

41. On the 9th June, 1880, Colonel Roberts, the commanding officer of the Armed Constabulary, telegraphed that the Natives had “repaired one of the fences broken down when the road-line was taken across through the Parihaka clearings,” and, on the 11th, that the Natives had “erected another fence, but I do not think it is in any way connected with blocking up the road, but simply as a divisional fence.” Telegrams,
Roberts to Bryce.

42. On the 16th he reports that “gaps will be made through three fences to-day.” Two of these three fences were those of a field in which the crops of the previous year were stored, and which had been prepared to be sown with corn, and the other that of a paddock which required but one fence, the other side being protected by water. On the day following, these gaps were filled up again by the Maoris, and, for about a fortnight, the fencing across these three gaps was repeatedly pulled down, and as repeatedly re-erected. Telegram,
Roberts to Bryce.
Testimony,
R. Parris.

43. On the 28th June, Colonel Roberts telegraphed as follows: “Te Whetu, Roberts to Bryce. Te Whiti’s secretary, and another Native, sent word that they wished to speak to me. I met them where the road is made through the fence. They asked me to put up a gate. I pointed out to them that a gate would not save the crops—suggested they should fence the road off. They said that it was too much work, and that they could not do it. I pointed out that it would not take long if they brought as strong a party as they had to-day. They replied that it would not take long if the soldiers would help. I agreed not to let the pigs into the sown paddock to-night, and to report to you. Te Whetu and party will return to-morrow for further talk. Please instruct me in the meantime. I am of opinion that the Natives would be willing to fence the road off if we assisted. The men seem to be in a very reasonable and talkative mood, and if carefully treated would be willing to come to reasonable terms. Te Whetu informed me that they would be sowing wheat to-morrow in the piece of land bounded by the fence where the Natives said he would not put it up again. Te Whetu wanted me to meet him there to-morrow. I refused, and told him he would have to come to me, to which he agreed.” The following day was a wet and stormy one, on which no work could be done, and the interview did not take place.

44. On the 15th July Colonel Roberts says, “Road party to-day employed between second Parihaka road from here and the Waitotoroa River. Had the fence pulled down. Two Natives came to put it up, stating that they did not want to stop the road, only to protect their crops. After a great deal of talk they asked if I would allow the fence to be put up high enough to keep out the pigs, and consented to have the fence in that state for the night. They are willing to put up a swing-gate. That question I did not settle. Told them that I would give them an answer to-morrow. Judging from their manner, I think a swing-gate would satisfy them. Please let me know if you will authorize such being done.” Telegram,
Roberts to Bryce.

45. I have been unable to find the reply sent to this telegram, but its nature is shown by a telegram sent by Colonel Roberts on the following day: “16th July.—Met Te Whetu and other Natives at the fence. I told them that you would only approve of a gate as a temporary measure until they had fenced the road off. He said that it was for us to fence—that he would not; that he would put it up as often as we took it down.” Telegram,
Roberts to Bryce.

46. On the 30th June Colonel Roberts had inquired whether he should arrest those who built the fence, and had received authority to do so. I cannot find, however, that any actual arrests took place before the 24th and 25th July, when a considerable number of Maoris were arrested at the fences. These men, of course, did not come under the provisions of “The Maori Prisoners Act, 1880,” already passed, and which referred only to those already in custody; and the short Act above referred to, “The Maori Prisoners Detention Act, 1880,” was hurriedly passed to meet the case, and to give power to the Government to detain, as prisoners, men whose offence, if a legal offence at all, was, as it was admitted, one of the slightest description.

47. A very singular state of things ensued. Almost every day a party of unarmed Maoris, sometimes three or four, sometimes a considerable number, Various tele-
grams.