

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

LANDLESS NATIVES IN THE SOUTH ISLAND

(REPORT RELATIVE TO SETTING APART LAND FOR).

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

SIR,— Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 14th June, 1897.
We have the honour to submit an interim report relative to the setting-apart of land for landless Natives in the South Island; but, before detailing the work performed in connection therewith, it appears advisable to furnish a brief retrospect of the causes which led to the necessity for setting apart land for the aforesaid purpose.

In consequence of the numerous petitions received from the Natives in the South Island relative to the non-fulfilment of promises made them at the cession of their land to the Crown—that additional land sufficient for their future wants should be set apart for them—several inquiries were held under Royal Commission for the purpose of ascertaining their actual requirements. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament was also appointed in 1888, and again in 1889 and 1890, to report on the Middle Island Native claims.

These several inquiries eventually resulted in the setting-apart of the under-mentioned areas of land, to provide for the persons found to be landless, or insufficiently provided for at that date, subsequently augmented by 19,721 acres to meet the requirements of other persons not included in the earlier enumerations :—

<i>Land originally set apart.</i>						Acres.	Acres.
Marlborough	...	...	...	...	...	...	6,111
Waiau, Southland	...	...	...	...	...	60,110	
Stewart Island	...	...	...	...	...	9,184	
Tautuku, Otago and Southland	...	...	...	...	...	11,819	
Wanaka	...	...	...	...	...	2,980	
Westland	...	...	...	...	...	1,764	
							85,857
							91,968
Augmented area	...	...	...	...	...	...	19,721
							111,689

The following allocations have been made up to date, viz. :—

						Acres.
At Tautuku,	in favour of	370 persons	...	...	...	12,371
At Stewart Island,	"	239 "	...	...	...	8,725
At Marlborough,	"	375 "	...	...	...	12,914
At Westland,	"	129 "	...	...	...	3,660
At Heaphy River,	"	38 "	...	...	...	1,600
1,151 "						39,270

The number of persons whose claims have been considered up to date comprises 3,483, of whom 1,151 persons have been located, leaving 2,332 yet to be dealt with. These persons have been grouped into families to facilitate their location so soon as the surveys at Waiau and Wanaka are sufficiently advanced to admit of this being done; and it will not therefore occupy long to perform this duty as soon as matters are otherwise in readiness.

In addition to the claims referred to in the preceding paragraph, there are about 460 persons in the Kaikoura and Marlborough districts whose position will have to be considered, as many of the number, it is alleged, have no land, and others are insufficiently provided for. An additional area will therefore be required to meet their wants if the same concessions are to be made in their favour.

A great deal of difficulty exists in providing for these claims in the Marlborough District, and the question arises where it will be possible to locate them.