

REPORT

OF THE COMMISSION APPOINTED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 7 OF THE NATIVE LAND AMENDMENT AND NATIVE LAND CLAIMS ADJUSTMENT ACT, 1917, TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT UPON THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF THE ABOVE BLOCKS.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Arthur William de Brito Savile, Earl of Liverpool, Member of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The sittings of the Commission were commenced, after due notification in the *New Zealand Gazette* and *Kahiti*, at Gisborne on Friday, the 15th February, 1918. After our commission had been read in both English and Maori an adjournment was taken till the 19th February, in order that certain documents and books of account might be produced, and to enable your Commissioners to become acquainted with the position of the titles to the Mangatu blocks. On the 19th the inquiry was proceeded with, and continued from day to day till its close on the 28th February, all proceedings being interpreted into Maori by the interpreter to the Commission.

Mr. Coleman, jun., appeared on behalf of the East Coast Commissioner, Mr. Thomas Alexander Coleman; Mr. Dunlop for Mini Kerekere and twelve other owners; Captain W. T. Pitt for Karaitiana Ruru and sixty-eight other owners; Mr. Burnard for Hau Wharakihi and two other owners; and Mr. Bright for Mr. H. C. Jackson (one of the trustees) and the Native committee of Mangatu No. 1. Later on Mr. Burnard took over from Mr. Bright the conduct of Mr. Jackson's case. Poneke Huihui appeared on behalf of Pera te Netuku and nine others, but later stated he did not wish to cross-examine or call any witnesses, but would leave the interests of his people in the hands of the Commissioners.

Mr. Marsh, Commissioner of Crown Lands for Hawke's Bay (and by virtue of that position one of the Mangatu trustees), was called as a witness by Mr. Coleman, and the following also gave evidence: W. Barton, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Gisborne; Thomas A. Coleman, the East Coast Commissioner; J. McLeod, police detective; H. C. Jackson, a trustee and secretary to Mangatu Block Committees; E. H. Pavitt, accountant in Mr. H. C. Jackson's employ; E. E. Hooper, Native Interpreter; and H. te Kani Pere, the Chairman of Mangatu No. 1 Committee.

We propose to deal seriatim with the ten specific questions submitted to us by the terms of our commission, and our answers to these will, we think, cover all matters we are required to report upon.

1. *The Dealings with the said Blocks from the Commencement of the said Trust or Trusts.*

First as to Mangatu No. 1 Block: The title to this land, estimated to contain 100,226 acres, was investigated under the Native Land Court Act, 1880, by the Native Land Court sitting at Gisborne in 1881, and 179 persons were found by the Court to be the persons entitled according to Maori custom to be declared the owners of the said land. It was agreed by the majority of these owners that the certificate of title for the said land should be issued in the names of twelve of their number only, and in pursuance of this voluntary arrangement the Native Land Court on the 30th April, 1881, ordered that a certificate of title be issued to Wi Pere and eleven others, such land to be inalienable, unless with the consent of the Governor, except by lease not exceeding twenty-one years.