

REPORT OF THE MIDDLE ISLAND REPRESENTATION COMMISSION.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable DAVID, Earl of Glasgow, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Her Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the undersigned, appointed by Commission bearing date the 20th day of July, 1896, issued under the hand of His Excellency the Governor, and sealed with the seal of the colony, sitting as the Middle Island Representation Commission for the purpose of "The Representation Act 1887 Amendment Act, 1896," having received from the Joint Commission the figures resulting from a census of the population of the colony taken on the 12th day of April, 1896, together with the numerical value of the quota of population required for each electorate of the colony, as defined in the Acts referred to above, together with the number of members for each island as determined by the said Joint Commission, now respectfully submit for your Excellency's consideration the following results of our proceedings:—

The Middle Island Commission met at Government Buildings, Wellington, on the 27th day of July, 1896, and, having obtained the information referred to above from the Joint Commission, proceeded to consider the rearrangement of the electoral districts on the basis of the Acts and the census above referred to. It was found that the nominal population of the Middle Island amounted to 428,896, and the quota to 11,848, whilst the proportionate number of members due to the nominal population of the Middle Island, including Stewart Island, was thirty-six. The Commission sat continuously up to the 8th of August, when, having finished the readjustment of boundaries, it adjourned until the 14th of September in order to allow of time for the receipt of objections. The proposed boundaries were published in a Supplement to the *New Zealand Gazette* of the 12th of August, 1896, which *Gazette*, with plans, was distributed throughout the colony, and notice given that objections would be received up to the 14th of September.

The Commissioners reassembled at Christchurch on that date, and found that a number of communications had been received from different parts of the Middle Island, mainly affecting the boundaries of some of the proposed electoral districts. A schedule showing the objections and suggestions that have been submitted in regard to the preliminary divisions proposed by us, and our decisions thereon, and also an authenticated map and description of the electoral districts as finally agreed upon, accompany this report.

The reduction of the number of members of the House of Representatives in the Middle Island from thirty-nine to thirty-six has rendered our work more difficult than it might otherwise have been; while the provision of the Representation Acts as regards the limits of the population to be given to the electoral districts has rendered impracticable compliance with the requests of most of the electors who have objected to boundaries provisionally fixed upon by us, when the changes proposed are considered in relation to adjoining districts, and when such changes in several cases would be objectionable to other and larger bodies of electors.

Given under our hands and seals, this 16th day of September, 1896.

JOHN HISLOP, Chairman.
THOS. S. WESTON.
J. P. MAITLAND.
J. W. A. MARCHANT.
DAVID BARRON.