

ownership was absolutely confiscated. Sections of the tribe remained loyal: they were to be left in the enjoyment of their share of the tribal land. This, practically, must have been the interpretation of his own Proclamation given by Governor Sir George Grey when, immediately after confiscating the rebels' land, he restored theirs to Ngarongomate, to Matakatea, to Hone Pihama, and the loyal sections of the Taranaki and Ngatiruanui tribes. Nor was any other interpretation consistent with common sense. It would always have been bad faith to seize any land of loyal Natives except where the safety of the country required it. It would always have been an imbecile idea, that because the loyalty of those who had remained true to us ought to be rewarded by the restoration of their land, therefore the rebellion of those who had laid waste our settlements must be condoned by foregoing the confiscation of theirs.

Still less could the validity of the confiscation fail because we did not take possession, as no doubt it would have been so much wiser to do, of all the country we had confiscated. The common-sense view was put very plainly by Mr. Sheehan last year: "I do not admit for a moment," he said, "that unless you take possession of land so acquired the Maoris can claim it back. There are people who tell us that because we did not take possession of the land, the confiscation is bad. Nothing of the kind. The Proclamation was quite sufficient to take the land."

Hon. Mr. Sheehan  
Speech 23 July  
1879, *Hansard*  
xxi. 185.

We of course knew from the first that the legality of the confiscation would be contested before us by the adherents of Te Whiti, and we had to make up our own minds very early as to the right course for us to take. It was not only the opposition of Natives we had to meet. Strenuous efforts had long been used to make the Natives believe the confiscation was illegal and could be successfully contested in our Courts. There was money to be got by instilling this delusion into the Native mind: money to be got by litigation: money to be got by jobbing meanwhile in Maori land. Nor were there wanting harpies that had infested the Coast for years: rogues whose trade was to poison the Native people against the Government, and baffle every endeavour after peace. We soon saw that any useful result to our inquiry was hopeless if we once let it drift into any unpractical channels. We therefore refused to hear counsel who wished to question the validity of the confiscation, and we told the Natives at the very outset that we were not there to discuss such questions with them, but to learn what just grievances they had, so that the Governor might "make good" (we again borrow Mr. Sheehan's words) "the faith of the country by giving them whatever successive Governments had promised." We have always thought it was most necessary for them to realize that the Native policy ought in all essentials ever to be the same, whatever party or Ministry may happen to be in power; and we never lost an opportunity of pressing this upon them as their best safeguard no less than ours. The question really is, whether by redeeming the promises that were made to them, full justice will now be done. We do not hesitate to say to Your Excellency that it will.

Hon. Mr. Sheehan  
Speech 23 July  
1879, *Hansard*  
xxi., p. 187.

(2.) *What the fulfilment of the Promises would do.*

If the narrative in our Second Report, of alternate truckling and threatening during so many years, is not creditable to us as a colonizing race, certainly what we are now going to say will add a regret that no one should ever have seemed to know what the simple fulfilment of our promises would have done for the Native people.

We lay before Your Excellency two statements: one showing the extent of land which in one shape or other has been promised, the other showing the value of the promised land to-day.

The detailed tables contained in the Appendices show all the land which successive Governments had either actually reserved, awarded, or promised to be set apart. Bringing these statements together, and calling all lands reserved, awarded, or promised by the same general name of "Reserves," the following is a summary of what was done:—