

Crown-granted to Europeans. Te Whiti and his people declared that it was done to test the right of confiscation : and, still further, to bring about that aggression against himself (by the Government) which was to end in his apotheosis, in the expulsion of the Europeans, and in the restoration of all the lands possessed by them to the original Native owners. The Government at first treated the matter as if the ploughing were an assertion of right to lands which “had been bought, not confiscated, and which for thirteen years had remained without its being paid for” : adding “that it did not appear that anything but a fair settlement was desired.” This view was reasserted in the Prime Minister’s telegram of the 22nd of June, addressed through Major Brown to the settlers at Hawera : “Some of the Natives,” said Sir George Grey, “represent that what they are doing is only to call attention to wrongs which they state they have suffered for years in reference to lands promised them as compensation. Others are undoubtedly doing it under the orders of a fanatic ; and there is no telling to what length fanaticism will proceed. This is no new thing. Nearly similar circumstances took place in the County of Kent in my youth, and resulted in much loss of life. You should let them [the settlers at Hawera] understand that there are no negotiations going on with Te Whiti, and that we are quite free to take any course we may think necessary.”

1879.

Hon. Sir G. Grey,
Telegram to
Ministers, 10th
June 1879.

Hon. Sir G. Grey,
Telegram to Civil
Commissioner,
22nd June 1879.

Up to this date the Government had resisted all appeals by the settlers to take active steps with the ploughers, and at the same time had repeatedly cautioned the settlers against taking the law into their own hands. In the telegram last referred to, however, Sir George Grey acquiesced in the propriety of the settlers “removing the ploughers without any unnecessary disturbance.” As it happened, they had not waited for his acquiescence, but had, early on the very same day on which it was written (22nd June 1879), removed the ploughmen and their gear from Mr. Livingstone’s land near Hawera, where the lawn was being ploughed up in front of his house. In a telegram dated the previous day, Colonel Whitmore had expressed a hope that the settlers “would not take that course, but leave the matter till the Government should have opportunity to obtain reports from its own officers.” On the 23rd June, Sir George Grey, in a telegram replying to one from Major Brown reporting the removal of the ploughmen, said, “The owners of the lands are quite justified in putting the Natives off with the assistance of their friends ; but arrests under warrants should be made by the Police or Armed Constabulary.” Two days after, Sir George Grey telegraphed to Major Tuke that “if Natives should frequently return to plough, and a disturbance of the public peace be likely to take place, it would be his duty to have such Natives arrested, and a charge of disturbance brought against them at once.” From this date the ploughmen, up to the number of nearly 200, were followed up by the police, arrested at various places, and sent for trial to Carlyle and Wellington. It is unnecessary here to continue the story of events so far as the ploughing is concerned. It entirely ceased at the end of August. The detention of the ploughmen, and the postponement of their trials under authority of an Act passed by the General Assembly, do not appear to come within the scope of the investigation we were commissioned to make. We will merely add that they submitted to arrest without resistance, acting under Te Whiti’s orders, and that they were told to remain in custody awaiting the final demonstration of his power, which he prophesies will release them and bring about the revolution he predicts.

Ibid.

Hon. Colonel
Whitmore, Tele-
gram, 21st June
1879.

Hon. Sir G. Grey,
Telegram, 23rd
June 1879.

Hon. Sir G. Grey,
Telegram, 25th
June 1879.

IX.—INCIDENTAL CAUSES WHICH IMPEDED THE GOVERNMENT.

Among incidental causes which no doubt more or less impeded the progress of the negotiations with the Natives, it would be unfair to Major Brown not to allude to a complaint which he makes on more than one occasion. We refer to obstructions placed in the way of the Commissioner by a class of persons who were professedly acting as his assistants, and who, either in the shape of salary or of largesse, were receiving for their imaginary services no small sums of public money. Europeans or half-castes of questionable antecedents, habitually living beyond the frontier of decent society in connubial or *quasi*-connubial relationship with Native women, have been taken into Government pay, and entrusted