

allowed themselves to be used as an instrument in the hands of the Government ; but this is not the law, and at any moment a change of mind might bring on the most awkward complications. For instance, when Mr. Ballance ordered the Board to advertise the Waimate Plains for sale, they obeyed forthwith : when he ordered them to stop the sale, they stopped it. But all the same they did not like it, and a vote of censure on the Government, which would have meant a declaration by the Board that they would use the power which the law had given them, was only not passed because the Board felt themselves helpless to guide or to prevent what they called “an act of public policy.” Suppose they had not chosen to stop the sale?

We cannot see there could be any just complaint against the Assembly for resuming the control over this part of the Crown land. An enormous cost has been incurred (and more will yet be wanted) to meet events which happened long after the Land Act and the Financial Arrangements Acts were passed, and which no one dreamt of at that time. Is the colony to find the money to preserve the peace, and, when the trouble has passed away, must it hand over the land acquired by all this treasure, the revenue to be derived from it, and the decision of the way in which it shall be occupied, to the local Land Board? These are very weighty matters ; but we only think it within our province to call the attention of Your Excellency to them, in the hope that they will be considered at the fitting time.

Another thing : the Taranaki land law is on one side an air-line running inland from the Patea River, the Wellington land law on the other. We strongly recommend that, for the purpose of administration, the land between that air-line and the Waitotara River be taken out of the land district of Wellington and brought under the same law, whatever it is to be, that will deal with the other confiscated land upon the line of coast to Stoney River.

### III.—THE LEGISLATION REQUIRED.

It may seem a paradox to say that the very fact of the business being now so intricate, removes an obstacle to providing for it. But the truth is that a thing which in itself was simple has got so confused by long delay and the repeal of one Act after another, that it is useless now to attempt a perfect law. We are quite sure none could be made that would meet every case : it would only end in putting in what is not wanted, and leaving out what is. There is no help for it but to give a large discretion to the Government.

It is for this, indeed, that we have ourselves gone into so much detail. It would have been much pleasanter for us, and we are very sensible how much we should have spared Your Excellency, if we had simply given our own opinions, and trusted to their not being challenged. We preferred, instead, to tell the story of how this long trouble has grown up, and to pile up proof that here was an exceptional case, in which the wisest thing to do would be to trace broad lines on which to go, to show the farthest limits of our liability, and then to let the Government do the best they can with it.

And after all, the thing itself is in transition yet. It was but the other day we presented our Second Report, and here is suddenly a new phase of the difficulty—one absolutely unique—where men are being sent by Te Whiti day by day to be taken prisoners, without the slightest violence, or even trace of rancour or vindictive feeling. Here is a telegram but two days old : “Have just had a long talk with a Parihaka Native, who says that he returns to Parihaka to be arrested at the fencing as soon as he has settled his affairs : that Te Whiti’s orders are that all the men at Parihaka are to go to fencing and be arrested, except himself and Tohu, who are to stay to look after the women and children ; and that the *pahekas* do not yet understand Te Whiti.” Was there ever heard the like of it? Acts of Parliament are powerless before such infatuation.