

1881.

NEW ZEALAND.

THE MAORI PRISONERS,

THEIR DETENTION, TREATMENT, ETC.

(PAPERS RESPECTING STATEMENTS AND CHARGES MADE BY MR. BRADLAUGH, M.P.)

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

No. 1.

The Right Hon. the Earl of KIMBERLEY to the OFFICER ADMINISTERING the
GOVERNMENT of NEW ZEALAND.

SIR,—

Downing Street, 22nd October, 1880.

I have received a letter, a copy of which is enclosed, from Mr C. Bradlaugh, M.P., drawing my attention to the prolonged imprisonment undergone by certain Maoris who were arrested in 1879 for forcible entry, and for offences under the Malicious Injuries to Property Act. Sir Hercules Robinson, in his despatch of the 14th of August last, informed me of the enactment of an Act entitled “The Maori Prisoners Act,” which he stated enables the Colonial Government to retain in custody, without trial, the most dangerous characters for a further limited period specified in the Act, and he expressed an opinion that the Act, though doubtless a strong one, was necessary, in the critical position of affairs on the West Coast.

I have not, however, been placed in possession, so fully as I should have wished, of the circumstances which have led to the passing of this Act, and I have therefore to request that you will be so good as to prepare a full report respecting the Native disturbances of 1879 and 1880, and the measures taken by the Government of New Zealand in consequence of them, so that, if necessary, it could be laid before Parliament as a complete account and narrative of the circumstances

I have, &c.,

The Officer Administering the Government
of New Zealand.

KIMBERLEY.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Mr. BRADLAUGH, M.P. to the Hon. the UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES.

SIR,—

20, Circus Road, St. John's Wood, N W., 30th September, 1880.

I have had application made to me from New Zealand with reference to the Native Maori prisoners now most unjustly detained as prisoners without trial under the following circumstances.

In 1879 certain Natives commenced ploughing on land which had been confiscated by the Government and sold to Europeans; many arrests of Maoris were made for forcible entry, and for offences under the Malicious Injuries to Property Act: some of the Natives so arrested were actually tried and sentenced; others (and it is to these I direct your attention) were arrested, and not immediately tried, but were committed by the Magistrates to take their trial before the Supreme Court. A general election being then impending, an Act was introduced to postpone the trial of the yet untried prisoners until thirty days after the assembling of the new Parliament. When the Parliament met, another Bill was introduced again postponing the trial until sixty days after the meeting of the next session of the Parliament. I am informed that before the Governor assented to this last Act a deputation of the Maori members waited upon him, when a