

There is no reason to doubt that the crime was committed by the prisoners, and there can be no question of the justice of the conviction and sentence. But it is to be borne in mind that even the most enlightened amongst the Maoris do not, for the most part, consider it wrong to put to death people whom they conceive to be guilty of witchcraft, and that the carrying-out of the sentence of death would be regarded by the Natives generally as an act of excessive severity and of injustice. It is moreover probable that the enforcement of the extreme penalty would scarcely have a greater deterrent effect upon the commission of a similar crime in the future than will be the penalty which the prisoners are now to undergo.

I accordingly arrived, after mature consideration, at the conclusion that it was advisable to commute the sentence of death to one of penal servitude for life—a conclusion in which my Ministers unanimously concur.

I have, &c.,

W. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., G.C.M.G.

No. 4A.

TELEGRAM from the GOVERNOR to the SECRETARY of STATE.

23rd August, 1887.

GENERAL elections are about to take place here. Meeting of Parliament 1st October. Ministers advise that, as regards New Zealand, agreement as to naval force should be kept open till meeting of Parliament.

No. 5.

(No. 78.)

SIR,—

Government House, Wellington, 1st September, 1887.

A.—2, 1887, Sess.
II., No. 25.

With reference to your Despatch No. 18, of the 5th April last, transmitting a letter from the Aborigines Protection Society, to be laid before my Government, and requesting to be furnished with any observations they might desire to offer thereon, I have the honour to forward herewith a memorandum on the subject, dated the 18th August, by the Minister of Native Affairs in New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

W. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

The Right Hon. Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., G.C.M.G.

Enclosure.

MEMORANDUM for His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

THE Native Minister has the honour respectfully to acknowledge the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of Despatch No. 18, of the 5th of April last, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, containing the copy of a letter from the Aborigines Protection Society enclosing one from Major Te Wheoro.

It will no doubt be recognised by Her Majesty's Government that the Government of New Zealand is always ready to regard with the utmost consideration any representations that may fairly be made by people of the Maori race, in the same spirit of justice that characterizes their relations with Europeans. Ministers therefore beg that His Excellency will inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies that there is nothing in Major Te Wheoro's letter of the 29th March last with which the Government of New Zealand are unable to deal, and which has not been the subject of repeated explanations.

Wellington, 18th August, 1887.

J. BALLANCE,
Native Minister.

No. 6.

(No. 79.)

SIR,—

Government House, Wellington, 1st September, 1888.

A.—2, 1888,
No. 17.

With reference to your circular despatch, dated the 15th June last, transmitting a copy of a letter from the Board of Trade requesting information respecting the laws and regulations for saving life at sea in force in the British