

22. You have said that large gifts were never contemplated on the part of the province: if some inconsiderable reserves only had been made, would they have been open to the same objection?—I do not think the province would have raised any objection; but this, I wish it to be understood, is only my private opinion.

23. In your letter to the Colonial Secretary, of 15th May, 1871, you say, “No action taken by the Provincial Government 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:” am I to infer from that letter that you understood Mr. McLean not to be acting at all on behalf of the province in the matter, but that his action was entirely on the part of the General Government, and was not binding on the province in any way?—Decidedly; I always understood that, though Mr. McLean was acting to a large extent on the part of the province, the whole matter was left in the hands of the General Government. The matter, as I understood it, was placed in the hands of the General Government as a question affecting the peace of the colony.

24. Am I right in inferring, from the general tenor of your letter of 15th May, 1871, that the real fault you found with the General Government was on account of the magnitude of the reserves?—The Provincial Government, as a Government, always insisted upon its right to the whole of the land. I believe, however, as I have stated before, that they would not have objected to some small concessions being made.

25. When did you first receive intimation of these reserves being made by Mr. McLean?—When the Council was sitting, and before Dr. Featherston’s return. A telegram from Mr. Fox, containing the information, was received by me and read in the Council.

26. Did the Provincial Government then remonstrate with the General Government as to the action Mr. McLean had taken?—No; not immediately. They did not offer any remonstrance; they thought it was of no use then. At that time Dr. Featherston was expected back daily, and they thought they would do better to let the matter stay until his return.

27. The first claim put forward on the part of the province against the General Government, appears to have been made in the letter from Dr. Featherston to Mr. Gisborne, on his return from England: is that so?—I think so. I do not remember any claim having been made before the one that was made when Dr. Featherston came out.

28. You have heard what Mr. Taylor said about the letter he wrote to Dr. Featherston on his arrival: did you write officially to Dr. Featherston yourself at that time?—No; but I wrote to him unofficially, I believe.

29. Had you never any consultation with Mr. McLean as to what he should do to get quiet possession of the block?—No; neither had we the slightest intimation about these reserves until they had been actually given.

30. *Mr. Gisborne.*] You have said that you did not contemplate that large gifts (I think that is your expression, “large gifts,”) would be granted, but that some small gifts were contemplated: is that right?—Just so. I had no doubt whatever but that when Mr. McLean was sent he would, in accordance with his previous actions, give away some land. So we naturally enough supposed that some would be given away on this occasion. That, however, is merely my own opinion.

31. But you acted then as Provincial Secretary and as the organ of the Provincial Government?—Yes.

32. And had the General Government not a right to assume that what you said expressed the opinions of the Provincial Government?—I suppose so.

33. And you thought it very probable, from his previous actions, that Mr. McLean would grant some small gift of money or land, in order that the Provincial Government of Wellington might be secured in peaceful possession?—Certainly I did.

34. *Mr. Speaker.*] I must again ask you as to your own impression of the character of Mr. McLean’s mission: you have told us that you contemplated he would be obliged to do something in order to get peaceful possession. If he did that “something,” did you think the Provincial Government would not afterwards hold themselves bound to carry out, to a reasonable extent, what he might do?—My own impression is, that to a reasonable extent Mr. McLean’s action would have been indorsed by the province.

35. Then so far as your recollection of the impressions you formed at that time guides you now, I am to understand that your objection really was to the degree and magnitude of the reserves made by Mr. McLean, rather than to the fact of reserves having been made?—Personally I say so; but as a member of the Provincial Government, I always reserved my right to question whether it should be borne as a provincial or a colonial charge.

36. How is this personal impression of yours at that time to be reconciled with the language of your letter of the 15th May, 1871, in which the action of Mr. McLean is so distinctly represented as being one by which the Provincial Government was not in any way to be bound?—I am only stating my private opinion. I am not aware of having in any case officially expressed that opinion to the General Government.

37. I want to know whether, when this letter was written and submitted to your colleagues in the Provincial Government, they were aware that this impression was upon your own mind at the time?—They were aware that that impression was on my mind at the time. I do not see how any one could help having that impression on his mind. The fact that Mr. McLean was