

exist only on paper, and in very few cases have Crown grants been issued. There can be no doubt that the delay of twelve years which has taken place since the awards were made by the Compensation Court has contributed largely to creating a feeling of distrust in the minds of Natives having a beneficial interest in the awards, aggravated by the fact that many of the elder people, in whose favour awards were originally made, have since died, and their relations look upon their disappearance before the completion of title as so much evidence lost of what the original terms of settlement were. But regard must be had to the fact brought forward by Mr. Parris: he points out that many of the awardees knowingly joined in the sales to Government of the whole of the very lands from which their awards were to have been satisfied. To make this matter clear, I have asked Mr. Parris to report specially upon the sale, in so far as it affects the following points:—

1. Whether or not the sale of the block referred to comprised the whole of the land over which these particular awards were exercisable.
2. Whether or not the Maoris understood that their awards merged in the sale to the Crown.
3. Whether they had any idea that, notwithstanding the sale, provision would be made for their awards, in the shape of reserves, in the land sold, or in other lands in the district; and whether any reference was made to this question in the deed of cession.
4. Whether they were asked to surrender the scrip exercisable over the lands comprised in the deed of sale.

#### STONEY RIVER BLOCK.

Under the above title I refer to a block, supposed to contain 18,000 acres, extending from the Hangatahua River southwards to the Waiweranui Stream, and extending from these two points, by natural boundaries, to the summit of Mount Egmont.

In respect of this block, it appears to me (subject to a qualification which will also apply to the two next blocks to be named) that it was intended to be given back to the Ngamahanga tribe or *hapu* of Taranaki Tribe, the original owners. So far as I can ascertain, up to the present time there has been no waiver of the Crown's rights over this block in the manner required by the New Zealand Settlements Acts, although I am convinced that as a matter of good faith, the waiver is morally complete. The Natives concerned in this block of land express the same feeling of insecurity and distrust at the delay which has taken place in the completion of this transaction. I quite admit the effect which an idea like this, once firmly fixed in the Maori mind, is bound to have upon the Natives—not only upon those actually concerned in the ownership, but also upon all other members of the tribe to which the *hapu* belongs.

I take it to be no part of my business, at the present time, to find fault, but simply to point out existing facts; but I feel bound in fairness to say, in justice to the officers (Mr. Parris and Major Brown) who have been successively concerned in the administration of the whole area from Pukearuhe to Waingongoro, that no blame is attachable to them. The real fault and the gravest fault was, to my mind, committed by the Governments who had the control of this question at the time when the confiscation was first decreed. Then, the original owners, crushed by superior force and cowed by successive defeats, would have offered no objection to a speedy and vigorous settlement of the whole question. Every year of delay has created fresh difficulties, and has given to the Natives what to them is sufficient colour of right for contending that our confiscation was never made complete according to Maori *tikanga*, by actual occupation. I shall refer to this view of the question further on, when I come to deal with the subject of the Waimate Plains.

#### PARIHAKA BLOCK.

Under this name I include all the confiscated land extending from Waiweranui, the southern boundary of the Stoney River Block, to the Moutoti Stream, near Whitiora. On this block is situate the settlement of Parihaka, occupied by the chief Te Whiti and his followers; and its area is roughly estimated at 80,000 acres.

In respect to this block, the evidence of Messrs. Parris and Major Brown, borne out in all respects by the records, is that no promise of any character whatever, definite or indefinite, has ever been made to the original owners, for the return of the whole or any part of it; nor has any action ever been taken of an official character to justify even a suspicion that any intention to return the block had ever existed in the mind of the Government. When I mentioned, some few days ago in Cabinet, that some idea existed of not interfering with this block, I was mistaken, as I find upon further consideration that what was really running in my mind at the time was a dim recollection of a conversation between myself and Major Brown at Opunake. At that time the surveys had been fairly started, and several overtures, made by the more turbulent spirits to Te Whiti, to allow violent measures to be taken, had been summarily refused. Whether the suggestion came from Major Brown or myself I cannot say, but we both agreed, in the course of a private conversation, that we ought to deal generously with Te Whiti with regard to his own block, in consideration of the effort he was then making to prevent any disturbance of the public peace. It is only fair to mention, as affording some justification for the action now taken by the Natives (apart from the question of delay previously referred to), that Mr. Parris felt it to be his duty to interview Te Whiti, and inform him of the action the Government was taking