

pointed out, the personal influence of the two greatest Maori experts I believe in the colony has been exerted to the utmost; and I should like honorable members to ask themselves whether or not the result has been satisfactory. Are Native affairs in a hopeful state now? At that time, in my opinion, the Maoris were sick of a state of isolation. I am speaking of a part of the country pretty well understood. The Maoris in that part of the country were becoming sick of the state of isolation in which they had been for some time, and I believe it only required a little patience, a little firmness, and a little justice to secure the best results to both races. But when we went among the Maoris and showed so much anxiety to do something, and so much anxiety to induce them to do something, I think that we took a wrong course. I think, when we petted them and fondled them, and made too much of them, we engendered in their minds that suspicion which beget contempt. I think the Maoris were led to suppose that the will of the Native Minister was all-in-all; and justice on all occasions—at all events, on many occasions—was made to give place to expediency. I think, if we had shown more firmness and justice, and less of what has been mistakenly called kindness, the result would have been better for the country—better for the country, I say, in the broadest sense—better for the Europeans and better for the Maori people. Sir, it will be expected, perhaps, that I should say something as to our relations with the Maoris in that part of the country, and that I should speak upon a subject which has been spoken of very frequently in this House—the negotiations with Rewi. Now, I do not think it desirable that I should do so—I am not able to say, with the honorable member for Parnell, that, if it had not been for that great meeting, we should have had a war raging in that country.

Mr. Moss.—I did not say so; I said that if it had not been for that meeting we should have had to keep a large force in the Waikato.

Mr. Bryce.—I am bound to accept the honorable gentleman's denial. I have not the right to refer to a previous debate, and he puts me out of Court on both points. I see no reason to suppose that that Native meeting obviated the necessity of keeping a very large force in the Waikato. I see no reason whatever to suppose anything of that sort. However, I do not wish to discuss that meeting, and I do not wish to discuss the negotiations with Rewi, because, as we all know, there is a strong possibility—at any rate, so say the Opposition—of the late Native Minister coming back to these benches in the course of a few hours or a few days; and if I can do no good I shall take care to do no harm in that matter; and therefore I will not go into that question, and say things from this bench which might possibly do harm. With respect to affairs on the West Coast, of which I have perhaps a more intimate knowledge, I am afraid I must say very much the same thing—that I think it would be imprudent for me to discuss at any great length from this bench the course of treatment which I think ought to be adopted on that coast. I may say this: that I do not feel inclined to blame the late Government very severely, or as severely as they have been blamed by some persons in this matter. I believe indeed that the time was when the difficulties could have been met and cured; but I admit that there was much doubt surrounding the subject, and it has always been my habit in life to give gentlemen, when I differed from them, the benefit of any doubt which existed in my mind. I can add little to what was said the other day by the Premier. For our own sake we ought to cause an inquiry to be made into whatever grievances the Maoris have on that coast. I myself—and I think the late Native Minister agrees with me in this—am of opinion that there are probably no grievances to speak of on what is known as the Waimate Plains proper. But there are, no doubt, grievances—I think they have been magnified somewhat—of one kind or another along that coast; and I think that, for our own sake, for the sake of our own reputation abroad and in the colony, we ought to have those grievances inquired into. But, having said that, I wish to say clearly that I have no hope that that inquiry will touch the trouble which exists at present on that coast. That trouble, in my opinion, lies far deeper than that. The question of reserves has been strongly spoken of in this House, and it was thought that a proper adjustment of reserves would settle the difficulty. I do not think so. I believe the trouble lies deeper. The trouble lies greatly in this: that almost the whole of the Maoris along that coast are