

staff under the general directions of Mr. Buller, who, in his turn, acted under instructions from the Hon. the Premier. A distinct promise was also made to the Provincial Government that Mr. McLean would, at the earliest possible period, use his personal influence to persuade the Natives to allow the surveys to proceed.

From that time the whole survey work of the block was left under the direction of Mr. Buller, who, acting, we presume, under the directions of the General Government, simply withdrew the survey parties from all those parts of the block where opposition had been offered, was threatened, or was by him supposed likely to arise; and to all the remonstrances of the provincial authorities against this inaction, the sole reply was that it would be unwise to provoke a breach of the peace, and that Mr. McLean would shortly visit the district.

As time passed on, the Natives, finding that they could obstruct the survey with impunity, opposed the progress of the work in every direction, in one instance destroyed the work which had occupied our party some months, and altogether caused a direct loss of several thousands of pounds to the province. The Provincial Government, finding that the General Government would take no action to punish the offenders until Mr. McLean should have visited the district, became more and more importunate that Mr. McLean's visit should be made.

At length Mr. McLean visited the district, in the month of November, 1870, at least ten months after the promise of his intervention had been given, but up to the date of his departure from Wellington, the Provincial Government were not consulted as to the measures to be taken by him, nor were they made aware of the intention to make large gifts of land, not only to those opposing the survey, but to others who had made no claim upon the province until after those gifts had been irrevocably made.

The late Provincial Government wish it to be distinctly understood, in reference to this matter, that they recognized that, in a question affecting the peaceable relations between the two races, the General Government had a right to control action, for the result of which the colony would become responsible in case of a rupture. They also felt that the case was one to be dealt with by a strong hand. As a Government they had no power to enforce their legal position, and therefore it was absolutely necessary to secure the aid of the Colonial Government. They believed that this was the view of the case taken up by the General Government, and they recognized that Mr. McLean, as Defence Minister responsible for the peace of the colony, and as Native Minister responsible for the relations between the two races, was *ex officio* the proper person on whom to place the responsibility of a resort to force, if—as the Provincial Government believed—forcible measures, as in the case of Miritana, were necessary to enable the province to obtain possession of its property. But no action taken by them can, in their opinion, be interpreted into the appointment of Mr. McLean as an arbitrator between themselves and the Manawatu Natives as to the claims of the latter upon a block of land, the ownership of which had been decided, after most careful investigation, by the highest tribunal to which the question of title could have been referred.

I have, &c.,

His Honor the Superintendent, Wellington.

A. FOLLETT HALCOMBE,
Provincial Treasurer.

I have submitted this letter to the late Deputy Superintendent, and my late colleagues in the Provincial Executive, and it meets with their approval.

A. F. H.

On the 6th June, the Superintendent opened the Session of the Provincial Council, and briefly referred to the pending dispute between the two Governments. "I wish," he said, "that I could inform you that every difference had been adjusted with regard to the much-vexed Manawatu land purchase question. The late Superintendent claimed, on behalf of the province, the sum of £15,000 for 15,000 acres of provincial estate taken by the General Government and given to certain Natives as additional reserves. My opinion coincides with that of my predecessor as to the validity of the provincial claim. You will probably, however, concur with me in the opinion that the course which it will be best, in the general interest of the province, for the Provincial Government to pursue in regard to this claim, requires a very careful consideration. I candidly inform you that for the present I wait upon circumstances."

The Council appear to have been of the same opinion, for nothing was done that Session by them. In the meantime, the two Governments were working together for quietly laying off the reserves, which was not completed till next year (1872). I do not think it necessary to insert here any account of those proceedings, because they have no bearing on the claim of the province.

I believe the preceding account comprises all the essential particulars of the case.

F. D. BELL.