN JAMES MEIKLE

(REPORT OF COMMISSION APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO).

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

## REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Baron Plunket, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.,  
Governor of the Colony of New Zealand.

May it please Your Excellency,—

WHEREAS by a Commission bearing date the 15th day of March, 1906, after reciting that at the Supreme Court sittings at Invercargill in the month of December, 1887, one John James Meikle was convicted of sheep-stealing, and was thereupon sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for the term of seven years; and reciting that upon his discharge from prison he commenced proceedings for perjury against one William Lambert, a witness for the prosecution at the trial of the said John James Meikle at Invercargill aforesaid; and that the said William Lambert was at the Supreme Court sittings held at Invercargill in the month of June, 1895, duly convicted of the said offence of perjury, and was thereupon sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for the term of four years; and reciting that the said John James Meikle alleges that he was innocent of the said offence of sheep-stealing of which he was convicted, and that he has suffered grave wrong and pecuniary damage and loss thereby; and has petitioned Parliament praying that his name be removed from the penal records of the colony, that he be granted compensation in respect of the aforesaid conviction and imprisonment, and that he be reimbursed the cost and charges incurred by him in defending himself upon his said trial and upon the prosecution of the said William Lambert; and reciting that it was expedient that a Commission should issue to inquire into the matters and things therein mentioned, for the purpose of arriving at a final conclusion and settlement in respect of the claims or alleged claims of the said John James Meikle and of determining whether legislation is necessary to give effect thereto, Your Excellency, in exercise and pursuance of the power and authority conferred upon Your Excellency by "The Commissioners Act, 1903," and the amendments thereof, and of every other power and authority enabling Your Excellency in that behalf, and acting by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council of the said colony, was pleased to appoint us, Worley Bassett Edwards, of the City of Auckland, Esquire, and Theophilus Cooper, of the City of Wellington, Esquire, to be Commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into the following matters and things, namely:—

1. Whether the conviction of the said William Lambert for perjury established the innocence of the said John James Meikle.

2. Whether the conviction of the said William Lambert raised a reasonable presumption that the said John James Meikle was innocent, or that he was wrongfully convicted.

3. Whether there is any evidence to show that the said John James Meikle has since his conviction made any admissions or statements inconsistent with his innocence.