

Urenui District during the war, a duty which they performed faithfully and zealously, frequently coming into conflict with the rebels, repulsing and capturing them on several occasions. To enable them to do the work efficiently the Civil Commissioner, Mr. Parris, was ordered to induce the tribe to move from their usual settlement inland at Tikorangi, and, quitting their pas, cultivations, and peach-gardens, to take up a position on the sea-coast several miles off. When they had been there for a considerable time the Government took the land they had thus temporarily abandoned and planted upon it two regiments of European military settlers, to whom it proceeded, under the powers of the New Zealand Settlement Act, to issue Crown grants. This was not done without the most resolute remonstrance of the Ngatirahiri tribe, who declared they would have their lives taken before they would be thus deprived of their ancestral homes. They, however, abstained from attempting to recover them by force, but have never ceased to ask for the return of their property. When hard pressed by them, Major Parris could only reply that the Europeans had "become as a large rock very deeply imbedded, and that it was not in his power to remove them." In 1866 their claims were brought before the Compensation Court, when, by special agreement under the Act of 1865, the whole of their lands, except the portion taken for the military settlers, was returned to them, on the same principle as the Stony River and Opunake Blocks had been returned to the tribes owning them—namely, that they had not abandoned their allegiance to the Crown, and had maintained their loyalty to the Queen all through the wars. But they still protested against the taking of their homesteads at Tikorangi, and declared that nothing would satisfy them but their restoration. It is not surprising that ultimately they became devoted adherents of Te Whiti, who promised to restore them to their lost possessions; but, except that a few of them joined in the "ploughing," and paid the penalty of imprisonment, they have never gone beyond peaceful remonstrance and assertion of their rights. In 1873 their case was brought before the Native Minister, Sir Donald McLean, at a large meeting at Waitara, who, after hearing the case, said that he considered they had been very "unfairly" used, and he was prepared to have paid them a "very large sum of money" as compensation, a proposition which they refused to accept. On a late occasion, when the Government constructed a road across their lands for public use, and offered several hundreds of pounds as compensation for the land taken for that purpose, they declined to receive it, and the money still stands to their credit in the hands of the Government. On a later occasion, 28th May, 1878, the Government, on the application of Major Brown, Civil Commissioner, agreed to fence the road above mentioned, and gave him an authority to draw for the necessary funds, no limit being imposed; but nothing further appears to have been done, and the fences are not yet erected. There are a great number of official records bearing on this case, and extending over several years. It is not, however, necessary to refer to more than the Commissioners' Reports of 1880, page iv.; Evidence, questions 296, 439, and 755; Appendix E., No. 1, Claim D; and various letters from the Civil Commissioner to the Government on record on the official files of the Native and Defence Offices from 1865 downwards.

2. It was not surprising that, in my first interviews with this tribe, I did not find much inclination on their part to discuss the position; but, as events have progressed, they have been brought to do so, and, though they will never be reconciled to the undoubtedly rough-handed and arbitrary seizure of their old homesteads, they have practically abandoned all hope of their restoration, and have acquiesced in the survey of the rest of their block and its subdivision among the hapus in the quantities and form which I have had the honour to recommend (14th January, 1884). They have, towards that end, cordially aided Major Parris in ascertaining the names of the individual grantees; and I hope will, before long, see the advantages to be gained from the administration of their lands under the leasing powers of the Act of 1881. They were formerly one of the most industrious tribes in the island, and are still remarkable for their agricultural enterprise. They will no doubt require very considerable reserves to be set apart for their own use.

3. The recommendation which I have the honour to make of compensation is simply in accordance with the expressed intention of Sir Donald McLean above mentioned. The quantity of land taken for military settlement at Tikorangi was 5,900 acres, about one-half of which belonged to the Otaraoa tribe, leaving at least 2,950 acres of it for the Ngatirahiri, though they say their share was larger. At the time it was taken the value of the land without improvements was at least £1 sterling per acre; and at the present day, also without improvements, it cannot be taken at less than £3 an acre. If an intermediate value between these two were taken, it would amount to more than £4,000; and I venture to suggest that that sum be taken as an amount not in excess of what is due to the tribe for the "unfair" treatment they have received, and, as I have reason to believe, not more than the "very large sum of money" which Sir Donald McLean was prepared to have paid them many years ago.

4. In making this recommendation, however, I beg respectfully to add that I think the amount should not be paid to the Natives in cash. The experience which I have had in districts south of New Plymouth of the reckless manner in which the licensing benches of the country have spread a perfect network of drink-shops all over the recently-occupied confiscated lands, up to the very margin of the newly-granted reserves, in direct defiance of the representations of the Commissioners of 1880 on the subject, contained in their Second Report, Section IX., satisfy me that no greater injury could be inflicted on the Natives than to place a large sum of money in their hands, much of which would inevitably be swallowed up in the vortex of the drink-shop, and be the cause of a general amount of dissipation and utter ruin to the helpless victims whom it was intended to benefit. After much consultation with Major Parris, I venture to suggest that the bulk of the sum recommended should be expended by the Government in erecting substantial fences of the most durable class along the principal roads on the reserves. Unless this is done very great trouble will arise in the future when parts of the block, or adjacent blocks, may be occupied by Europeans. A small portion of the amount might probably be well expended on agricultural implements, which would be a further fulfilment of an intention of Sir Donald McLean which I consider amounted to a distinct