

1872.

Parris, P. P.

1872, F.—3A.

Ibid, 26th

August 1872.

Ibid, 31st March
1872.Ibid, 30th July
1872, 72/1582.30th July 1872,
Hansard, vol. xii,
p. 167.*Hansard*, vol. xii,
p. 595.*Hansard*, vol. xii,
p. 640.Sir E. Stafford,
5th September
1872, *Hansard*,
vol. xiii., p. 154.
Appendix A,
No. 4.13th September
1872: *Hansard*,
vol. xiii., p. 171.Wi Parata, 12th
September 1872.
Appendix A,
No. 7.Question 1st Oct.
1872: *Hansard*,
vol. xiii., p. 431.
2nd October 1872:
Hansard, vol.
xiii., p. 467.Report of Native
Affairs Com-
mittee, 25th
September 1872.
Appendix A,
No. 6.
Appendix A,
No. 5.

But meanwhile news was flying up the Coast that the land was to be restored. Titokowaru, with the last remnant of those who had fled to Ngatimaru, hastened their return to their old settlements. Large numbers of Natives poured in from other places: in one month a hundred came up from Wellington alone. At the Parihaka half-yearly meeting, Wi Parata told the Natives that he had brought the question of the confiscation before the House without avail, so that he would not give rise to any false expectations, but advised them to come to some settlement with the Government. Several meetings took place, one at Omuturangi, and another convened at Opunake by Wi Tako, Wi Parata, and Hemi Parai, with the object of inducing the Government to give back the township there of 1,400 acres as well as the rest of the confiscated territory. On the meeting of Parliament in July, Wi Parata presented a petition from the Natives, praying for the restoration of their lands; and moved in his place that "in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the confiscated lands should be returned to the Native owners thereof." In the debate that ensued, Sir D. McLean said the Assembly had already declared that the confiscated land could not be restored, and the Government would not retrace its steps by restoring it now. It happened that immediately after this, a party debate took place on the policy of the Government. Wi Parata assured the House that if part of the land were returned to the Parihaka Natives, roads could be made through any part of that country without opposition. Sir Donald McLean said: "The Government has already gone so far that in the district between Waingongoro and New Plymouth, arrangements are being made to secure to the Natives all lands required for their own use: for those lands the Natives will receive titles, and for the remainder compensation will be given to them." Sir Edward Stafford said, "There is a large portion of the confiscated lands now in the position of Mahomet's coffin, and I do not see that we could do better, in order to promote the peace of the country, than to largely divide what remains of those lands among the Natives who after fair investigation may be found to have an interest in them. Of course I would make necessary reserves for railways and villages, and where rivers flow into the sea I would make reserves for seaport purposes. I should then institute a process by which it should be ascertained who were fairly entitled to reap some benefit from those portions of the confiscated lands at present unalienated. When the Government has done that, it will have done the best thing it has ever done. It will have got rid of one of the greatest sources of difficulty. I do not suggest that this should be done in answer to any demand of the Natives, but as an act of grace and an act of policy."

This was on the 5th September 1872. The division went against the Fox Ministry, and Sir E. Stafford came into office. On the 13th September, in the Legislative Council, Mr. Sewell, in answer to a question as to what the new Government meant to do about the restoration of the confiscated lands, replied that though he could not then state the particular measures the Government would adopt, the intention of the Ministry was to give effect to the general views of policy expressed by the Prime Minister. Wi Parata had already told his friends on the Coast that "it was quite decided all the land from Waingongoro up to Taranaki was to be restored"; and the Government had gone so far as to announce that the sale of land at Patea, which had been in preparation for some time, was to be cancelled. Nevertheless, in answer to a distinct question of whether it was the intention of the Government to abandon the confiscated land, Sir E. Stafford said that the Government did not mean to abandon it at all, but to use it for the objects he had indicated. And on being further pressed for a more specific answer, he said it would not be for the public interest openly to declare at the [then] present time the definite conclusion to which the Government would come.

But in the meantime the Select Committee on Native Affairs to whom the petitions presented by Wi Parata had been referred, advised the restoration; and the House passed a resolution that "in the opinion of this House, it is desirable and expedient that the recommendation of the Native Affairs Committee should be acted on by the Government." But they desired that this should only be done by assigning land under Crown grants irrespective of the original Native ownership; and deprecated the indiscriminate giving back of unappropriated lands to