

1909.

NEW ZEALAND.

EAST COAST NATIVE TRUST LANDS

(REPORT, BALANCE-SHEET, AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS IN RESPECT OF).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in pursuance of Section 13 of "The East Coast Native Trust Lands Act, 1902."

REPORT BY THE EAST COAST COMMISSIONER.

SIR,—

Gisborne, N.Z., 16th November, 1909.

I have the honour to submit the following report of the transactions of the Trust, together with the balance-sheet and statement of accounts to the 31st March last.

Scheme of Adjustment of Interests.—Since the date of my last report there has been laid before Parliament the scheme which, under section 11 of "The Maori Land Claims Adjustment and Laws Amendment Act, 1907," the Validation Court was directed to prepare for the purpose of adjusting the equities as between the beneficial owners of the respective blocks constituting the Trust estate. By its decision the Court formally ascertained the amounts owing by or to the respective blocks as at the 31st March, 1907, thus enabling the account of each block to be stated with accuracy as from that date. I therefore beg to submit herewith, in addition to the balance-sheet and statement of receipts and expenditure required by statute, statements of the accounts of the respective blocks, founded on the balances ascertained by the Court as at 31st March, 1907, and giving an abstract of the transactions of the respective blocks from that date to the 31st March, 1909. A statement summarising the position of the blocks as between themselves is also annexed. The accounts of the Mangapoike and Tahora Blocks have been further divided so as to show the position of each subdivisional block. In Mangapoike there are seven and in Tahora five blocks, each block having in nearly every instance entirely different groups of owners. The accounts of these two blocks are therefore now shown in twelve separate statements.

Rents.—Out of the sum of £4,334 4s. 3d. received for rents during the year, £1,323 13s. 9d. has been paid over to the beneficiaries, as against £540 10s. last year. The balance has been placed to the credit of the respective blocks from which the rents were derived. Some of the leased lands are still in debt to the Trust estate to such an extent that it is not yet possible to pay over any part of the rent to the beneficiaries. Several of them are, however, now altogether freed from debt, and I purpose paying over to the beneficiaries in these blocks the rents as received, less the proportion of expenses of management fairly chargeable against them. Others of the leased lands, although still indebted to the Trust estate, are in such improved circumstances that from this out it will be possible, after putting aside such portion of the rents as will provide a sinking fund for the redemption of the block, to pay the balance to the beneficiaries.

Farms.—During the year further areas of bush have been fallen and sown for the purpose of farming the lands for, and by, the Native owners. In Tahora No. 2c 1, Section 3 (commonly known as the Stock Track) about 1,100 acres have been cleared and sown, and are carrying about 1,800 sheep, besides cattle. At the Papuni Farm, in the Tahora No. 2f Block, on the Ruakituri, 1,300 acres of bush have been cleared, and are now carrying 3,500 wethers. On Maraetaha No. 1n (Te Kopua) 800 acres have been cleared, in addition to 250 acres felled by the Native Committee before I took over the block, and which I have since paid for, and a further area of about 100 acres which was cleared by one of the Native owners. Altogether about 1,200 acres of bush are in grass, besides 400 acres of fern partially grassed. There are now depasturing on the block 3,000 sheep and 200 head of cattle. In Paremata No. 3 further improvements have been made, chiefly by draining at the foot of the hills, in sowing the swamp which had been drained the previous year, and in fencing. This year the farm has carried 2,500 ewes, 200 hoggets, and 140 steers. The whole of the live-stock on the farms are of good quality, and are doing well. The profits on the working of the Paremata Farm for the year