

on the West Coast and the causes of the recent demonstration was constituted, whilst the last four virtually re-enacted the provisions of the expired Act, which it revived. Similar professions to those made in July, that the trials were only postponed, and that but for a short time, were made on this occasion. The Bill, however, was not received with the same acquiescence as its predecessor, nor did it pass without opposition. It was urged by Mr. Stewart, one of the members for Dunedin, that, if these men had committed an offence, they should be brought to trial for it, and that, if they had not, they should be released. Others alleged that they could see no reason for the measure which would not equally apply to the permanent detention of the prisoners; others, again, urged that they had really been guilty of no crime—"that where a man acted *bond fide* in the exercise of what he believed to be a right, even though that right had no existence in fact, yet, if that right was one which might have existed in law, and he *bond fide* believed he was acting in pursuance of that right, he was protected, and was not amenable to the criminal law of the country." Sir G. Grey pointed out forcibly the objections to combining in one Bill two totally distinct measures; and all the Native members protested against the delay of the trials. On the other hand, it was urged that, though the offence with which the prisoners were charged, and of which alone they were formally guilty, was slight, the real cause of their arrest was a dangerous opposition to Government; that, if they had been detained a long time in gaol awaiting trial, so sometimes were Europeans; that if they were released the chances of war between the two races at an early period would be increased, and that it would, as a matter of fact, be most dangerous so to release them. An amendment was agreed to, limiting the date to which the Governor could postpone the trials to the time during which the Act was to continue in operation, that is to say, until the next meeting of Parliament and for sixty days thereafter; and on a division the Bill was passed in the House of Representatives by fifty-eight votes to thirteen.

26. In the Legislative Council the measure passed without opposition, but a somewhat remarkable speech was made by Sir F. D. Bell, in which he pointed out in very forcible terms the injustice done to the Maoris by delays on the part of successive Governments, and by the breach of promises made to them: but, whilst protesting against the indefinite detention of the prisoners, he recognized the danger of releasing them, and, (with the amendment already agreed to in the House of Representatives,) voted for the Bill. Both the Native Minister, in the House of Representatives, and the Attorney-General, in the Legislative Council, without absolutely denying, appeared to discredit, the existence of grievances, and held out strong hopes that the trials would take place before the next session of the Legislature.

27. When, however, Parliament reassembled in June, 1880, the prisoners had not been tried. By a Proclamation of the Governor, the trials had first been fixed for the 5th April, and subsequently postponed to the 5th July, and were on the 29th June further postponed till the 26th July. On the 15th July the Minister for Native Affairs proposed a fresh Bill to authorize the further detention of the prisoners, avowing, as he did so, that he now "intended to drop the provisions with regard to trial altogether, which he considered to be a mere sham."

28. This Act ("The Maori Prisoners Act, 1880") recites the substance of the previous statutes, and enacts that all Natives committed and waiting for trial to whom the Acts referred, as also all other Natives detained in custody for default of entering into sureties to keep the peace, should be deemed to be in lawful custody, and may be lawfully detained. It further provides that the Governor may direct the discharge from custody of such prisoners on such conditions as he may think fit; and that, if such conditions should not be observed by any Native so liberated, he may be rearrested by a warrant from the Minister for Native Affairs, and returned to his former custody.

29. The duration of the Act is limited to the 1st October, 1880, but power is given to the Governor to extend its operation for any period not exceeding three months at one time, until the close of the next following session of Parliament.

30. More opposition was offered to this measure than to that of 1879. The Minister for Native Affairs gave two reasons for its adoption. "The reasons," said