

criticised White's writing and his organisation of material, which Butler described as 'peculiar'. They recommended that White supervise the work's printing. Cabinet was now asked to decide on awarding the bonus. Alas for White's future, political events now conspired to put the matter to one side. Governments rose and fell in swift succession; the result being a hiatus of six months despite attempts to raise the matter by the project's allies in Parliament.²¹

Perhaps frustrated by such delays and feeling isolated from events while living in Auckland, White himself enquired about the bonus in November. The new Colonial Secretary in Robert Stout's Ministry, P. A. Buckley, handled the Government's response. To be charitable, one must assume Buckley was poorly briefed; nevertheless his outburst is extraordinary. He replied that White's letter was beyond his comprehension and 'a huge joke'; he promptly recommended that 'the whole of the *foolery*' (his emphasis) be referred to the Native Minister, John Ballance.²²

In the dying days of December 1884, T. W. Lewis, the permanent head of the Native Department, following Ballance's instructions, prepared a memorandum crucial to the future of the history project. It was to open a period of intense negotiations between the government and White. Lewis suggested that the manuscripts ought to be translated 'by competent Maori scholars'. He thought the department's own interpreters could at least commence the task. So that the work was widely read a suitably qualified person should edit the translations. The history would be published in parts beginning with the next parliamentary session. A settlement should be made with White and his manuscripts transferred to the department. Before receiving his bonus White would arrange the manuscripts in the order he intended for publication.²³

Ballance accepted the recommendations, adding his own that the suitably qualified person alluded to be his friend Edward Tregear, soon to make his own scholarly mark in the field of Polynesian studies.²⁴ Accordingly Tregear was contacted in New Plymouth and offered the editorship of a proposed English language edition of the history. Faced with such a golden opportunity Tregear accepted almost as soon as he had received the letter.²⁵ Indeed so eager was he that within a few weeks he announced to a somewhat bemused Native Department that he was preparing to depart for Wellington. Although there were no English manuscripts to edit, his request was approved. He continued working in the Survey Department, no doubt waiting in anxious anticipation to begin editing White's history.²⁶

While negotiations proceeded with Tregear, Lewis proposed that White be brought to Wellington to supervise the publication of the Maori language edition. Since the Colonial Secretary's Department, despite Buckley's outburst, remained responsible for the project, Lewis's proposal had to be channelled through this department.²⁷ White's