

5. The question of surveying these lands was, indeed, with the Government of Sir Julius Vogel, of Dr. Pollen, and of Major Atkinson—Sir Donald McLean being Native Minister in all three—regarded only as one of when it would be politic to begin the work, which the Government of Sir George Grey eventually initiated.

6. Paragraph 12 of the despatch is not to be easily understood, and is difficult of reconciliation with paragraph 9, the statements in them as to reserves being apparently contradictory. Reference is made to the purchase from the Natives of 185,000 acres of land between the Waitotara and Waingongoro rivers; and the inference seems to be drawn that this is an apparent recognition of the title of the Natives to the land north of the Waingongoro. While Ministers cannot admit that this is the case, they submit that the restoration to the Natives south of the Waingongoro of such a large area in excess of their requirements, is a striking proof of the liberality of the Government in their dealing with that portion of the confiscated lands, and an indication of the course which was about to be taken with the lands north of that river, when Te Whiti forcibly stopped the survey by removing the surveyors. It may not be out of place to mention here, that the estimated present value of the reserves made and promised for Natives in this district, "who never numbered more than 3,000," and are now said to be less, is shown by the Commissioners' report to be £638,555, and that this value is mainly due to roads and railways made at the cost of the colony.

7. With reference to the statement in paragraph 15, that the Natives had reason to fear the land would be sold without reserves being made for them, and that Te Whiti would have been far from unwilling to accept adequate reserves, Ministers must remark, that it appears certain from a variety of documents that it was not reserves Te Whiti required, but that he laid claim to all the land between Stoney River and the Waingongoro. This claim was plainly asserted during the interview Mr. Mackay and Captain Blake had with him in April, 1879. Soon after the talk began, Te Whiti declared, "The land is mine, not that of the Governor. I am the owner of the whole;" and he afterwards said, "The Governor has no claim on the lands this" (North) "side of Waingongoro." Certainly, Te Whiti never availed himself of the opportunities which were afforded for obtaining the most ample reserves: what he claimed was supreme authority over all the land in that part of the colony.

8. The statement made in the despatch, that 4,850 acres intended to have been given to friendly Natives who were owners in the Oakura Block, have not yet been given to them, is erroneous. This block was specially dealt with, because of the murder, by residents and owners of the land, of a party of soldiers upon the Oakura beach. The land was taken absolutely, without reservations in favour of friendly Natives or other persons: but the friendly Natives were entitled to compensation under an Act of Parliament, in terms of which large reserves were made. These reserves were accepted under deed, in 1866; and not only have the Natives been put in possession of the land so promised, but long since, with their consent, it was divided among the three hapus of the tribe interested, and they have remained in unquestioned possession ever since. His Excellency, in the same paragraph, quotes a statement of Colonel Whitmore, that "the land ploughed was in each case land bought, not confiscated, and had, moreover, remained for 15 years unpaid for." The answer to this is, that all the ploughing was done on confiscated land, except a small portion in Bell Block: which block was bought and paid for 30 years ago, and has been in the undisputed possession of Europeans since that time.

9. Ministers respectfully submit to His Excellency, that portions of the despatch convey an altogether wrong impression of the attitude of the settlers under great and continued provocation, through the presence of the Maori ploughmen on their farms and homesteads, and under what, in the circumstances, was a natural fear for the safety of their wives and families. There are abundant official documents which prove that the settlers at each end of the district desired to leave it wholly in the hands of the Government to deal with the ploughmen, and did not desire to interfere themselves. His Excellency quotes a telegram sent to Sir George Grey by Mr. Courtenay, as evidence to the contrary; but Mr. Courtenay, on the same day that this telegram was sent, agreed to leave his case in the hands of the Government. On the same day, Sir George Grey telegraphed this to Mr. T. Kelly, M.H.R.; and at a later period he recognised that intruding Natives had been removed as he had advised, namely, with firmness, but without insult or violence. At the outset, individual settlers may have used strong language: but Ministers must repeat, that official records prove that the settlers as a body showed great forbearance and self-restraint; that their conduct, under conditions that were most irritating and trying, was recognized by Sir George Grey's Government as proper, and as helpful to the authorities; and that that conduct deserves, in truth, the highest praise.

10. In paragraph 21, His Excellency says of Sir George Grey's Government, "It cannot be a matter of surprise or blame that they should have hesitated to comply with the demand urgently made for the general arming of the whole white population of the district, and their enrolment as a military force—steps which must almost inevitably have led to collision between the races." What are the facts? The first ploughing took place on May 25th. On the 1st June, His Excellency Sir H. Robinson, with Sir G. Grey and Colonel Whitmore, arrived in New Plymouth, and proceeded at once to organise and arm the settlers; the Taranaki Volunteers being regarded as enrolled from the 28th, and those of Patea from the 30th May. Practically, the whole male population in the Okato and Oakura districts was armed by the Government. On the 4th June, an officer was sent to Patea; on the 8th, the Armed Constabulary were removed to Oakura. Sir George Grey, speaking in his place in the House on the 18th July, declared that the first point to which he directed his attention after arriving at New Plymouth, was to attend to the arming of the European population; and that he then sought to place bodies of Armed Constabulary so that at any point likely to be threatened the Europeans should have the superiority. The Government of the day, therefore, did promptly, and as Ministers believe did wisely, that which His Excellency says, if it had been done, would "almost inevitably have led to collision between the races."

11. There are some inaccuracies in the statements as to the order in which arrests were made; but these are not material. The facts of importance are, that the settlers were organized and armed