

WEST COAST COMMISSION.

APPENDIX A.—PART II.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. SHEEHAN RESPECTING THE PARIHAKA BLOCK.

No. 1.

The COMMISSIONERS to Mr. SHEEHAN.

DEAR MR. SHEEHAN,

Wellington, 26th July, 1880.

I ask your permission to bring before you a point which Sir William Fox and myself wish very much to clear up.

In making the recommendation we did to His Excellency the Governor last March, on the subject of making provision for Te Whiti and the Parihaka people, we were under the impression that we were really giving effect to the intentions you had yourself expressed as Native Minister, in your place in Parliament, as well as in your Cabinet Minute of 14th April 1879, to which we have referred in our Second Report. We were confirmed in that opinion by the evidence of Major Brown, who told us that Sir George Grey had informed him that the Government intended, and had indeed fully decided, to give back to Te Whiti and his people the piece of country which comprises Parihaka. On sending, however, a copy of Major Brown's evidence to Sir G. Grey, he wrote to us that Major Brown must have altogether misunderstood him, and that all your colleagues agreed with him that the Government had never decided upon giving back any particular block of land to the Natives.

Under these circumstances, Sir W. Fox and I would be very glad, before sending in our Final Report, if you would have no objection to let us know what your own intentions were with regard to provision for the Parihaka people. We laid down the principle from the first, with all the Natives, that they must not seek for new concessions, and that our business was to ascertain as nearly as possible what previous Governments had either promised or intended to do for them. Major Brown's statement to us is so entirely contradicted by Sir George Grey, that we think it of essential importance to be able to inform the Governor how far your own views, as Native Minister at the time, differ from those we submitted to His Excellency in our First Report last March.

I remain,

Dear Mr. Sheehan,

Yours faithfully,

F. D. BELL.

No. 2.

Mr. SHEEHAN to the COMMISSIONERS.

DEAR SIR FRANCIS,

Wellington, 27th July, 1880.

I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, in which you state that on making the recommendation you did to His Excellency the Governor, last March, on the subject of making provision for Te Whiti and the Parihaka Natives, you were under the impression that you were really giving effect to the intentions which I had expressed as Native Minister, in my place in Parliament, as well as in my Cabinet Minute of the 14th April 1879, to which you have referred in your Second Report. You go on to state that you were confirmed in that opinion by the evidence of Major Brown, who, you said, had told you that Sir George Grey had informed him that the Government had intended, and indeed had fully decided, to give back to Te Whiti and his people the piece of country which comprises Parihaka. You then proceed to state that on sending a copy of Major Brown's evidence to Sir George Grey, he represented to you that Major Brown must have altogether misunderstood him, and that all his colleagues agreed with him (Sir George Grey) that the Government had never decided on giving back any particular block of land to the Natives. Under these circumstances you intimate to me that Sir William Fox and yourself would be very glad, before sending in your final report, if I would have no objection to let you know what my own intentions were with regard to provision for the Parihaka people. And you add that you laid down the principle from the first with all the Natives that they must not seek for new concessions, and that your business was to ascertain as nearly as possible what previous Governments had either promised or intended to do for them.

I very willingly give the Commissioners the information thus sought for.

(1.) I do not remember ever having been present at any conversation between Sir George Grey and Major Brown upon the question of returning the Parihaka Block, or any part of it; and I observe that Major Brown's conversation with Sir George Grey is stated by him to have taken place at New Plymouth. As I was in Auckland at that time, it is hardly necessary to say that I could have taken no part in the matter.

(2.) For a long time before the turning off of the surveyors, I had frequently discussed with Major Brown what action should be taken with regard to the confiscated land between the northern boundary of the Waimate Plains Block and the southern boundary of the Hangatahua Block. It is impossible for me to recollect exactly what took place during these conversations, but they amounted in substance to this:—