

mission, one at Kaitaia, the other at Auckland. Whether the former has ever been in operation I have never learned. The latter was during the past winter worked with much difficulty in printing a few chapters in the Bible.

Maunsell felt able to be somewhat fulsome in his recognition of Government impeccability: 'I am confident that very few of our body could be induced to take any step in political matters, much less against the Government whose moderation & justice in all its transactions with the Aboriginal race the Missionaries as a body have always contemplated with much satisfaction . . .' He had not seen a copy at Kohanga, Waikato Heads, from where he was writing and no one had referred to it.¹⁵

Ashwell from Taupiri and Taylor at Wanganui joined in the chorus of repudiation. Ashwell had seen two copies, one with a Maori on his way to Tauranga and the other shown to him by Huirama, a chief of the Ngatimahuta, to whom the missionary had expressed his strong disapproval of the sentiments in the circular and his endorsement, even cordial approval, of McLean's policies.¹⁶ Taylor, like his Auckland colleagues, had taken custody of the one copy he had seen—sent by Telford to a Maori known to him from his period of duty at Putiki with Taylor. Taylor had used his best efforts 'to counteract its pernicious tendency'.¹⁷ The resolution which he forwarded from the 'members of the Western District of the Church Missionary Society' was even stronger in its support of Government policy than those already quoted. When Grace caught up with the reaction of his colleagues he was somewhat shaken. He might have felt—for he was not a modest man—as Christ denied by Peter.

Meanwhile, since the initial letter from Morgan to McLean, the FitzGerald 'Ministry' and its even briefer successor under Forsaith had vanished like FitzGerald, Sewell and the doubtful southern colleagues hastening back to their own troubles. By default as much as self-interest it was proper that the Auckland Provincial Council should respond to the dominant feeling of its masters and investigate the matter. That the Province's first Superintendent should have been the Officer administering the Government may have been more than a coincidence of the same order as the fact of his successor William Brown being the owner of the *Southern Cross* with Logan Campbell, a leader of the Auckland group which had long been agitating for the cancelling of the Crown's right of pre-emption and a return to direct purchase from Maori owners.¹⁸ The *Southern Cross* made the Grace affair an opportunity to step up its pressure for this move and, in the wider context, it is significant that Frederick Whitaker, who moved the resolution in the Council for setting up the committee of inquiry, of which he was appointed chairman, was the public spokesman for this view.