

1896.
NEW ZEALAND.

MIDDLE ISLAND NATIVE CLAIMS:

STATEMENT SHOWING PROGRESS MADE IN MAKING PROVISION OF LAND FOR NATIVES IN
ACCORDANCE WITH RECOMMENDATION OF JOINT COMMITTEE IN 1889-90.

Laid on the Table by the Hon. J. McKenzie, with the leave of the House.

On behalf of the Commissioners I submit the following statement, which gives the present state of the matter:—

The Commissioners consist of Judge Mackay, Mr. T. Pratt, M.H.R., and myself. We sat at different times for about three months during the evenings getting together the necessary data on which to award the lands to the Natives entitled. It was necessary to adjourn from time to time to obtain information from the Natives themselves. The matter has now reached this stage: that, so soon as a question now before the Government is settled, the Commission can finish its work so far as the Canterbury, Otago, Southland, and Westland Natives are concerned.

The surveys of the lands set aside are well forward, and so soon as the question referred to above is settled, instructions can be given as to the size of the farms into which the lands are to be divided. The area reserved is, roughly, between 80,000 and 90,000 acres.

With regard to the land for Natives in Marlborough, a table is being compiled of all the landless people. At the present time it is not known who are really landless. I can give no indication of when this will be finished, for it may yet be necessary to make personal inquiries in the districts where the Natives are residing, and, as Judge Mackay and myself have our hands fully occupied with our own particular duties, it is likely this matter may be postponed indefinitely.

I may say, however, with regard to the landless Natives of Marlborough residing in the Sounds, that 193 of them have been supplied with land within the last three years, and many are now in occupation of such lands.

S. PERCY SMITH, Surveyor-General.

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