

5. The latter Act provided for the appointment of the Commissioners by whom the Reports were presented. Those documents are, with a view to the completeness of the information, included in the series of papers sent herewith; but Ministers do not doubt that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has already received them through Sir Hercules Robinson, and has given to them the attention demanded by their interest and importance.

6. Those Reports contain a statement of the causes of the West Coast troubles; a careful inquiry what should be done, so as to secure justice to Natives and to Europeans; and recommendations as to the best means of doing what is desired. The question of Confiscation—its policy at the time it was determined upon, and its general effect—is fully discussed by the Commissioners. The promises made by successive Governments, the extent to which they have been performed, and the results to the Natives of performing them as recommended by the Commissioners, are minutely set forth. And as it appears that such performance would mean securing reserves amounting to nearly 263,000 acres, of the estimated value of £638,000, for Natives not numbering, in all, more than 3,000, there can, it is conceived, be no question respecting the sufficiency of the provision.

7. The West Coast Settlement Act, 1880, was passed as soon as possible after the receipt of the Commissioners' Reports. It empowers the Governor, "in such manner as he may think fit, to make a final settlement of every claim or grievance, of any nature, arising out of any promise, award, or engagement, howsoever made, by or on behalf of the Government of the colony, in respect of lands situated within the confiscated territory, and, so far as may be expedient to do so, in accordance with the said Reports; and to issue Crown grants in fulfilment of such awards, promises, and engagements." The Act further provides that certain of the reserves for Natives shall be made inalienable, while others may be made alienable under the provisions of special Acts relating thereto.

8. The Commissioners had consented to aid the Government in giving effect to the Act; but Sir F. Dillon Bell having accepted the appointment of Agent-General for the colony, in London, Sir William Fox has been appointed sole Commissioner for the purpose. He will enter upon the work soon after the commencement of the New Year. Meanwhile, the survey of the large block of 25,000 acres, spoken of by the Commissioners as the "Continuous Reserve," is being pressed forward; and steps are being taken to set apart, as quickly as is found possible, the other reserves recommended.

9. The letter to Wiremu Kingi was written by the Native Minister on the occasion of this Chief's release from prison. Its object was to prevent, or to remove, misapprehension as to the intentions of the Government; and a number of printed copies of it were sent to Parihaka, and distributed there, as well as amongst the Natives on other parts of the West Coast.

10. Subsequently, Mr. Parris—who had been for many years in charge of the district on behalf of the Native Department, and who was so well known to the West Coast Natives, and so favourably regarded by them, that he was specially selected to assist the Commissioners—was twice sent to Parihaka, in order that he might explain fully to the Natives at the monthly meetings, as well as to Te Whiti, what the Parliament had done and the Government wished to do. Te Whiti refused to listen to Mr. Parris, and prevented the Natives from listening to him. But Ministers have evidence that the Parihaka Natives are, as a rule, well informed as to what has been done, and as to what is proposed to be done, towards a settlement of difficulties; and Mr. Parris was sent to the meetings only because the Government had heard that Te Whiti had said that he was ignorant as to the recommendations of the Commissioners and the provisions of the West Coast Settlement Act, and that he desired to be informed what they were. As illustrating the influence over Natives which enabled Te Whiti to prevent Mr. Parris being listened to, it may be stated that amongst the prisoners there are many who belong to tribes that have no interest in West Coast lands, but who went to Parihaka, and there obeyed Te Whiti's orders.

11. His Excellency is aware that, in addition to the endeavours herein stated, others are being made which, it is hoped, will bring about direct and beneficial communication with Te Whiti. But, whatever may be the result of such endeavours, it has been thought right that a test should be applied to a statement alleged to have often been made by Te Whiti, that he desired to meet the Governor, and to discuss with him all questions of grievance and their remedy.

12. Ministers believe they have now sufficiently dealt with the general question of the West Coast troubles, and the arrest of the prisoners. The Native Minister's memorandum will fittingly supplement the information given, with reasons in justification of the detention of the men.

13. Mr. Bradlaugh states in his letter, that he has been informed that before the Governor assented to the Maori Prisoners Act, 1880, a deputation of Maori Members of Parliament waited upon His Excellency, and that a solemn assurance was then given that the prisoners should be tried in January or February of the present year. A statement to this effect having been made by Sir George Grey in the House of Representatives, Sir Hercules Robinson sent to Ministers a memorandum stating his desire "at once to record officially his denial of the accuracy of the statement that he promised the Maori Members that the prisoners should be tried in January or February last." The *Hansard* report of proceedings in the House, and the extracts from Sir Hercules Robinson's memorandum, which are amongst the appendices hereto, are but additional proofs that—although probably based upon a misconception on the part of members of the deputation—the statement that the alleged promise was made is altogether erroneous.

14. Mr. Bradlaugh says, "My informant writes that this prolonged imprisonment is likely to cause the death of many of these unfortunate men; and that one of them actually died in gaol on 22nd July last." The prison returns show that two of the Native prisoners have died at Dunedin—one in the Gaol, and the other in the General Hospital; the cause of death in each case being consumption. In Wellington, one of the prisoners died, after a long illness, also of consumption. At Lyttelton, where 62 prisoners have been confined, and at Ripa Island, in the same neighbourhood, where there have been 153 prisoners, no death has occurred, and the general health of the prisoners is reported to be good. The deaths amongst these Maoris have, therefore, been very few in proportion to the number of the prisoners.

15. Mr. Bradlaugh concludes his letter by saying that he is "credibly informed" that the prisoners "are all" "absolutely ignorant of the English language, and utterly defenceless against this